

Message of the Robin

Martin Luther said, "I have one preacher that I love better than any other on earth. It is my little tame robin which preaches to me daily. I put his crumbs on the window sill. He hops on the sill and takes as much as he needs. From there he always flies to a little tree close by, lifts up his voice to God, sings his song of praise and gratitude, tucks his head under his wing and goes to sleep, leaving tomorrow to look after itself. He is the best preacher I have on earth."

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

27. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation (John 1:18; 1 Pet.1:10,11, 12; John 15:15; and 20:31).

28. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of priest in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (Heb. 9:14, 28) and reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17), and in making continual intercession for us (Heb.7:24, 25).

29. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself (Acts 15:14, 15, 16), in ruling (Is. 33:22), and defending us (Is. 32:1, 2), and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies (1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110 throughout).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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DEAD RECKONING

*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Romans 6:11*

We often have our attention arrested by a play on words. Many years ago I listened with great interest and profit to Missionary John Hatcher preach a message by this same title and with reference to this text. I was fascinated at the outset because I had often heard people say with reference to various propositions, “I reckon.” Often they were giving a personal assent or permission to something. Sometimes it was an expression of approval or correctness. Many times it was the expression of a calculated result. That is, based on a present situation taken with what might be, a certain outcome might be assured. “Dead reckoning” is a nautical term used in which a present position is calculated by using a known previous position and then taking speeds and direction into account. The term is also used as an expression of accounting such as the number of people in a crowd or the amount of money in question.

Biblical use of the term “reckon” makes application of many of the above thoughts. Of Christ it is said: *For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. Luke 22:37.* Concerning we who believe it is written: *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. Romans 4:4.* We “reckon” our all to be of grace and not works. In the accounting of the Apostle Paul, certain value was placed on salvation in comparison to our present estate. *For I reckon that the sufferings*

of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18.

The case for this “dead reckoning” is well made in first part of this chapter and we are challenged to see both its substance and its Spiritual logic. He begins with a rhetorical and easily answered question. In that grace is become the order of the day for true believers continuance in sin in an unacceptable course of action. We are further challenged to assess the manner in which our salvation has been brought about. In being buried with Christ the matter of the believer’s sin is settled. In rising with Christ the matter of eternal life is established and this life in Christ ever remains new and fresh. So it is that we are “dead” to the condemnation of sin. We are “alive” unto righteousness in Christ our Lord. The thought of any longer serving sin is regressive and hateful to the whole thought of salvation. It is true that an “old nature” remains in contention, but it no longer has the right of rule. Therefore neither sin nor death has any more hold on believers. This is not a matter of presumption. It is a matter of knowledge – “knowing this!” Freedom thus is given us in a dual manner. We are free from the claims and the pangs of death and we are free to live in Christ. A popular airline commercial says “you are now free to move about the country.” We have far greater freedom than that. We are free to move about in Christ. David declared” *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy:*

thou hast set my feet in a large room. Psalms 31:8.

Having established the fact of the believer's death in Christ and His life with Christ the Apostle moves from teaching to exhortation. Those things clearly established as the outcome of the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord are to become the heartfelt convictions of those professing faith in Him. The enemy labors to distract the mind from these things and rather appeals to the natural man with his sinful tendencies. We are to enter into every aspect of life with the thought of what has happened in redemption and regeneration. I am the purchased possession of another and I have His nature imparted to me. The remembrance of these precious facts conditions the courses to be followed and the objectives to be pursued. Many rely on a profession and claim an interest in eternal life only to pursue the life of this present world. My present position must be calculated in this manner. I was dead in trespasses and sins. Judgment fell on me in the person of Christ who assumed full responsibility for me and received the death due me. In fact then, I am dead. But He arose with life which is His to give to whomsoever He wills. As the

beneficiary of this new life then I am to "reckon" based on Him, not me. Paul then declared that: *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Romans 6:10.* The issue was finalized in Him. The "old man" is disenfranchised and I must no longer serve him.

When guilt and condemnation are suggested by the accuser I am to reckon myself dead to sin even as Christ died to sin. When temptation rears its ugly head and would endeavor to resume control I am to reckon myself as alive unto God through Christ. We believe it and it remains for us to "lay hold on it" as Paul exhorted Timothy with regard to eternal life. We are to engage in full submission to this truth. Our present position is confirmed to the point that when doubts would arise the calculations of faith take us to the cross, the death of Christ, to His life in us and to a confidence that is not registered in the flesh but in Him who had conquered all. It is He who declares: *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Revelation 1:18.*

"Dead reckoning" establishes our position precisely and squarely in Christ and the full certainty of life forever in Him. *bhs*

Grace Active

O God, may Thy Spirit speak in me that I may speak to Thee. O Lord Jesus, great high priest, Thou hast opened a new and living way by which a fallen creature can approach Thee with acceptance.

Help me to contemplate the dignity of Thy Person, the perfectness of Thy sacrifice, the effectiveness of Thy intercession.

O what blessedness accompanies devotion, when under all the trials that weary me, the cares that corrode me, the fears that disturb me, the infirmities that oppress me, I can come to Thee in my need and feel peace beyond understanding!

The grace that restores is necessary to preserve, lead, guard, supply, help me. And here Thy saints encourage my hope; they were once poor and are now rich, bound and are now free, tried and now are victorious.

Every new duty calls for more grace than I now possess, but not more than is found in Thee, the divine treasury in whom all fullness dwells. To Thee I repair for grace upon grace, until every void made by sin be replenished and I am filled with all Thy fullness.

May my desires be enlarged and my hopes emboldened, that I may honour Thee by my entire dependency and the greatness of my expectation.

Do Thou be with me, and prepare me for all the smiles of prosperity, the frowns of adversity, the losses of substance, the death of friends, the days of darkness, the changes of life, and the last great change of all. May I find thy grace sufficient for all my needs. Spurgeon

Pilate questioned the existence of truth, and his life bore the fruit of his doubts. He lived in fear of losing his position. Against his conscience, he gave deference to the mad requests of the people. He disregarded the advice of his wife, who urged him to have nothing to do with Jesus' death. Pilate was in bondage because he didn't know the truth. Even though he spent many years bound in prison, the apostle Paul declares, "Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1). So you can be a prisoner and yet be truly free, or you can be a king and live in bondage. As Paul testified in chains before kings, it was clear that he, not they, knew true freedom (Acts 24:16, 25). You can almost hear the chains rattling on Pilate's wrists when he asks Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Jesus testifies, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37) and promises that "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Do you experience true freedom in Christ? Or are you living in bondage to the fear of men, to the demands of your flesh, and to the guilt of lies? As we experience salvation in Christ, we begin to see that truth and lies are like oil and water. In Christ we can reject everything that is false and begin to live freely in the truth. We find healing for our deceitful hearts in His truth. We learn to hate lies and deception because they attack Christ as surely as nails pierced His hands and feet. A tremendous series of lies sent Christ to the cross! We love the truth because it is a reflection of Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate (John 14:6). Joel Beeke in *Why Christ Came*

Salvation is not of works for two fundamental reasons. First, man has no works of which to speak. There is nothing in his life that merits salvation, but everything that would evoke the condemnation of a holy God. It is the testimony of Scripture that there is no one righteous, not even one. There is none who does good. In fact, the very best of man's labors and his greatest acts of altruism are nothing more than filthy rags before God. These truths devastate the pride of man, but they must be pressed upon his conscience in order to extinguish any hope of self-promotion before God and to crush every thought of gaining favor with the Deity by the strength of his own arm. A man comes to God by faith only after he has realized his destitute condition and cries out with the old hymn writer, "In my hand no price I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." Secondly, salvation is not of works because that would not glorify God; it would make Him a debtor bound to reward the supposed virtue of the creature. Salvation by works is nothing more than humanism clothed in religion. It is the mythological man raising himself from the dust by his own strength of will to overcome all odds and earn the prize. On the other hand, faith is true religion. It is man as he is, "lost and ruined by the fall," emptied of all confidence in self, and trusting in the faithful promises of a saving God. In the epic drama of salvation by faith, God is the hero, and upon Him alone do we lavish praise. Just as it is written, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory," and "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

Paul Washer in *The Gospel's Power and Message*

Triune Prayer is to the:

Father. Prayer touches the tenderness of the heavenly Father's heart like nothing else, bringing him delight as he comes to the aid of his children (Matthew 7:11). • Son. Each time we pray we demonstrate our dependence on Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, who is the way, truth, and life—the only way to the Father (John 14:6). • Spirit. The Holy Spirit carries our prayers to the Father's throne of grace, interpreting our heart's unutterable longings (Romans 8:26). This is the God who knows us and our struggles far better than we do ourselves. If we are to understand anything about unanswered prayer, we must begin with him. Paul Tautges in *Brass Heavens: Reasons for Unanswered Prayer*.