

"When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy."

-Corrie Ten Boom

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Romans 15:5-7

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)

40. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23), and do immediately pass into glory (2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43); and their bodies being still united to Christ (1 Thess. 4:14), do rest in their graves (Is. 57:2) till the resurrection (Job 19:26, 27).

41. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection believers, being raised up in glory (1 Cor. 15:43), shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of judgment (Mt. 25:23; Mt. 10:32), and made perfectly blessed, both in soul and body, in the full enjoyment of God (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 13:12) to all eternity (1 Thess. 4:17, 18).

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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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EXCEPTIONAL CHRISTIANITY

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20

Some time ago a cry went up from some quarters in this country denouncing any claim to American “exceptionalism.” There is, however, no doubt that America has been exceptional in comparison with most nations in the world. Perhaps there are some areas in which that is still true. With the decline in morality and the contempt for the Word of God and for God Himself that claim may now be dubious at best. What is much more distressing is the fact that there seems to be man-defined norms for Christianity with the desire to make them anything but exceptional. Churches have endeavored to “dumb down” the message and create a non-threatening atmosphere so that the world may feel comfortable. Thus, the idea of an “ordinary Christian” emerges and the lines of distinction grow dim. This is not far removed from the idea of a “carnal Christian” which is a gross contradiction of terms to say the least and blasphemous at the worst. True believers are followers of Christ (Christians) and as such discover no place for ordinary or carnal.

The word “except” occurs seventy-four times in the KJV and in a good number of instances it is making a strong distinction. For example, *Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Psalms 127:1.* Or, *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Isaiah 1:9.* The case before us in this

text is of a similar vain. The word, “except,” stands between an inadequate form of righteousness and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our Lord spoke out strongly in defense of the Law as it pertained to His purpose. He would, in fact, fulfill the Law in every way; not the least detail would pass until He had personally displayed a perfect righteousness, offered a proper sacrifice and caused the divine nature to be incorporated in those He came to save. At that point they would no longer be under the Law because His righteousness would have been imputed to their account and imparted to their nature. Christ in His people answers to the fulfilling of the Law. The sanctity of the Law was never in question. The enforcement of the Law would continue to be rigid in its most exacting manner (witness the crucifixion). But, He would expose the legalism of the Scribes and the Pharisees and reveal a requirement that no amount of ceremony or outward shows in the flesh could meet. What He would supply would make them “exceptional Christians.”

His cited the two most knowledgeable groups in the society of His day. The Scribes were they who copied and expounded the scriptures constantly. The Pharisees were the epitome of outward devotion, dedication to the ceremonies and morality. As to behavior, the Lord brought the disciples to comparison with a high, howbeit, human standard. The average person would have been intimidated by the

knowledge of the Scribes and the high standards of the Pharisees. Many would have been astonished at these words, but they stood. Such righteousness and knowledge was insufficient to qualify for citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. They would have to be infinitely better.

The Greek scholar A. T. Robertson supplied important light to the words of our Lord. In reference to the word “exceed” he wrote that it meant to “overflow like a river out of its banks and then Jesus adds more...” The indications were that their righteousness would have to be more in both quality and quantity. “The superiority to the Pharisaic righteousness here required is plainly in *kind*, not degree...” JFB. Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven was not as a result of more of the same. It would be in contrast to their superficial righteousness and would bear the very character of Christ. This alone is the accepted righteousness. It is then this righteousness that is within the true believer that becomes the “overflowing river” of which Robertson wrote. This mighty operation of grace in the heart and life of a believer makes him distinct from all others. And so Paul would give emphasis by declaring: *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: Philippians 3:9*

The lines of distinction in scripture are emphatic and unequivocal. The enemies of Daniel sought occasion against him but

discovered ...*We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Daniel 6:5.* Our Lord would often define their exceptionalism to the disciples. An example is: *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3.* With lines so clearly drawn there can be no excuse. The wonder is that, by the Grace of God, men like Daniel were made to be so exceptional that it was apparent even to his enemies. And, while the lessons were slowly learned, in the end the disciples and all true believers become as little children in whom the exceptional righteousness of Christ is seen.

There are no exceptions to the exacting requirements of salvation. *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:3.* But then, grace enables repentance and the conditions are met. None are excepted from the exacting requirement that: *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Acts 17:30.*

We have been sought by the love of Christ; we have been held accountable by the justice of God; we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ; we have been made new by the Spirit of God; we have been made exceptional by the righteousness of God in us – all by His grace and mercy as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *bhs*

Two are better than one.- Ecc 4:9

Surely he has more satisfaction in life, who labours hard to maintain those he loves, than the miser has in his toil. In all things union tends to success and safety, but above all, the union of Christians. They assist each other by encouragement, or friendly reproof. They warm each other's hearts while they converse together of the love of Christ, or join in singing his praises. Then let us improve our opportunities of Christian fellowship. In these things all is not vanity, though there will be some alloy as long as we are under the sun. Where two are closely joined in holy love and fellowship, Christ will by his Spirit come to them; then there is a threefold cord.-- MATTHEW HENRY

The Worker's Ruling Passion

Wherefore we labour that . . . we may be accepted of Him. — 2 Corinthians 5:9

"Wherefore we labour" It is arduous work to keep the master ambition in front. It means holding one's self to the high ideal year in and year out, not being ambitious to win souls or to establish churches or to have revivals, but being ambitious only to be "accepted of Him." It is not lack of spiritual experience that leads to failure, but lack of labouring to keep the ideal right. Once a week at least take stock before God and see whether you are keeping your life up to the standard He wishes. Paul is like a musician who does not heed the approval of the audience if he can catch the look of approval from his Master.

Any ambition which is in the tiniest degree away from this central one of being "approved unto God" may end in our being castaways. Learn to discern where the ambition leads, and you will see why it is so necessary to live facing the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says – "Lest my body should make me take another line, I am constantly watching so that I may bring it into subjection and keep it under." (1 Cor. 9:27.)

I have to learn to relate everything to the master ambition, and to maintain it without any cessation. My worth to God in public is what I am in private. Is my master ambition to please Him and be acceptable to Him, or is it something less, no matter how noble?

Oswald Chambers

"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."—Jer. xxxii. 40

Precious consideration to a poor exercised soul, that a covenant God in Christ, hath not only engaged for himself, but undertaken for his people also. God will not, and his people shall not. My soul, take a short view of the foundation of this precious, precious promise. It is God's everlasting love, everlasting grace, everlasting covenant. And remember, the Author of it is not changeable as thou art: "with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Moreover, it is purchased by the blood, sealed in the blood, and made eternally firm and sure in the blood and righteousness of Christ; the everlasting efficacy of which is as eternal as the Author of it. Neither is this all. There is an union with the person of thy Jesus. The head without a body would be incomplete; and, united to his Person, the believer is interested in all his graces, fulness, suitableness, all-sufficiency: so that this preserves grace from perishing, because it is an everlasting spring. And Jesus lives to see it all complete. His intercession answers every want, and supplies every necessity. Neither is this all; for God the Holy Ghost sets to his seal, in the heart, that God is true. His quickening, convincing, converting, manifesting grace in the soul, in taking of the things of Jesus, and shewing to the heart, becomes an earnest and pledge in assurance; and all tending to confirm, that God will not, and his redeemed ones, shall not turn away, but his covenant remain everlasting.

Author Unknown

"We don't believe 'in the power of prayer,' but in our all-powerful God who empowers our inherently powerless prayers." —Burk Parsons

"The Christian on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe." —D. L. Moody