

At the time of my conversion I was dead to the things of Christ, hostile to God, passionately resisting and going full-barrel the other way. I had an unwilling ear ... The last thing I wanted to be true was the Christ of the Bible. Then the light of Christ pierced through such that I beheld the majesty of God in all His sovereignty and holiness revealing my own misery and pollution and showed forth the beauty of Christ and what He had accomplished for me, so that what was once bitter, now tasted sweet and that which once appeared ugly, now appeared all-glorious. J. W. Hendryx

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)*

31. Q. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4), in ascending up into heaven (Mark 16:19), in sitting at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20), and in coming to judge the world at the last day (Acts 1: 11; 17:31).

32. Q. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us (John 1:11,12) by his Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5,6).

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM– In Richwood

Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

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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### THE EFFICACY OF FAITH

*And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. Matthew 8:13*

Truth is that which we believe and that statement finds its greatest realization in looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus declared Himself to be The Truth. Faith is experienced as we are brought to union and communion with Christ our Lord in Spirit and in Truth. We are sweetly reminded of two things about faith as we read: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1.* The first of these is that true faith has substance and is not the illusion professed by many. By it Christ and all that pertains to Him are made real so that the things hoped for are certified to those to whom the promises are made. The second thing is the evidence that faith brings to us of things not perceived by the natural senses. In everything from the peace that we can know in the midst of the storm to the assertive works done in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, we are assured of the validity of all the divine claims for us.

Sadly, like so many of divine operations, cheap human imitations appear everywhere. Such has given rise to the “faith-healers” so called and other movements in which the mechanics of true faith are claimed, separate from and without reference to, the Gospel. Such was the error of Simon the sorcerer who supposed that the abilities witnessed in Peter resided in men. The result has been to create chaos and deceptions that have no connection

to the object and sustainer of true faith – “Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Another sad note appears in the weakness of faith. Of Abraham, it is written that he was not weak in faith (Rom. 4:19). Certainly, Paul was making a comparative statement. He believed God and received the promised seed in Isaac. Paul wrote of those who were weak in faith and gave instructions to receive them. By these things we understand relative strength in faith.

With the disciples, our Lord addressed the problem of little faith, seemingly quantifying, or qualifying it. As Jesus once slept in a ship a great tempest arose and the disciples awoke Him. His response to their fear was “O ye of little faith.” He then rebuked the winds and the sea leaving a great calm. We observe several things here. First, were they assuming that both they and He would perish if the storm did not abate? Had they forgotten who He was and the mission that lay before? By reference to their faith, was He saying to them that had they had “big faith” resting in Him they could have done what He did? It is not that they had power in and of themselves; strong faith lays fast hold on needed power in Christ and mighty things are done. When His disciples failed to cast out a demon He issued an astounding challenge: *...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Matthew 17:20.*

The scripture records multiple instances in which great accomplishments are attributed to faith. Our text here is one of them. The fact that Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion is enough to warrant seeking to imitate it. It was identified as distinguishing between true and false believers in that our Lord declared that true believers would come from all over while the “children of the kingdom” would be cast out. Our Lord’s accreditation of such faith is seen in that the possessor of it (the centurion) would be granted what he desired of Him. Faith had framed the right words, the right approach and elicited the desired response from the Christ Jesus. “...and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” His faith put him in tune with the will of God.

The woman with the issue of blood was told that her faith had made her whole. Two blind men, pleading with Christ for their healing, were asked if they believed that He could do this and then responded to their faith with sight for them. When Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted he pleaded for his sight. Our Lord’s response was: “Go thy way, they faith hath made thee whole.” His way became the way of Christ as he both received his sight and followed Jesus in the way. The Syrophenician woman, lepers, the lame man at the Temple, a lame man at Lystra and others received healing through faith.

Of great significance is our Lord’s response to the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Having witnessed her worship and devotion He declared her sins forgiven and further said “thy faith hath saved thee.” We know and declare that salvation is by “grace though faith” and that truly, salvation is of the Lord. The efficacy of faith is due to its

attachment to Christ our Lord and it is in that way experienced. The word for the “touch” by which Christ perceived that virtue (power) had gone out of Him means to “attach oneself to.” Such is the identification given one in coming to Christ by His might and power and mercy.

Peter declared to the council at Jerusalem that the Lord had distinguished Gentile believers thusly: *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Acts 15:9.* Paul asserted that the power of God avails in faith: *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:5.* Paul declared the substance of faith in addressing the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:17). The declaration of the Old Testament prophet and Paul in the New Testament is that the “Just shall live by his faith.” The Thessalonians were identified by their “work of faith.” Peter addressed himself to those “begotten again unto a lively hope, and to an incorruptible inheritance as having a precious promise: *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:5.*

Are we not excited unto faith as we read of those from the past, *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Hebrews 11:33-34.* Has either faith or its confidence (Christ) changed? Does the phrase “O ye of little faith” apply today? O that we indeed attach ourselves to Christ for He accomplishes the “efficacy of faith.” *bhs*

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“Our Heavenly King is pleased with all our graces: hot zeal and cool patience pleaseth Him; cheerful thankfulness and weeping repentance pleaseth Him; but none of them are welcome to Him without faith, as nothing can please Him without Christ”. – Thomas Adams

## **God's Word to You**

*"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."* (Isaiah 1:18-20)

The Lord God here commands you to come to him by faith in Christ, and promises the full forgiveness of sin to all who obey his command.

## **God's Command**

The gospel is not a bare invitation, which may be accepted or refused, as you may choose, without impunity. It is a command, a summons from the throne of the Most High God. When God says, "Come," he does not mean, "Come if you please." He means "Come!" You cannot disobey an invitation. But a command is different. If you refuse to obey God's command, if you refuse to come to Christ, you shall be judged of God as a disobedient rebel (Romans 10:21). This is a gracious command, a very gracious command. The gospel of God presents you with God's commandment (1 John 3:23). — "Come!" And you are responsible to obey it.

## **To You**

This command is addressed to you. It is addressed to sinners everywhere, without qualification. If you hear the command, God gave it to you. If you read the command, God gave it to you. I know many would-be theologians frown at it, many will cry, "That is not consistent Calvinism. Bro. Fortner's theology needs to be more precise." I care nothing for that. — God commands you to come to Christ.

## **No Qualifications**

Many place qualifications in front of the word "sinners," implying that before you can come to Christ in faith you must meet certain conditions. They try to sneak works into the scheme of grace by making works sound like humility. They say, God commands "sensible sinners" to come, or "seeking sinners," or "thirsty sinners," or "hungry sinners," or "weary sinners," or "lost sinners," or "convicted sinners," or "penitent sinners," or "broken sinners." But this is God's word to you, sinner, without qualification or condition. In fact, in the context, those to whom God is speaking were sensible of nothing. They did not feel any need of a Savior. They had no sorrow, or remorse for sin. They were not broken at all. A more graphic description of utter godlessness, depravity, and spiritual death could never be found. Here is thick darkness, without one ray of light. Yet, to these hard-hearted, spiritually dead sinners, God says, "Come." — They were senseless sinners who would not hear, ungrateful sinners who did not care, beastly sinners who would not think, utterly depraved sinners without one commendable trait, a people laden with iniquity, sinners who promoted sin in others, hardened sinners. They were the very worst of sinners, they were self-righteous sinners, whom the Lord God compares to Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 2-14).

The gospel is addressed to sinners as sinners. The gospel net is cast into the sea of fallen humanity to catch all kinds of sinners. None are exempt from this command. None are excluded, not even you who shake in your boots fearing that you have committed "the unpardonable sin." If God commands me to come to him, then I may come to him. And if I come to him in obedience to his own command, I will not be turned away (John 6:37). --Don Fortner