

God, by the wondrous work of his grace, has made heaven-born souls “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), putting a new nature in us, a new man, “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24), that cannot sin, a new man that can do nothing but righteousness (1 John 3:9); and that new man is “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Don Fortner

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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50. Q. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Ex. 20:3).

51. Q. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God and our God (1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17), and to worship and glorify him accordingly (Mt. 4:10; Ps. 29:2).

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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

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

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FORGIVENESS AND FEAR

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. Psalms 130:4-5

The two terms in our title are often subject to abuse and misapplication. That is not surprising in that both, when properly understood, subject us to the sovereignty of God and submission to the terms of the Gospel. We would note that, while the Gospel is the greatest news one could hear, it is fully rejected by men who address it on their own terms. They will “accept” a form of it provided it does not challenge their sense of ability to choose for themselves and will conditionally use the terms. I have often seen persons, and met a few, wearing a T-shirt with the simple caption “FORGIVEN” on it. But, invariably they wear it with a smug look and show no evidence of the fear of God in them which has characterized true believers in all generations. On being asked “how are you,” I have had many answer, “I am forgiven.” But, sadly such statements are made with an air of pride in personal decision or accomplishment.

Both terms are essential in understanding true salvation. the first, “forgiveness,” is at the very root and cause of salvation while the other, “fear,” shows the effect of a divinely wrought operation upon the soul. In both, one is “shut up” to the mercy of God and in both there is personal delight to have been so involved. In the first we find that which is the prerogative of the Lord and is exercised without the discovery of a cause in us. The second is produced when one comes to the sense of having been forgiven. It is most precious to we who have had the

realization that the awfulness of what Christ endured on the Cross was because of us – bearing our sins in His body on the tree. The second comes with the essential regeneration that reveals our sin, His forgiveness and the magnificent greatness and holiness of He who has forgiven.

The “but” that begins this passage contrasts with what might have been in the preceding verse: *If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Psalms 130:3*. It is a wonder to men when true forgiveness is revealed in that it is such a difficult thing for them to do. I question whether any, outside the grace of Christ in them, really do forgive those who trespass against them. God is omniscient and certainly has knowledge of every sin. But, it is only of Him to declare, *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Hebrews 10:17*. If, indeed, he should call us to account in the matter of our sins, none would stand. But. Only of God can it be said that He is able to willfully forget.

But, it is of extreme importance that we understand how the “High and Holy One” is able to forgive such horrendous offences against Himself and His Son (any and all sin). Paul gave the answer to the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia: *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: Acts 13:38*. In that it is He who has paid the price, it is He alone that can grant forgiveness. It is God that appointed His

Son to take away the cause of God's anger toward men. The words are emphatic – "...there is forgiveness with Thee'..." Forgiveness does not come because one asks for it, although we do. Divine forgiveness assumes absolute condemnation without it. And, forgiveness is effectual in accomplishing the purpose for which it is rendered.

Reverence and Godly fear are introduced here as the result of forgiveness. Those mentioned earlier claim it in the sense of being "off the hook" in the matter of their sin and sins. We often encounter the purpose clause (*hina*) in the New Testament. The word "that" as used here means "in order that." Forgiveness has the effect of enabling one to fear God in a proper fashion. The writer of Hebrews used it thusly: *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: Hebrews 12:28.* This fear does not stand in dread of God as do the devils who "believe and tremble." It rather stands in the love of God while recognizing all His superlative attributes. In this grace we call fear and that which proceeds from it is found motivation to please Him, devotion and delight in serving Him and so is He worshiped by those who truly fear Him. All have reason to stand in dread of God and His judgment. *For our God is a consuming fire.*

Hebrews 12:29. But, we who are taught by the grace of God cling to it as a marvel that we may fear Him.

If we had not forgiveness there would be cause to dread. But, in verse 5, we find just the opposite. There the Psalmist includes the expression of his very soul. It is for the Lord, Himself that his soul waits with great desire and anticipation and delights at His presence. Further, His hope rests in the fact that it is He who has forgiven; he will hang on His word with confidence. Not only on the written word, but also on the Word made flesh. A redeemer is clearly in view and this hope is a person. And, we look with reverence and Godly fear to Him who is the God of our salvation.

Charles Spurgeon wrote: "If the Lord were to execute justice upon all, there would be none left to fear Him; if all were under the apprehension of his deserved wrath, despair would harden them against fearing Him: it is grace which leads the way to a holy regard of God, and a fear of grieving Him." May we, as Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, be by faith, moved with fear as we pursue the things of the Lord and the Lord Himself. Forgiveness, through Christ our Lord, has brought to us both desire and enabling that we may so fear Him who so loved us. *bhs*

When you've done something wrong, it's not natural to look inside yourself for the cause. Sin makes us all shockingly self-righteous.

Because accepting blame is not natural, it takes rescuing, transforming grace to produce a humble, willing, broken, self-examining, help-seeking heart. Only divine grace can soften a person's heart. Only grace can help your eyes to see what you need to see. Only grace can decimate your defenses and lead you to confess. Only grace can cause you to quit pointing your finger and to run to your Redeemer for his forgiveness and delivering power. Only grace can enable you to forsake your own righteousness and find your hope and rest in the righteousness of another. Only grace can make you more grieved over your sin than about the sins of others. Only grace can make you accept your need for grace. Only grace can cause you and me to abandon our confidence in

our own performance and place our confidence in the perfectly acceptable righteousness of Jesus Christ. Only grace can cause us to put our hope in the only place where hope can be found—in God and God alone. Every moment of defensiveness argues how much the grace is still needed. -Paul David Tripp

We cannot all preach for God — but we can all pray to God.

We cannot all be leaders — but we can all be pleaders.

We cannot all be mighty in rhetoric — but we can all be prevalent in prayer.

--C. H. Spurgeon

What is sin?

It is often described as “missing the mark”—that is, failure to live up to the rigorous standard of God’s holy law. But the Bible makes it clear that it is much more than that. In Leviticus 16:21, sin is described as transgression; literally, as rebellion against authority. In the prophet Nathan’s confrontation of David over his sins of adultery and murder, Nathan describes sin as a despising of both God’s Word and God himself (2 Sam. 12:9–10). And in Numbers 15:30–31, Moses characterizes sinners as acting “with a high hand,” meaning defiantly. Therefore, we can conclude that sin is a rebellion against God’s sovereign authority, a despising of his Word and his person, and even a defiance of God himself. It is no wonder Paul wrote that because of our sin, we were by nature objects of God’s wrath (Eph. 2:3). We would like to think that, as believers, such descriptions of sin no longer apply to us. We look at the gross and obvious sins of society around us, and we tend to define sin in terms of those actions. We fail to see that our anxiety, our discontentment, our ingratitude toward God, our pride and selfishness, our critical and judgmental attitudes toward others, our gossip, our unkind words to or about others, our preoccupation with the things of this life, and a whole host of other subtle sins are an expression of rebellion against God and a despising of his Word and person.

—Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington *The Great Exchange*

“When we keep near to Jesus,” he said, “it is He who draws souls to Himself through us, but He must be lifted up in our lives; that is, we must be crucified with Him.” This was the keynote of Hyde’s power as a soul-winner. He had been crucified with Christ, self had been destroyed that the glory of the Master might shine through his actions. “If not 'buried' the stench of the old man will frighten souls away. If these three steps downward—crucified, dead and buried with Christ—are taken as to the old man, then the new man will be revived, raised and seated—three corresponding steps upward which God permits us to take.” Basil Miller quoting John Hyde