

“If my respects to my Savior be for the loaves and fishes, my heart is carried away with those baskets of fragments; but, if I can love God for His goodness’ sake, this love shall outlast time, and overmatch death.”

Joseph Hall

We are never nearer Christ than when we find ourselves lost in a holy amazement at His unspeakable love.

John Owen

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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70. Q. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglect of, or doing any thing against the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations (Mt. 15:4-6; Ez. 34:24; Rom. 13:8).

71. Q. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God’s glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment (Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:2, 3).

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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

Volume 10, No. 29

July 16, 2017

SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Romans 8:35-36

The declaration of no separation from the love of Christ is one of the most precious to those who truly know the love of Christ – who sense that they are the loved of God. That declaration carries with it the assurance that the love of Christ for His own is ever active and engaged fully to the accomplishment of the eternal design of God. It is declared from all eternity and preciously manifests itself in bringing the effectual grace of God to bear in the hearts of those who are the called according to His purpose and enables the endurance of all things for His sake.

It is to be feared that as we read of those things that ultimately fail to separate us from the love of Christ that we do not realize that Paul was sensitive to the attempts they had made to do so. He was truly conscious of the love of Christ. He had experienced the things of which he writes. This was a matter of personal testimony to him. The expression of the love of Christ to his very soul brought him to consider what the love of Christ had driven Him to do. The songwriter was very insightful in writing: “Love sent my Savior to die in my stead/ Why should He love me so?” John wrote of Christ that “...having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Christ had been revealed in him and the truth of redemption had been sealed in his heart so that he was fully rested in the confidence of the success of Christ. The accomplishment of Christ

assured that the love of Christ to Him would never cease and the love of Christ in him could never fail regardless of circumstances.

It is interesting that between two declarations about the intensity and extent of the love of Christ that we find Paul’s application of a passage from Psalm 44:22. It is almost verbatim, but the context at first glance seems a little different. But, this is owing to the fact that the Psalmist precedes the statement with the descriptions of the contempt that the enemies of the Lord’s people had for them while Paul is dealing with the love of Christ. But, backing up a few more verses in Romans 8, we find the references to judgments and condemnations directed at the saints. The impact of the statement is quite simply that in both cases it depicts the world’s thoughts of the redeemed of the Lord.

Some would associate these words with the sacrificial sheep under the old system of ordinances. However, to see us as sacrificial sheep in the sense that anything might be merited in our death (slaughter) would detract from the sufferings of our Lord, the Lamb of God. The slaughter here is that which is done to be eaten. Even as these words are being written we are aware that Christians are being dealt with in that way. While Paul might say “I die daily” it would seem here that his reference is to those who were indeed being martyred then. The matter of accounting then is that which

appears in the minds of the haters of Christ and all with whom He has to do. Those who reckon the Gospel as foolishness reckon those who believe it and are true followers of Christ as fit for nothing else but slaughter. So, the record bears out that vast numbers of believers have been so accounted and have had the privilege of suffering and dying in the cause of Christ and the Gospel. *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Hebrews 11:37-40.*

The divinely appointed outcome of these things is that all is turned to victory because of the love of Christ. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Romans 8:37.* The additional list of credits to the love of Christ are all associated with being "accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Heads might be severed, but the love of Christ continues in fact and application to those suffering. We often sing the hymn *Faith of Our*

Fathers. Perhaps we should ask if we can identify fully with the second verse which reads "*Our fathers, chained in prisons dark, Were still in heart and conscience free;/ How sweet would be their children's fate If they like them could die for thee!*" We have to wonder how many of us pause over that thought? They were "accounted as sheep for the slaughter" and were slaughtered.

It would seem that the intent of the Apostle in inserting this thought here was not to suggest embracing a gruesome and gory outcome so much as it was to show the absolute contempt of the world for the righteousness of God (and the righteous ones of God) in contrast with the exceeding love of Christ. This makes the thoughts of the love of Christ ever more precious. Many will miss this thought because they are courting the favor of the world and trying to produce a form of Christianity that is acceptable to the world and therefore the world is not offended. Christ warned his disciples not to be surprised when the world hated them since they hated Him first.

The preaching of the cross is offensive because it exposes the world and the awfulness of sin. Those who take up the cross are invariably "accounted as sheep for the slaughter." *bhs*

Reader! do you know this blessed servitude?

Can you say with a joyful heart, "O Lord, truly I am Your servant"? He is no hard taskmaster. Would Satan try to teach you so? Let this be the refutation, "He loved me — and gave Himself for me." True, the yoke is the appointed discipline He employs in training His children for immortality. But be comforted! "It is His tender hand that puts it on — and keeps it on." He will suit the yoke — to the neck; and the neck — to the yoke. He will suit His grace to your trials. No, He will bring you even to be in love with these, when they bring along with them such gracious unfoldings of His own faithfulness and mercy! How His people need thus to be in heaviness through manifold temptations, to keep them meek and submissive! "Jeshurun (like a bullock unaccustomed to the harness, fed and pampered in the stall) waxed fat, and kicked!" Never is there more gracious love than when God takes means to curb and subjugate,

humble us, and to prove us — bringing us out from ourselves, our likings, our confidences, our prosperity — and putting us under the needed YOKE! And who has ever repented of that joyful servitude? Among all the regrets that mingle with a dying hour, and often bedew with bitter tears a dying pillow — who ever told of regrets and repentance here?

--John MacDuff

The sovereign choice of the Father, by which he elected us unto eternal life, or ever the earth was, is a matter of vast antiquity, since no date can be conceived for it by the mind of man. We were chosen from before the foundations of the world. Everlasting love went with the choice, for it was not a bare act of divine will by which we were set apart, but the divine affections were concerned. The Father loved us in and from the beginning. Here is a theme for daily contemplation. The eternal purpose to redeem us from our foreseen ruin, to cleanse and sanctify us, and at last to glorify us, was of infinite antiquity, and runs side by side with immutable love and absolute sovereignty.

--C. H. Spurgeon

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STAYING IN THE FIRST GRADE

... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. —Philippians 3:13-14 There are Christians who grow up and have no relish for anything spiritually advanced. They're preoccupied with their first lessons. The average church is a school with only one grade and that is the first one. These Christians never expect to get beyond that and they don't want to hear a man very long who wants to take them beyond that. If their pastor insists they do their homework and get ready for the next grade, they begin to pray that the Lord will call "our dear brother" somewhere else.... All he's trying to do is prepare them for another grade, but that church is dedicated to the first grade, and the first grade is where it's going to remain. Paul said some of them went up into the second grade and gave it up, and said, "It's too hard here," and they went back to the first. "How long have you been in the first grade, Junior?" "Twelve years."... Paul said, "forgetting those things which are behind ... I press toward the mark" (Philippians 3:13-14). There was a man not satisfied with the first grade. Father, I do pray that our church might not get stuck in the first grade. Help us not to shrink from the hard lessons that bring us to spiritual maturity. Amen.

--A. W. Tozer

Jesus calls us to a life of obedience. He says, "if you love me you will obey my commands." But the bible also teaches that our obedience does not, in any way, earn God's favor. We obey, rather, because we already have God's favor. It demonstrates the reality of God having been gracious to us (Phil 2:12-13; Eph 2:10; 1 John 3:9).

--Monergism