

Following Jesus means we no longer go our own way. We no longer follow the flow of the crowd. We begin to walk a new path that is headed in a new direction. We walk as Jesus walked and imitate Him. We start to obey the word of God as Jesus did while He was here on the earth. We are to love people as He loved, even those who are most difficult to love. We are to act as He acted and react as He reacted in each situation. We are to meet the many challenges in life as He did, with supreme confidence in God.

--Steven Lawson, *The Cost*

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 53. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbids the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God and our God; and the giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due unto Him alone. (Joshua 24:27; Rom. 1:20,21; Ps. 14:1; Rom. 1:25)

Q. 54. What are we especially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

A. These words, "before me", in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other God. (Deut.30:17,18; Ps. 44:20,21; Ps. 90:8)

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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 11, No. 25

June 24, 2018

WHOM SHALL WE FEAR?

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Luke 12:4-5

Thoughts of fear are usually not pleasant to ordinary folks and therefore is avoided as a topic. The normal tendency is to avoid the things which engender fear and are only discussed at a safe distance. Here, our Lord brings a most endearing form of address to bear in conjunction with an instruction to fear. The thought of scaring friends seems incompatible with the idea that we should be comforted with the Words of Christ Jesus our Lord. But, as the passage unfolds we are made to realize that He instructs in ways that only the best friend alone can and does do.

The warning here comes as a huge crowd has assembled which might have given the appearance of great success to His disciples. Instead of celebrating, He issues a warning to them about themselves and the dangers from within. He told them to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” It had been well established that the Pharisees were hypocrites (those who speak from behind a mask). He would have them to recognize that they were subject to the same and so He says to them. Beware.

Our topic embraces a second thought which He would communicate to them. That is, that they should be brave in the matters of this world and the things that threaten, and rather embrace the fear of God. In so doing, they would be led to a third instruction which was to

be true to Him and be ready to confess Him before men with the assurance that the Holy Spirit would teach them what they should say.

We are sweetly drawn to the words of verse four in that He addresses them as friends. We know many relationships with Jesus. He is Master, and Lord and we are submitted to Him. He is our King and we are His subjects. He is the everlasting Father and we are His children. Each of these thoughts encourage us to think on these things and be thankful. We are taught that there is a “friend that sticketh closer than a brother,” and only He can ultimately meet that description. *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17.* Again, our thoughts go to the ultimate friend. A friend is one in whom confidence is registered and certainly we have it toward Him. But, the thought that He should have confidence in me raises a question – unless we think of the operations of His grace in us that produces His likeness in us and assures faithfulness in the end. A friend looks to the welfare, safety, and peace of his friends as our Lord did here.

So, His assuring word is to be unafraid of them which certainly may kill the body, but that is all. We remember that this was not addressed to the multitude; it was to His disciples (friends). We are reminded that men are subject to irrational fears such as spiders and snakes while ignoring the arch-enemy of the soul. The fear of

death enslaves and may be more rational in that there is the fear of the unknown. Such is not the case with those who know the Lord in that death has been conquered and eternal life has been claimed by His resurrection. And, even though He had not yet died, His further words remind them of the fact of resurrection to come.

The enemies of Christ and the Gospel may kill the body. Many have done just that. They can go no further. The final disposition of the soul is in the hands of God alone. This passage is often issued as a warning to the unbelieving and that is not altogether wrong. But, these words are to friends and we see a different reason for placing them here. If we are not aware of that which awaits the rebellious and unbelieving, we cannot appreciate the true nature of our deliverance. In telling His friends this, He is reminding them that it is the mercy of God alone that prevents them from being cast into hell. He did not hesitate to acquaint them with the reality of eternal punishment forever out of mercy's sight. As believers we do not fear going to hell, but we do recognize that the very One we worship would have been just to have sent us there. It is in this way we are constrained by the Love of Christ to remember that we were all "by nature the children of wrath even as others.

Our salvation required our substitute to endure the punishment for us!

It is in this way that Jesus would deliver His friends from the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and all fallen man. We are warned away from any pretensions and are rather to face the reality of what we deserve that we may rejoice in mercy and all that is given in grace. He would assure them of their friendship with Him by pointing to the perfect care for them. He points to the sparrow's fall and the fact that the "very hairs of your head are all numbered."

It is essential that we fear Him and remember that He casts people into hell. He covered the scene at Calvary, but we have been made to hear the awful cry from out of the depths – "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?" We have been spared a full view of hell and are rather pointed to Christ that we might know the cost of our justification. And, that we might fear Him who has delivered us by such a mighty work of love and grace. Every "fear not" in the Bible is underwritten by the resurrection of Christ from such an awful death. The question is answered. We fear Him who did not cast our unworthy souls into hell. *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalms 27:1. bhs*

From the Puritan Richard Sibbes:

Holy men, as they be 'trees of righteousness,' Isa. lxi. 3, and desire to be fruitful at all times, so most especially towards their end; having but a short time to live in the world, they be willing to leave the world with a good savour. So it was with Jacob. So with Moses, as appears in his excellent Song made before his death. You may see it in King Solomon and David before their deaths. But especially in our Saviour. The nearer to heaven, the more heavenly-minded. When grace and glory are ready to join, the one to be swallowed up of the other, then grace is most glorious. All the passages of Christ are comfortable; but none more comfortable than those sermons of his, that were delivered a little before his death. Of all words that come from loving men to those they love, such are most remarkable as be spoken when they be ready to die; because then men are most serious, they being about the most serious business. Then they be wisest, and best able to judge; for the consideration of their end makes them wise. And therefore,

saith God, 'O that my people were wise to consider their latter end!' Deut. xxxii. 29. And, 'teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart to wisdom,' saith Moses, Ps. xc. 12. And indeed there is no wisdom to that; for it teacheth men to pass a right judgment upon all things in the world. They be no longer drunk with the prosperity of the world; they be no longer swayed with opinion, but they pass an estimation of things as they are.

WORSHIP AS PRAISE AND ADORATION. What really is this worship, in the sense of praise and adoration? The Puritan Stephen Charnock called it "nothing else but a rendering to God the honor that is due him."³ John MacArthur defined it as "honor and adoration directed to God."⁴ A. W. Tozer gave a more expanded meaning. He said that God "wants to cultivate within us the adoration and admiration of which He is worthy. He wants us to be astonished at the inconceivable elevation and magnitude and splendor of Almighty God!"⁵ Note the words I emphasized in these quotations: honor, adoration, admiration, and astonishment. These are also words we use to describe the fear of God. One of the best biblical descriptions of worship is Psalm 29:1-2.

--Jerry Bridges

To fail to pray, then, is not to merely break some religious rule—it is a failure to treat God as God. It is a sin against his glory. "Far be it from me," said the prophet Samuel to his people, "that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you" (1 Sam 12:23 [*italics mine*]).³⁵ King David composed much of the Psalter, God's inspired prayer book, filled with appeals to "you who answer prayer" (Ps 65:2). His son Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem and then dedicated it with a magnificent prayer.³⁶ Solomon's main petition for the temple was that from it God would hear his people's prayers—indeed, Solomon's highest prayer was for the gift of prayer itself.³⁷ Beyond that, he hoped those from other nations would "hear of your great name . . . and pray toward this temple" (1 Kings 8:42). Again we see prayer is simply a recognition of the greatness of God.

--Tim Keller

Even though Adam and Eve were dependent before the fall, their only experience was one of surplus and abundance. They never knew a day of scarcity. After the fall, however, their experience was quite different, as is ours today. Our default experience is no longer abundance but scarcity. Food must be produced by the sweat of our brow, and its existence is never certain. Thus, after the fall we become even more dependent on God for our daily sustenance. We are no longer merely creatures in need of provision; we are sinners in need of the Creator's mercy. —Al Mohler

The day of the casual Christian is over. No longer is it possible to drift along, hoping that no tough choices will have to be made. At this point in American history, any moral and spiritual progress will have to be won at great cost. The darker the night, the more important every candle becomes. —Erwin Lutzer