

A man preacheth that sermon only well unto others which preacheth itself in his own soul. And he that doth not feed on and thrive in the digestion of the food which he provides for others will scarce make it savory unto them; yea, he knows not but the food he hath provided may be poison, unless he have really tasted of it himself. If the word do not dwell with power in us, it will not pass with power from us.

John Owen, cited by John Piper

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 73. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13)

Q. 74. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life and the life of others. (Eph. 5:29,30; Ps. 82:3,4; Prov. 24:11,12; Act 16:28)

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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

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STRONG MEAT

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:14

Varying levels of maturity are evident among believers. To some this is an acceptable fact and not a matter of great concern. Owing to this lack of concern, over the years, we have witnessed the emergence of such things as the “carnal Christian theory” and other thoughts that excuse inconsistencies in the lives of empty professors. The writer of Hebrews does not hesitate to call out the seriousness of such errors and in very strong terms denounces their failure to maintain a state of development in their lives and devotion to God.

The Apostle does not hesitate to draw an apt illustration from the natural development of children. In so doing he, in effect, calls them babies in the things of the Lord. Small children are not able to digest solid food and therefore must depend on milk and food so simplified as to allow for digestion. We do not miss the fact that such is the need of newborn Christians and are thus to be brought along in the basic truths of the Word of God.

It is sad to note that the case here seems to be that these people had lapsed into a very childish form of scriptural treatment and needed restarting of their development. A similar observation of the Corinthians is made by Paul: *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 1 Corinthians 3:2.* Many are reporting a similar state of the people in their churches, even in those we would consider to be sound in the faith. Basic Bible

knowledge is forgotten where it once may have been known; foundational applications are not being understood, let alone being repeated in bearing witness to Christ and the Gospel.

There is always development in the lives of true believers. There is no standing still in this case. If one is not moving forward, he is going backward. When Peter enjoined his readers “But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” he was encouraging them to embrace that as a necessity, not an option. Peter quickly added: “To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” Likewise, the writer of Hebrews issued a call to greater aspirations to enable the consumption of “strong meat” or solid food. And like Peter, he would have them be better able to render praise unto Him who is worthy. That would occur when their knowledge of Him increased. That entailed eating the solid food of the Word of God with a view to increased spiritual health and awareness.

Much had already been addressed in the book to this point regarding the superiority of Christ Jesus our Lord. A little further along he was going to call them away from their allegiance to what had been a typical display of the sacrifice of Christ to the fact of it in Him. They were about to be faced with the necessity of leaving the Aaronic priesthood and rather see Christ as our eternal High Priest. They surely knew about Melchisedec and his connection with Abraham. But, the High Priesthood of

Christ was “strong meat” it was important that they receive it. But, they were being pointed back to the basics. It is certain that we are never to lose sight of the first thoughts of Christ and of fundamental faith in Him. In the next chapter such is mentioned: *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. Hebrews 6:1-2.* He did not say to forget those basic things such as repentance and faith, but rather to build on them.

It is evident that many are deceived by false prophets who would merchandize and sensualize religion and reap millions in the process. Others are stunted, if saved, by never hearing the whole truth. They are maintained on a diet of baby food while that which requires chewing and digestion is needed to enable a greater level of praise to Him who is worthy. Not only is there a lack of ability to duly praise God, there is no ability to proclaim the Gospel with any degree of conviction. Where is the knowledge of the “deep things of God?” *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Corinthians 2:10.*

Perhaps, of greatest importance here is that those of full age are able to discern both good and evil. It comes through the use of these

things and so they must be preached. We can tell a little child “no-no,” but what is needed is such discernment of those high thoughts of God that enables them to know the difference experientially. Many will hear and believe the fact of divine election and miss the fact that it is unto holiness: *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Ephesians 1:4.* Likewise, the preaching of predestination is strong meat, and while being acknowledged, the aim of conformity to Christ is missed. O that we would even more ask of Christ the Holy Spirit to enable the preaching of the whole counsel of God and that holiness would be the result.

A little child may not be able to digest solid food, but he observes his parents consuming it. Perhaps he hears their comments on how good it is and senses the pleasure they have in partaking of it. In time he will begin to reach for what they are eating and soon realize what they are tasting. In preaching the Trinity, the Amazing Grace of God, the Majesty of God and His sovereignty and all that pertains to the Cross of Christ, the glory of God in the face of Christ, may we do so with undergirding and empowering of the Holy Spirit and may praise be detected in every word we declare of the greatness of our God through Christ Jesus our Lord. And, may our prayer be that growth in praise of the Worthy One be found across the land. *bhs*

A Beeline to the Cross

One great preacher who proclaimed Christ crucified with unequalled success was the nineteenth-century British minister Charles Haddon Spurgeon. This “Prince of Preachers” believed that Christ must be the centerpiece of every sermon. Whatever his passage, Spurgeon announced, “I take my text and make a beeline to the cross.” In other words, every time he stepped into the pulpit, he was relentless to set his unwavering focus upon Christ and Him crucified. A sermon without Christ, Spurgeon insisted, is a graceless sermon. Such a sermon, he maintained, has no good news to declare: A sermon without Christ, it is an awful, a horrible thing. It is an empty well; it

is a cloud without rain; it is a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots. It is an abominable thing to give men stones for bread and scorpions for eggs, yet they do so who preach not Jesus. A sermon without Christ! As well talk of a loaf of bread without any flour in it. How can it feed the soul? Men die and perish because Christ is not there. —Steven Lawson, *The kind of Preaching God Blesses*

THE GENUINE JOY OF THE LORD

The he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and set portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. —Nehemiah 8:10 We are missing the mark about Christian victory and the life of joy in our Savior. We ought to be standing straight and praising our God! I must agree with the psalmist that the joy of the Lord is the strength of His people. I do believe that the sad world is attracted to spiritual sunshine—the genuine thing, that is. Some churches train their greeters and ushers to smile, showing as many teeth as possible. But I can sense that kind of display, and when I am greeted by a person who is smiling because he or she has been trained to smile, I know I am shaking the flipper of a trained seal. When the warmth and joy of the Holy Spirit are in a congregation, however, and the folks are spontaneously joyful, the result is a wonderful influence upon others. I have said it a hundred times: The reason we have to search for so many things to cheer us up is the fact that we are not really joyful and contentedly happy within.... But we are Christians, and Christians have every right to be the happiest people in the world.

Lord Jesus, help me today to experience the joy of the Lord. I claim that joy as mine, even in the midst of heavy responsibilities. I'm going to rest in this joy as my strength today, and praise You for it! Amen —A. W. Tozer. *Tozer on Christian Leadership*

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT

As you exercise your gifts, your preaching [I would add any form of witness] will develop on its own. And it will be a natural formation, rather than a synthetic product. If you are too concerned about matters of style, it will handicap your preaching. I cannot say this enough. Preaching is not about the preacher. It is about the royal message that we preach. You will have a car accident if you are preoccupied with what you see in the vanity mirror. Pay attention to the road. Stay in your lane. Focus on getting to your final destination. —H. B. Charles, *On Preaching*

BE ASSURED THAT RELIGION THAT COSTS NOTHING IS WORTH NOTHING—AND ACCOMPLISHES NOTHING. RELIGION THAT COSTS YOU NEITHER TIME NOR THOUGHT, NOR SELF-DENIAL, NOR SACRIFICE, NOR PRAYER, NOR SUFFERING, NOR OPPOSITION, NOR PERSECUTION, NOR CONFLICT, WILL BE A RELIGION THAT WILL NEVER SAVE YOUR SOUL. IT IS A RELIGION THAT WILL GIVE YOU NO COMFORT IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY. IT IS A RELIGION THAT WILL GIVE YOU NO PEACE IN THE DAY OF YOUR DEATH. —STEVEN LAWSON