

We all profess that we are bound for Heaven, immortality and glory. But do we have any evidence that we really intend to go there--if all our thoughts are consumed about the trifles of this world, which we must leave behind us--and have only occasional thoughts of things above? – John Owen

"If then you were raised with Christ--seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above--not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears--then you also will appear with Him in glory!" Colossians 3:1-4

### BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbids the taking away our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereto. (Gen. 4:10,11; 9:6; Matt. 5:21-26)

Q. 76. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: [branthsj@msn.com](mailto:branthsj@msn.com)

Website: [www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com](http://www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com)

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM– In Richwood

#### Services:

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. 36

September 9, 2018

---

---

### WITHOUT A CAUSE

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Romans 3:23-24*

We live in a land where there is an entitlement mentality. The use of the term evokes thoughts of social welfare programs that are providing a living for many. Certainly, there are situations where it seems that there is no other solution to poverty and child welfare. The issue lies in the fact that many believe that it is something owed to them. The attitude is not limited to these situations; it is found in the workplace as well. Many, contracting with an employer for a wage, often make demands that far exceed the value of services rendered and lacks personal commitment to quality. Such would certainly rebel at the parable of our Lord in which the eleventh-hour laborer was paid the same as the one who had toiled all day.

It is to be feared that this way of thinking appears in religion as well. Thoughts of grace and mercy are being redefined, if not completely pushed aside. Somehow an image of God has appeared wherein He is obligated to men based on what they do or the terms they dictate. Perhaps we should emphasize the term “image” in that the Living God has never subjected Himself to human terms. Such thoughts, in the hands of men, will invariably point to the merits of men and so salvation is pictured as having come with a minimal appearance of righteousness and the love for God in Christ. Many obituaries and funeral orations are filled with glowing descriptions of human merit with no reference to the grace of God. In fact, many such are represented as

having entered Heaven based on just being a relatively good person.

The concept of the freeness of salvation with many has been reduced to just that – a religious “freebie.” Men love that which is free or seems so. That is, it didn’t cost them anything. It is not uncommon to hear men brag about that which cost them nothing. Things coming in that way are not valued by them to the degree that costly items might be.

Perhaps, entitlement thinking in religion has emerged because there is no revelation to them of what they do deserve from God. In the interest of attracting the crowds are of easing one’s thinking about the severity of our God (Who spared not His own Son) such is replaced by a socially acceptable gospel which is not the Gospel at all. Their approach to God is no more than a self-willed expression of goodwill. Minimal demands for evidence (fruits meet for repentance) reinforce the idea of free. In their minds, God owes them an eternity of bliss in His holy presence because they met some human definition of approach to God.

So, has come the misplaced thoughts declared in the text. Many years ago, it was sweetly revealed to me that the same word translated “freely” in the KJV text here is elsewhere translated as “without a cause.” See John 15:25. There it is declared of Christ Jesus that He was “hated without a cause.” In applying that thought here we have that the wonderful gift of justification has come to those

in whom there is no moving cause to bring it about. They are discovered as depraved and with nothing about them to recommend them to the favor of God. In fact, there is every reason to do just the opposite. It is true that salvation comes at no cost to us. But, it did not come without a cost to Christ. We are found morally and spiritually bankrupt; In Him are all the riches of grace and mercy and the cause of our justification before God is realized in all that His life, suffering, death, and resurrection entailed.

It is important that we understand that what came to us without money and without price, nevertheless has great cost to those receiving it. *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33.*

Our Lord taught this to his disciples. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Matthew 10:8.* Again, the word “freely” is the same as that used in our text and John 15:25. Surely, they understood, even at that early stage of their training, that His relationship with them was not based on anything in them. So, would be their ministry then and in the years to come. Likewise, humbled by this knowledge of ourselves, we would bear witness to all without looking for a cause in them.

We read the words of our Lord, *But this*

*cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. John 15:25.* While there is a distinct reference to Israel in that statement, the matter of human depravity and the rejection of Christ is evident in all. While true salvation comes without a cause in us, the hatred of Christ is because of what it found in men. There is to be discovered in Him absolutely nothing that should provoke hatred. He is the Son of God and God the Son and He is the man Christ Jesus. As a man He was the absolute that God required in those who would dwell with Him forever. He will accept nothing less. There truly was no cause for their hatred in Him – it was all in them. It was because of what was not in Him, that is sin, that they hated Him. It was a provocation that light shined in darkness. They did not comprehend it, but they knew it was there and they were exposed by it.

Those who know the Lord praise the God of all grace that a cause is now discovered in them that would have them to be in His presence forever. Having loved them eternally, they are brought at last, having been conformed to the image of Christ Jesus our Lord, and with Christ in them, the hope of glory. They are freely justified and have the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ. And so, shall we ever be with the Lord. *bhs*

---

An Obsession with Pragmatism Horton writes, “The church in America today is so obsessed with being practical, relevant, helpful, successful, and even well-liked that it mirrors the world itself. Aside from the packaging, there is nothing that cannot be found in most churches today that could not be satisfied by any number of secular programs and self-help groups.” He calls such popular religion Christless Christianity. Horton further explains, “The focus still seems to be on us and our activity rather than on God and His work in Jesus Christ.” Here, Jesus is a coach with a good game plan for our victory rather than a Savior who has already achieved it for us. Salvation is more a matter of having our best life now than being saved from God’s judgment by God Himself. Sound familiar? In short, both Barnhouse and Horton warn of a Christianity without Christ. Barnhouse feared such an alternative gospel was coming. Horton, regrettably, asserts that it is now here. –S. Lawson, *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses*

From J. I. Packer in *Rediscovering Holiness*

In New Testament salvation, Jesus Christ the Savior, who is both God and man (John 1:14; Col. 1:13-20; 2:9), is the key figure. Salvation is through Him, in the sense that our forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, pardon, acceptance, access, standing, and fellowship with God (all these terms are used<sup>3</sup>) rest on His death as a sacrifice for our sins—a sacrifice guaranteeing that believers will never come into condemnation, nor be deprived of the communion with the Father and the Son that is now theirs (John 5:24; Rom. 8:32-39).

Salvation is also in Him, in the double sense that we are both in solidarity with Him as our representative head, who once suffered as our sin-bearer, and now intercedes on our behalf, and are also in vital and vitalizing union with Him by faith through the Holy Spirit. Thus He becomes truly our life-giver, who animates us for holiness in a way to which we were strangers before (see Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-10; 4:20-24; Col. 1:27; 3:4). Natural life is supernaturalized as the Holy Spirit makes Christ present to us, and reproduces in us the God-oriented desires, aims, attitudes, and behavior patterns that were seen in Christ's own perfect humanity when He was on earth. All Christians who can recall their life before they were converted can point to specific ways in which their mindset in Christ has now become different from what it was before.

---

### God's Plan for Martyrs

They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. (Revelation 6:11)

For almost three hundred years, Christianity grew in soil that was wet with the blood of the martyrs.

Until the Emperor Trajan (about AD 98), persecution was permitted but not legal. From Trajan to Decius (about AD 250), persecution was legal. From Decius, who hated the Christians and feared their impact on his reforms, until the first edict of toleration in 311, the persecution was not only legal but widespread and general.

One writer described the situation in this third period:

Horror spread everywhere through the congregations; and the number of lapsi [the ones who renounced their faith when threatened] . . . was enormous. There was no lack, however, of such as remained firm, and suffered martyrdom rather than yielding; and, as the persecution grew wider and more intense, the enthusiasm of the Christians and their power of resistance grew stronger and stronger.>

So, for three hundred years, to be a Christian was an act of immense risk to your life and possessions and family. It was a test of what you loved more. And at the extremity of that test was martyrdom.

And above that martyrdom was a sovereign God who said there is an appointed number of martyrs. They have a special role to play in planting and empowering the church. They have a special role to play in shutting the mouth of Satan, who constantly says that the people of God serve him only because life goes better. That's the point of Job 1:9–11.

Martyrdom is not something accidental. It is not taking God off guard. It is not unexpected. And it is emphatically not a strategic defeat for the cause of Christ.

It may look like defeat. But it is part of a plan in heaven that no human strategist would ever conceive or could ever design. And this plan will triumph for all those who endure to the end by faith in God's all-sufficient grace.

--John Piper in *Future Grace*