

Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

There is no record that He uttered a single word of public ministry until He received a special endowment of the Holy Spirit that, among other things, equipped Him to speak as God's authoritative prophet, as well as setting Him apart and sustaining Him so that He finally, by the same "eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14).

Albert Martin

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 77. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2; 2 Tim. 2:22; Matt. 5:28; 1 Peter 3:2)

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions. (Matt. 5:28-32; Job 31:1; Eph. 5:3,4; Rom. 13:13; Col. 4:6)

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

Website: 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. 37

September 16, 2018

SEEING THE UNSEEN

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

An old adage states that “things are not always as they seem.” Certainly, this is often true of those things seen with the natural eye and subjected to discernment by the natural mind. Things beheld as we are looking to Jesus are what they seem to be and are cause for confidence and rejoicing in those beholding Him through eyes of faith. It is impossible that these things are open to the natural eye and neither is there an explanation for what they observe in true believers. Yet, it is this witness that the Spirit is often pleased to use in bringing light and life to those being born again.

The transition from the rigors of this present world to consciousness of the glory in which we share and will share forever is presented to us in this text. Furthermore, they are seen as mutually contributory. There are some things never considered by the world. Affliction is depicted as working in the interest of the sufferer in a special way. It is a stretch for us to consider affliction and the “exceeding weight of glory” in the same context. But, this is exactly what Paul does in defending his ministry and explaining his own suffering. We understand from this that Paul saw his suffering as a divinely appointed experience and so to be acknowledged as the Lord’s will.

We would be careful at this point not to minimize the pain and experience of suffering. This is especially true if we are relatively free from suffering ourselves. Paul presents some

severe cases of suffering that he had personally endured and was perhaps enduring at the time. But, he characterizes them as “light afflictions.” Simon Kistemaker (Bakers New Testament Commentary) translates the passage in this way, “For our affliction, which is temporary and trifling, is working...” In either case, the comparison is not being made to earthly things and earthly means of endurance. It is the comparison to the eternal that makes any suffering here seem light by eternal measures. Paul would have us to imagine pain that reached the same extent as does the weight of glory which is ours in Christ.

This raises two questions. First why do we suffer? And, how do we suffer? The answer to both is realized in Paul’s own example. Obviously, in his case he was suffering because of the Gospel. We are not sure if there were afflictions not related to his ministry. It is enough for us to know that sin entered the world and pain and suffering came as a result. But, then we are reminded of the fact that the Lord makes it all to work for the good to those who are the called according to His purpose. As to the second question it is answered in v. 18. We suffer (in any case) “while seeing the unseen.” While we are looking at the things that are not seen, the afflictions of this world are working for us. And, the reproaches of Christ have prevailed over all.

The thought of seeing the unseen appears

contradictory at first reading. How can such things be? But, then we are reminded of the vistas opened to us by the gift of faith and it makes perfect spiritual sense to all who are looking. Catherine Hankey captured the thought well in writing the much-loved hymn, "I love to tell the story of unseen things above, Of Jesus and His Glory, Of Jesus and His love..."

The writer of Hebrews encourages a look beyond the things that are seen and rather reminded us that: *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Hebrews 2:8-9.* In Hebrews 11, we are pointed to the definition of faith: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1.* In Hebrews 11:3 we are told that things that are seen were made by things we do not see. Of Moses it is written: *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Hebrews 11:27.* It would seem that the exhortation to "run with patience the race that is set before us" suggests

difficulty and opposition. In a similar manner as our text we are urged to pursue our goal while "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." (Heb. 12:3).

Peter wrote to persecuted and suffering people and reminded them of the trial of their faith and lovingly added concerning our Lord, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 1 Peter 1:8.* Thus, our hearts, by faith are enabled to embrace our Blessed Lord and experience joy not understood by those of this world. John likewise points us to that which is unseen but known. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2.*

Any state we are in short of our eternal home may be characterized as suffering and will be as we are driven to look on the things not seen. As we contemplate the unseen things herein referenced and so much more, may we be aware that all of the difficulties relating to the flesh are, in fact, working for us an eternal weight of glory – and these things "redound to the glory of God." *bhs*

What passes for preaching in many of today's pulpits is little more than sermonettes for Christianettes. No doubt you know exactly the kind of preaching to which I am referring—20-minute pep talks filled with shallow clichés, self-help snippets, and bumper-sticker slogans. Worse than their superficial delivery, though, is their shallow doctrine. Such performances are therapeutic, but rarely theological. They are amusing, but not arresting—clever, but not converting. Their anemic message is so empty that in no way do they declare the biblical text listed in the worship program. Soul-starved listeners are left to ask, "Is this all there is?" Such spiritual junk food, sadly, has become the main entrée for many emaciated congregations. The result is that countless churches are left weak, worldly, and worse, unconverted. When preaching sinks to the low level of being little more than trendy talks about temporal trivialities, the spiritual life of the congregation is in triage. The people stand in desperate need of being rushed to the emergency room and put on life support. –Steven Lawson

From *On Preaching* by H. B. Charles, Jr.

The previous century saw the battle for the Bible waged in the church. Faithful Christians took a stand to defend the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Yet the battle for the credibility of Scripture continues. The battlefield is no longer biblical inspiration. It is now a fight over the sufficiency of Scripture. There are many pastors and churches that would readily affirm the Bible is the Word of God. But they turn to everything but Scripture to reach the lost, disciple the saints, lead the church, counsel the troubled, and impact the culture. We lack a true confidence in the Word of God. We almost apologize for it, constantly seeking to "make it relevant." But if Scripture is not inherently relevant, you cannot make it so. Preaching through a book of the Bible can demonstrate the fundamental relevance of Scripture to your congregation as you tackle neglected texts that teach life-changing truths.

Al Mohler in *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down*

In Ecclesiastes 5:2, Solomon connected our understanding of the transcendence of God to the proper practice of prayer. He wrote, "Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few." Our knowledge of God's transcendence should shape our prayers by reminding us that prayer is a humble and reverent enterprise. This is why I believe that one of the most helpful things to do in prayer is to pray the Scriptures. In this way, we can make sure that God's words are many and that our words are comparatively few.

Thomas Boston on Heaven:

(1.) Of the Bible-heaven, that heaven described in the Old and New Testaments. Is not that heaven a lifting up in due time? But, how shall you be lifted up that are never well got down? Where will your tears be to be wiped away? What place will there be for your triumph, who will not fight the good fight? How can it be a rest to you who cannot submit to labor? (2.) Of the saints' heaven. "And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This answers the question about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints with them there. They were brought down to the dust by humbling circumstances, and out of these they came before the throne. How can you ever think to be lifted up with them with whom you cannot think to be brought down? (3.) Of Christ's heaven. "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God " Oh! Consider how the Forerunner made His way. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And lay your account with it that if you get where He is you must go there as He went. "And He said, If any man win come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Sinner, thou thinkest, that because thy sins and infirmities, I cannot save thy soul; but behold My Son is by me, and upon Him I look, and not on thee, and shall deal with thee according as I am pleased with Him. --John Bunyan