

"Never will man pray as he ought unless the Master will guide both his mouth and his heart." -John Calvin

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

IX. Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel, that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

II Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; I Peter 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:16; I John 4:19; II Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14; Ex. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; II Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36; I Cor. 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; Rom. 4:16; Col. 3:12; I Cor. 3:5-7; I Cor. 15:10; I Peter 5:10; Acts 1:24; I Thess. 2:13; I Peter 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; I Thess. 2:12; II Tim. 2:10; I Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; I Thess 1:4-10; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29; II Peter 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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

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GLORIOUS GRACE AND ACCEPTANCE

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Ephesians 1:6-7

One of the proudest statements men ever make is “I accepted Jesus as my Savior.” If it could be understood as “I embraced as true that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God and that He is God manifest in the flesh and trusted in His mercy,” it would be well. Most such declarations are uttered in the sense that one thought about it and came to a decision based on what seemed like a good idea. Then they pushed the magic button. The profession of the songwriter did not leave out an essential element: “Then I repented of my sin and gained the victory.” Repentance is conspicuously absent from man-made professions and is not a consideration then nor will it be afterward.

But they are doing what preachers are teaching them to do – approve of God. Such a plea to accept is simply not the language of Scripture. It is “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” Or, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Men are taught to think of God’s dependence on them to accomplish His will and purpose. They would surely deny it confronted with that thought but if God desires it and can’t have it unless the object of plea allows it or accepts it then man is in control. Such a thought is unacceptable to say the least.

The question of acceptance lies with God. What would be the effect if, instead of the typical Arminian “beg session,” the preacher would present the Gospel and then bid his hearers to flee to Christ, beg for mercy and pray that He will accept them.” To think in any other

terms would be to presume upon God and His glorious grace.

Our text declares the purpose of God – the adoption of children. It further declares the means whereby His purpose is accomplished. The origin and the end of salvation are assured to us with the simple phrase, “Having predestinated us...” Of all the Scofield footnotes I have read (I was once a devotee), I have remembered only one. He rightly defined predestination as “That effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass.” The aim of that predestination here is to bring the objects of His affection into a familial relationship with Himself. That means no less than likeness to Christ and full identity with Him. Not only does the grace of God bring us into full standing, but also into same perfection as Christ – we are accepted!

We continue in this longest of Paul’s sentences and connect the ordained praise of God with His action. Glory and praise are ever the objectives of God and those whom He gloriously saves. From the prophet we read: *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. Isaiah 43:21.* In the same book it is further declared: *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

Isaiah 61:3. And Paul describes the work of grace thusly, *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:11.* Praise might be defined as the act of commendation wherein meritorious things are recognized as such. The child of God would carry that to where dictionaries would fear to tread – we acknowledge the greatness of the work in us and by virtue of what He has done we are enabled to be drawn into the wonder of His majesty and beauty and therefore to praise Him as He is. What glorious grace indeed.

Praise is that which comes from all the redeemed. It is the language of the observing angels. It is ultimately that He alone is worthy. It will be the theme of our eternal communication with our God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is glorious grace. John Gill wrote “...the glory of God is the supreme end in all that He does.” Fallen man, in his foolish pride, has the same end. When declared, it is unacceptable with God and men. It is obvious that people are offended at braggarts because they are hypocrites. God is perfect and knows it and to declare it is consistent with both the true revelation of Himself and the assurances to His people.

Marvin Vincent wrote that “The grace of God is more than mere favor. The divine character is

seen in it. In praising God for what He has done we learn to praise Him for whom He is.” Vincent calls “glory” a ruling word in this epistle along with “riches” and “fulness” – we simply do not put measure or restriction on them. Grace then may be seen as an operative attribute of God – It is He that has thereby provided all that is needed and has caused it to be applied and has brought us to see it as such.

Thus, it is He that has made us “accepted in the Beloved” and not we ourselves. All are subject to divine approval or rejection. This goes beyond moral approval. It implies being honored in Christ, as Christ. This acceptance is all of God’s doing in applying the merits of Christ to us. We could never be or do such as could only be accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ and being made new by the Holy Spirit.

It is the glorious grace of God that brings us to acceptance with God and not any contingency in us. We bid men to come to Christ with the assurance that none who come repenting, seeking mercy, and believing on Him shall ever be turned away. Such will be free of presumption and will fully submit to the fact that it is of Him to accept them and that it is He that has made them acceptable. “Depth of mercy can there be Mercy still reserved for me? Can my God His wrath forbear – Me, the chief of sinners, spare.” *bhs*

If you have been freed from needing success and acclaim to feel good about yourself, you know grace has visited you.

It is an intensely human endeavor. It is the quest we all pursue. We all want to feel good about ourselves. We all want to think that we are okay. It is a fearful and anxious quest from which only grace can free you. Here’s what happens to us all—we seek horizontally for the personal rest that we are to find vertically, and it never works. Looking to others for your inner sense of well-being is pointless. First, you will never be good enough, consistently enough, to get the regular praise of others that you are seeking. You’re going to mess up. You’re bound to disappoint. You will have a bad day. You’ll lose your way. At some point, you’ll say or do things that you shouldn’t. Add to this the fact that the people around you aren’t typically interested in taking on the burden of being your personal messiah. They don’t want to live with the responsibility of having your identity

in their hands. Looking to people for your inner self-worth never works. The peace that success gives is unreliable as well. Since you are less than perfect, whatever success you are able to achieve will soon be followed by failure of some kind. Then there is the fact that the buzz of success is short-lived. It isn't long before you're searching for the next success to keep you going. That's why the reality that Jesus has become your righteousness is so precious. His grace has forever freed us from needing to prove our righteousness and our worth. So we remind ourselves every day not to search horizontally for what we've already been given vertically. "And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever" (Isa. 32:17). That righteousness is found in Christ alone.

--Paul David Tripp *New Morning Mercies*

The Awfulness of Sinning Against the Holy God

"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," Isaiah 59:2

There is grave danger in soft peddling sin against the holy and true God. What does being soft on sin prove? It proves a lack of respect for God most of all. The dishonor of the holy God shows the enormity of soft peddling sin. Sadly, to most people sin is not exceedingly sinful because they have little respect for God. Is sin such an act that it really is merely a minor infraction? A weak view of sin indicates a small view of God the Father, and a belittling view of Christ's atonement, and a dishonoring view of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration. A soft view of sin devalues the holy nature of God the Father, the impeccable life of Christ and the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Sin violates the thrice holy God! A soft view of sin is a great slander of God (Ps. 50:21). As noted a soft view of sin degrades the suffering and death of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:6).

When one considers the literature on the doctrine of sin (hamartiology) most treatments deal with sin as it relates to man's ruin and spiritual need, but the horrendous nature of sin in violating God is seldom considered. Here is an area that mankind, in his depravity, seeks to fabricate false understandings. Like the Pharisees of old they redefine or create a concept of sin that is not Biblical. For example, the Pharisees would declare an act corban, that is, money that should have been used to help their parents, they declared to be a gift to God (Mark 7:7-13). This way they kept their money, neglected their parents, but saved face; at least they thought so except when Jesus called their hand. Jesus exposed the evil of such behavior saying it made God's Word of none effect. They were rejecting the validity of the fifth commandment by their tradition. Thus their tradition became more important than God's Word. Were they really smarter than the all-knowing God?

--Dr. Ron Rumburg

"When I Look At Myself I Don't See How I Can Be Saved. But When I Look At Jesus I Don't See How I Can Be Lost." - Martin Luther

"Every man, therefore, who expects justification by works, must see to it... that he is sinless." - Charles Hodge