

When our Lord says to Nicodemus, and by extension to every one of us, “You must be born again,” He is not issuing a command but rather communicating a fact. Being born again is an experience we undergo, not one we initiate or manage. However, our Lord goes on to explain to Nicodemus that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3: 14–15). –Jeremy Walker, *Life in Christ: Becoming and Being a Disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

GADSBY’S CATECHISM

By William Gadsby, about 1800

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

Question XXXVI. Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?

Answer. Christ's exaltation consists in His rising again from the dead on the third day; in ascending up into heaven with the elect on His breast as trophies of victory; in sitting at the right hand of the Father; and in coming to judge the world at the last day, accompanied by all His holy angels, and His Bride adorned in His glory, who shall meet Him in the air at His coming; and in His sitting upon His throne of glory, to be admired and honoured by all the redeemed throng, for ever and ever.

Luke 24.1-7; Act. 1.9-11; Rom. 8.34; 1 Cor. 15.4; Eph. 1.20-23; Phil. 2.9-11; I Thess. 4. 16-18; 2 Thess. 1.10; Rev. 5.11-14 & 20.11 & 21.2-4.

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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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A SIGHT TO BEHOLD

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalms 133:1

The word “behold” appears over thirteen hundred times in the King James Version of the Bible. Quite often when a word appears that often the intensity of its meaning is diminished, and we tend to read text without the sense of importance that the word attributes to it. We are well advised to both be aware of the word, and to obey the source of its use (it is “God-breathed”) and to attribute the same importance to what follows. Here we are directed to consider “brethren” dwelling together in unity, or perhaps as a unit.

The word as used here appears over one-thousand times in the Old Testament. If we thought of overuse, we might be worn out with the declarations of the Lord in Genesis alone. This attention-getter is applied in several ways. We are especially attentive to those uses which direct our attention to the person and majesty of God. The attributes of God are set forth often and with a sense of essential application to the needs of men and we are directed to intensely consider. Therein lies our hope and our salvation. We are to behold the work of the Lord in creation and are directed to be suitably affected at the wonder of that which proceeded from nothing to that in which we live today. We are often directed to “behold” as the Lord gives an accurate and in-depth observation of the fall of man and the subsequent ruin that has been the story of fallen men. We are directed to “behold” the fact that terrible sins have been the order of the day in spite of the longsuffering and patience of God in matters demanding

judgment. We could go on in the many ways we are to behold both the Lord, His work, and the awful condition of man.

Perhaps there is a height of use attained when the lowly John the Baptist directed his disciples to “Behold the Lamb of God.” This mandate, when obeyed, imparts to believers the greatest of importance in that all the promises of God and His revelation of Himself are beheld when one truly sees Jesus.

We are likewise directed to behold the mighty works of God and thus to wonder and be amazed. It may not occur to many that we are directed to behold just such a work where brethren are found dwelling together in unity. Certainly, it is a beautiful sight to behold a congregation, enrapt together with the person of Christ Jesus our Lord, attending and submitting to the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. Such is described as both good and pleasant. If it is good, it has the divine image and superscription of on it. If it is pleasant, mutual delight is the experience of both God and men.

But we ask the question, what is the reason that we are directed to intensely consider what we are seeing? I have often heard the remark, “why can’t we all just get along.” It has appeared in family settings, in organizational meetings, and in just about any situation that needs the cooperation of the participants to function well. Sadly, such is the condition of many churches. It was so with the Corinthians as Paul, in writing to them, addressed it early. He

admonished them to “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” To the Philippians he wrote: *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Philippians 2:2.*

We are made to wonder at the floundering attempts of men to “get along.” All we need to do is look to the sad situation with our elected officials in our nation’s capital. Such bitterness as we have never seen seems to grow worse day by day. Fallen man cannot long find common cause to “get along” because eventually pride and self-seeking become more important than any other objective. We cite the condition in our country because it is ever before us. But we have long heard of church splits and similar bitterness on a smaller scale. Even the Apostles of our Lord became self-seeking and had to learn the essentials of grace that promoted the unity the Psalmist describes.

Our Lord anticipated the need of His people to avoid taking their focus away from Him. He did it by teaching and enforcing the necessity to “love one another as I have loved you.” Thus, the desired condition proceeds directly from the love of Christ to us and in us. It is a glorious outcome of the redeeming work of Christ. To endure, requires that Christ be the cause and the attraction of those so dwelling together. It is another example of the sweet savor of Christ of which Paul wrote. It is good and pleasant to God

in that the essence of His Son is everywhere evident in them and among them. “Christ is the firstborn among many Brethren!” Such a condition confirms the success and application of the redemptive work in us and from it proceeds the experience of true joy.

The two verses that follow describe the effect. The illustration of the aromatic anointing oil poured on Aaron at his consecration spoke of the anointing of the Spirit that we know in regeneration. It is permeating and sensed by all and is so sensed by the Lord Himself. It is like the dews from the higher Mt. Hermon that descended upon Mt. Zion. We are thereby reminded of the place of blessing and the presence of the Lord there with His people. The Old Testament prophet posed the all-important question: *Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3.* The precious point of agreement here is Christ Jesus our Lord. John comforts us with the well-known, *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 1 John 3:14.*

As we come together in our assemblies may we be aware that the affection that we sense in brothers and sisters of like precious faith for the Lord and the affection we feel for each other is not of this world. It is a miracle of the grace of God. It is truly “Something to Behold.” It behooves us to enjoy it and to so be exhorted to see the Lord in the midst. *bhs*

The first type of prayer Jesus condemned is hypocritical prayer. The term hypocrisy in the New Testament is drawn from the culture of the day, where a hypocrite was one who engaged in drama, in the theater. He was play-acting. What he was doing was not real. So the original meaning of the term had nothing to do with insincerity—we don’t charge actors today with being hypocrites or insincere simply because they’re playing a role that does not correspond to their real lives. But Jesus applied the word to people who were going through the motions of prayer, making a great external show of piety, but whose real state did not match this outward show. Their piety was a sham; it was phony and fraudulent. It was a fake form of godliness, one that had been mastered by the Pharisees. Prayer, for them, was a business. Prayer was something that was expected from people in their positions, so they made a public display of their piety. --R. C. Sproul

DIFFERING feelings divide ACCORDING to the well-worn fable, two persons who are totally different in their pursuits, cannot live well together: the fuller and the charcoal-burner were obliged to part; for whatever the fuller had made white, the collier had blackened with his finger. If differing pursuits divide, much more will differing feelings upon a vital point. It is Jesus, whom Jehovah likes to honour; and if you will not trust even Jesus with your soul's salvation, you grieve the heart of God, and He can have no pleasure in you. —C. H. Spurgeon, *Barbed Arrows*

That all the disciples were speaking boldly in the name of Jesus shouldn't surprise us in Acts 4, because Acts 2 tells us to expect it. When the Holy Spirit descends so strikingly on the assembled disciples, he descends upon them all, and they all start declaring "the mighty works of God", as verse 11 puts it. This, says Peter, is only what the prophet Joel said would happen. In the "last days", says Joel, when God's Spirit was poured out on all flesh, everyone would prophesy—the young, the old, men and women, all the way down to the servants of the household—all would declare the word of the Lord (Acts 2:16-18). All would testify to Jesus, because the "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10). This pattern continues throughout the New Testament. There are of course leaders, teachers, elders, overseers, pastors and evangelists—people who have leading roles and responsibilities in declaring God's word and shepherding his people—but alongside these, there is a constant stream of references to the 'word ministry' of each and every Christian. Speaking God's word for the growth of the vine is the work not of the few but of the many. Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine*

Food, rightly received, functions as a constant reminder of the greatness of God and our need for his goodness and provision. Unlike us, God will never grow hungry or need sustenance. Humans on the other hand are in need of constant provision. God made us this way so that we would rely on his providence and kindness, regularly remembering that we are not master of our own fate—only he is. As the old hymn reminds us, "I need thee every hour." Our hunger serves as a reminder of that truth several times a day. Jesus highlights our regular dependence on God by teaching us to pray for our "daily" bread. This word shows us that we ought not pray for opulence and riches, only for the needs of the day. Further, this word teaches us to pray for our needs every day, seeking God's provision in our life hour by hour. In sum, the word daily here teaches us to train our hearts to depend consistently on God, rather than just in times of need.

--Al Mohler, *The Prayer that Turns the World Upside Down*

Prayer is the only entryway into genuine self-knowledge. It is also the main way we experience deep change—the reordering of our loves. Prayer is how God gives us so many of the unimaginable things he has for us. Indeed, prayer makes it safe for God to give us many of the things we most desire. It is the way we know God, the way we finally treat God as God. Prayer is simply the key to everything we need to do and be in life. We must learn to pray. We have to. —Tim Keller