

If we want proof of God's love for us, then we must look first at the Cross where God offered up His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Calvary is the one objective, absolute, irrefutable proof of God's love for us. —Jerry Bridges

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 LXXIII. How many ordinances has Christ instituted in His church?

Answer. Two, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Matt 3.15 & 28.19; Mark 1.9-11; Luke 22.15-20; Acts 9.18; 1 Cor. 11.23-26.

Question LXXXIV. What is Baptism?

Answer. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the person baptized a sign of his fellowship with Him in His death, burial and resurrection; of his death unto sin, wrath and the law, and all other lords; of his resurrection unto life, and of his giving up himself unto God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

Rom. 6.3-5; Gal. 3.27; Col. 2.11-13 & 3.1-3; 1 Pet. 3.21..

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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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CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." 1 Corinthians 15:20

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Corinthians 15:23

When the Apostles were asked who they believed the Lord was, Peter quickly responded with "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But, at the report from the women that Jesus had risen from the dead the response was one of doubt: "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Luke 24:11. The Lord had told them what was going to happen. They had acted in confidence toward Him and His words through most of the ministry that He shared with them but the most crucial event of all was met with doubt. They had witnessed Him raising others from the dead and yet they could not believe that He had risen.

Lest we be too critical of the reaction of these men, we would put ourselves in their place. Despite seeing the miracles, human nature prevailed and warred against faith at this point. We cannot picture ourselves dead and we have never seen one emerge from death. I have witnessed the burial of many in my lifetime and not one has ever risen. We are simply not able to conceive of either death or resurrection from the dead. Left to themselves the thought of Him being alive was far from them.

The doctrine of resurrection has always been a point of contention for the world. The men of Athens listened intently to Paul for some time. But at the mention of the resurrection of the dead and the fact that God had raised Jesus from the dead, they left him. Paul had detected that there were those at Corinth that were

questioning the resurrection of the dead. Whether they questioned the resurrection of Christ is not mentioned, but it is certain that they doubted the resurrection of the saints.

Paul would proceed with the argument that in the absence of the resurrection of the dead all else was meaningless. It must all begin with the resurrection of Christ and so to deny the resurrection of the dead was to deny the resurrection of Christ. Faith was found to be vain. They were yet in their sins, preaching would have no objective, there was no hope for those who had gone before and there would be no hope for the future of any. All that would be left would be misery.

Having laid out the hopelessness and futility of such a concept in vv. 12-19, Paul turns to the positive and precious declaration that rejoices the hearts of all true believers. "But now is Christ risen from the dead..." All that would be taken away if it were not true is confirmed with emphasis on these words. Faith does lay hold on Christ and sees the end result in personal resurrection that is assured by the fact that He is the firstfruits. We recognize the concept from the Old Testament teaching wherein we understand that the first of the flocks, the crops and all the fruitfulness of the Land belonged to the Lord. The significance was twofold. First, we note that the first ripe of the fruit is typically the best. But, secondly, we would observe that the coming of the firstfruits was an assurance of

that which was to come. So, in seeing Christ as the firstfruits we are assured of our own resurrection and the expectation of all that follows. In witnessing the life of Christ in victory over death, we are made to experience new life in Him. It is the same life with which He arose. It bears the same characteristics: "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Romans 11:16.

In verse 20, Paul gives assurance concerning those who have died in the faith. The resurrection of Christ confirms the choice of God in them. But we, likewise, are given assurance that it will be in order. Verse 23 begins with Christ as the firstfruits and afterward we that are His at His coming. Such assurance is confirmed in the narrative of His resurrection, the confirmations of Paul at the beginning of the chapter (see vv. 1-8), and the faith of God's elect which facilitates the "Now" of verse 20. We experience Christ in us, the hope of glory.

At this season of the year men ritualize and engage in celebrations of their own making. True believers are always in the way of celebrating and experiencing the resurrection of Christ. We may rejoice that attention is drawn to the resurrection and we would seize the opportunity to bring true biblical perspective to the shallow treatments that men are given to employ. We would rather point them to the awfulness of sin and the reason of the sufferings

of Christ and of the glory that was to follow. This we would do in attempting to show the glory of the resurrection and its victory over the ruin of men in sin and death. Furthermore, we would have all to see and consider that this was a man who thus suffered. He was the substitute of God's designation. He had to suffer having been made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We are made to see the love of Christ for His own in what He knowingly endured so that He might raise them from the dead and so have them to be forever with Him in their resurrected bodies.

Paul's aim was that these powerful words of encouragement might be claimed as words of life forevermore. He would counter the false claims of men who would deny this most glorious truth. He would encourage us with regards to those who have gone before. He would encourage us who wait and so have us delivered from the fear of death. He would do so in such a way as to set Christ before us with our interest lodged deeply in His heart — He proved His love and rose to make it effectual. He will prevail: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18. Now is Christ risen! "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Acts 2:24. O that we might know the power of His resurrection. *bhs*

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."—Micah vii. 18, 19

My soul! hast thou ever duly and thoroughly pondered over the several interesting volumes of grace recorded in this glorious scripture? If not, make them the subject of this evening's, song. Let every chapter contained in them, pass and re-pass in review before thee, and see whether, in the close of the whole, the astonishment of the man of God is not thine also; crying out, "Who is a God like our God? a God in Christ, gracious

and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!" And, first, "He pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his people." Yes; in Jesus, the Son of his love, he hath done all this, and more than this, for he hath taken the objects of his clemency into favour. Secondly, the cause of all these unspeakable felicities is assigned; "because he delighteth in mercy." It is from himself, and his own free sovereign grace, that these blessings flow. Not what the highly-favoured objects merit, but what grace can do for them. Not what claims they have to his bounty, but how his grace can best be magnified in their salvation. Sweet and precious consideration to the breast of every poor sinner! My soul! I hope that thou canst truly participate in the delightful thought. Thirdly, he that delighteth in mercy, will delight to "turn again" to his people. He will turn their hearts to himself, and then his returns to them will sweetly follow, to their apprehension, and to their joy. "Fourthly, he will not only pardon their iniquity, but "he will subdue their iniquities: not only take away the guilt of sin, but also destroy the dominion of sin; not only cast their sins behind his back, but "cast them into the depths of the sea:" and so effectually shall they be lost, that if the sin of Judah be sought for, it shall not be found. The depths of the sea, that fountain which God hath opened in the Redeemer's blood, shall more completely bury them, than the congregated waters of the ocean cover any mountain or hill cast into them. Say now, my soul! dost thou not look up to a God in Christ, and cry out, with the prophet, in the same holy rapture and astonishment, "Who is a God like unto thee?" –Robert Hawker

But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. — Romans 10:6–10 This is arguably one of the most eloquent and important passages in the Scriptures regarding what a person must do to be saved.¹ Throughout the centuries of Christianity, it has served as a source of comfort for all who believe and as a wall of defense against the almost constant barrage of every false teaching that would seek to mingle works with faith as the means of salvation. A person does not win salvation by any valiant deed or noble pilgrimage, but by calling upon the name of the Lord in faith.

--Paul Washer

THE DEEPEST THINGS THAT I HAVE LEARNED IN MY OWN LIFE HAVE COME FROM THE DEEPEST SUFFERING. AND OUT OF THE DEEPEST WATERS AND THE HOTTEST FIRES HAVE COME THE DEEPEST THINGS THAT I KNOW ABOUT GOD. –ELISABETH ELLIOT

*He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay.
Matthew 28:6*