

"[If Jesus died for all men]...why then, are not all freed from the punishment of all their sins? You will say, "Because of their unbelief; they will not believe." But his unbelief, it is sin, or not? If not, why should they be punished for it? If it be, then Christ underwent the punishment due to it. If so, then what must than hinder them more than their other sins for which he died from partaking of the fruit of his death? If he did not, then he did not die for all their sins." -John Owen



KEACH'S CATECHISM – Benjamin Keach 1640 - 1704

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

Q. 51. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me."

(Exodus 20:3)

Q. 52. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify Him accordingly.

(Joshua 24:15; 1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17; Ps. 29:2; Matt. 4:10)

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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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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RESPECT OF PERSONS

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. James 2:1

Having written of faith and identity with Christ in a more personal way, James proceeds in the second chapter to address practical issues in the life of true believers. The foundation of life has been laid – *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:18.* The trial of faith is seen as having positive benefit to the possessor. This thought is assumed as James begins to use specific instances of the application of faith in relationship to others. So, when he says “...have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ...” the question is raised as to the manner in which such faith is possessed.

Possession of faith may be considered in two ways. First it may be addressed in terms of what is believed. Thus, we consider the Gospel and the whole body of truth as it relates to Christ and His finished work. Secondly, we address the thought of “faith in Christ,” or the ability to believe on Him for our salvation. Both would reflect on what James addresses in this passage. That is, it would be inconsistent to claim a body of beliefs that pertained to grace and salvation but discriminated against certain persons. Furthermore, in believing “in Christ” we confess that we are unworthy in the strongest sense of the word.

James tends to be very explicit in setting forth examples and the one here is no exception. Having respect of persons is a character trait of the “old nature.” Fallen man tends to seek advantage through his associations with others. Therefore, that person

who seems to be of low degree is to be avoided if such association might affect one’s reputation. Likewise, men seek the companionship of those who appear wealthy, prosperous and well received by the world. To show such difference is totally inconsistent with the mandate to “condescend to men of low estate.” See Romans 12:16.

Of even greater importance is the comparison that is drawn to Christ Himself. In that it is the “faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory...” we should expect to see His character in the practice of faith. In verse five of this chapter James reminds us that the chosen of God are the poor of this world. We take that in the same sense that we think of “Blessed are the poor in spirit...” This was a hard lesson for Peter when he was sent to the house of Cornelius who was a Gentile and considered very low by the Jews. Peter’s observation is well known: *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: Acts 10:34.* This came as he witnessed the evidences of salvation in them in the same manner that he had seen it with the Jews. How easily the judgments of this world creep into the realm of Christian practice. Else, why would James have issued this warning? If then, God is no respecter of persons then neither should we be. In promoting true fellowship Paul wrote: *For there is no respect of persons with God. Romans 2:11.*

While there is a great example that follows in this chapter in James, there is no greater

example than that of Christ. Paul writes of Him in Philippians 2 as to the position He took in going to the Cross. Four important things come to light there and serve to amplify the directive in James. Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh. He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." There is no higher status to be enjoyed by any. This emphasis is brought to bear that we might see the contrast made with Him. So it behooves us to consider the degree of His condescension in that light. Secondly, we note that He "made Himself of no reputation." What He did was voluntary. He took the place of the servant rather than a place of prominence. He did so for the specific purpose of taking the position of the lowest of men yet without sin. He was in the likeness of men and we learn soon that this was so He could suffer in the stead of men. Thirdly, as a man He humbled Himself. He stripped Himself of all dignity and allowed Himself to be treated with contempt by the likes of those for whom He came to die. The fourth thing is the obedience of Christ and where it took Him. He obeyed unto death. This was no ordinary death. His death proceeded from

human suffering to the receiving unto Himself the wrath of God on His very soul.

All of these things were required of Him because they were deserved by we who know Him. Thus, there is more to it than the mere idea that it doesn't seem right to have respect of persons. While we certainly cannot be partakers of their sins, we are in the same condemnation as they except for the grace of God. To show such respect of persons would be to forget the manner of our own salvation. Knowing the grace of God blots out distinctions among men. We see them not in terms of earthly appearances but in the same terms that He sees us. A precious Gospel message is conveyed to us in this passage. The good news is that we were not judged on the basis of our worth or even the appearance of worth. Rather, we are received through the grace and love of Christ our Lord. We were the "poor man in vile raiment." (James 2:2). True believers are ever reminded of that and they realize that their acceptance with God is because they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and have none of their own. *bhs*

The Look of Transformation.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). This "beholding" is not simply one of faith — but especially of holy ambition and resolve. As the believer contemplates the moral perfection and character of Christ as they are set forth in the Word — there is born within him a deep yearning to be conformed to His likeness and to "walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). As that yearning persists and is accompanied by earnest prayer, the Holy Spirit works in him a deeper spirit of obedience, causing him to be increasingly regulated by Christ's example and precepts, and thereby "changes" him, little by little, unto the same image. The Greek verb for "change" here is rendered "transformed" in Romans 12:2, and "transfigured" in Matthew 17:2. As the will is brought into subjection to Christ — we drink into His Spirit and become partakers of His holiness. This lifelong process will be completed when "we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2), "face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). *Arthur Pink*

BOTH APOSTLES ARE RIGHT!

(William Bacon Stevens, "Waiting and Watching!")

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?" James 2:14

The religion of Jesus Christ is made up of two parts--faith and works. Faith is the root of works. Works are the fruit of faith.

A belief, however true and pure, if it is accepted only by the intellect, and is not carried out into practice--translating the faith held by the mind, into active duties--is a barren faith, which will not be accepted by God, and which will not secure salvation.

On the other hand, works, however good, which do not spring out of faith in the Lord Jesus, but which are done merely from human and worldly motives--are of no avail before God, because "whatever is not of faith, is sin."

Thrice has James told us, "Faith without works is dead!" And just as distinctly has Paul declared, "By the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

Both apostles are right!

Works without faith--have no living root. Faith without works--has no authenticating fruit.

They are the two parts of the one tree, namely, the root and the fruit. They are the two halves of the one whole--together they make up the true Christian.

"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead!" James 2:17

A most soul-ruining sin!

(J. C. Ryle)

"I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13

It is a dreadful fact, whether we like to allow it or not--that PRIDE is one of the common sins which beset human nature. We are all born Pharisees. We all naturally think far better of ourselves than we ought. We all naturally imagine that we deserve something better than we have.

Pride is an old sin. It began in the garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve thought they had not got everything that their merits deserved.

Pride is a subtle sin. It rules and reigns in many a heart without being detected, and can even wear the garb of humility.

Pride is a most soul-ruining sin. It prevents repentance, keeps men back from Christ, checks brotherly love, and nips spiritual desires in the bud.

Let us watch against pride, and be on our guard.

Of all garments, none is so graceful, none wears so well, and none is so rare--as true humility.

"All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud--but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5