

Gospel Fruit

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. Matthew 12:33

Gospel fruit can only grow upon a gospel tree, and thus the fruits of a holy and godly life must spring out of the divine operations of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. J. C. Philpot



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. 59. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

(Exodus 20:7)

Q. 60. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.

(Ps.29:2; Deut. 32:1-4; Deut.28:58-59; Ps.111:9; Matt. 6:9, Eccles. 5:1; Ps. 138:2, Job 36:24; Rev. 15:3-4; Rev. 4:8)

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

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“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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NOT AHSAMED

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16

This verse has been quoted by many in a context of personal pride and boldness. It was not the intent of the Apostle here to do some bragging about his approach to sharing the Gospel. The obvious intent of some is to call attention to themselves in comparison to others who may not be so outspoken. While all who know the Lord should be able and willing to say so, where true humility is in evidence the attention will be drawn to the Lord and not to themselves. Indeed, many claim salvation but are embarrassed about it and are careful to declare it only in the presence of those who are likeminded. Others hesitate because they are fearful of embarrassing the one to whom they speak. Still other fear rebuke from the persons addressed. So, they manifest a vote of “no confidence” in what Paul says of the Gospel here.

The thought of not being ashamed here arises from the confidence Paul had with regard to the Gospel. If it is possible that what I say might be refuted or proven wrong I have reason to hesitate and I may, in the end, be embarrassed or ashamed. But, where there is a firm conviction of the worth and truth of what is said, one may indeed be bold without bragging. Often we hear one loudly declaring some religious fact and we are made to wonder if he is fearful of his own position. Others who calmly declare a truth with an air of confidence are far more convincing. True believers, along with Paul, know that in the end they will not be

confounded or brought to shame. They can stand in the face of rejection and ridicule, as did our Lord, because they know Him of whom they speak and they know of what He has accomplished, what He will accomplish and the unshakeable assurance that it is so. After all, the “Gospel is the power of God unto salvation...”

If we stand in doubt of that power we have reason to be hesitant or ashamed. Such was not the case with Paul. He had experienced the power of God in his own life bringing him to faith in the Gospel report of salvation in Christ alone. He had been brought to know that the power of God was able to make one a “new creature” in Christ and bearing the very nature of Christ – it had happened to him. He would speak of Christ being revealed in him (not just to him). He knew then that the work of salvation went beyond the persuasive endeavors of men. It was God’s power alone that brought salvation. Paul knew that it is not the power of preaching that brought salvation and that what many preached was not the Gospel. The mere saying of the words was not what was effectual; it was what those words declared about the work of Christ our Lord in bringing salvation. Thus, the power of God to save is declared in the Gospel. The means of salvation is declared through Christ. It is that Christ died for the sins of His people according to the Scriptures in that He was the substitute for them – the Lamb of God. It was the declaration of His victory over death and the claim of life from the dead which has

been imparted to those who believe. *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. John 5:21.*

The message of the Gospel is all about the power of God to save sinners and to preserve them to Himself forevermore. Thus the assertions of the true witness will be made without fear of contradiction and such have no need of being ashamed.

The truths of God and the Gospel in particular are received only by believers and so it is to them as it is declared here. They have fully entrusted their lives to Christ and they live in His presence and in belief of "the truth." It is true that they have an ongoing battle with their "old nature" that would be embarrassed by such bold behavior. But, true faith will prevail and with Paul they will declare the Gospel (not mere religion) with confidence. If my confidence is in what I have done or even in the fact that I believe I am sure to be ashamed. There can be no doubt where the power of God is in

operation and this is the case with the true Gospel. The good news is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners not to help them get saved or to try to save them. He accomplished what He came for and there shall never be discovered any flaw with regard to either His purpose or its outcome. The true believer will quickly confess that had he been left to himself he could have never been saved. His confidence is rested in the power of God as it is declared in the Gospel.

Elsewhere, Paul would say that boasting is excluded. (See Romans 3:27). He adds there that the reason it is excluded is faith. Many brag of what they have done for Christ as if He needed anything from them. True faith "brags" on Christ alone and what He has done for them. The absence of shame in believers begins and ends in humility as it is about His power that they bear witness; and it is in His power that they are able to do so. May we, without shame, follow the mandate of Scripture. *Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; Psalms 107:2. bhs*

The Early Churches

The primitive churches were not mere assemblies of men who agreed to meet together once or twice a week, and to subscribe for the support of an accomplished man who should on those occasions deliver lectures on religion. They were men gathered out of the world by the preaching of the cross, and formed into society for the promotion of Christ's kingdom in their own souls and in the world around them. It was not the concern of the ministers or elders only; the body of the people were interested in all that was done, and, according to their several abilities and stations, took part in it. Neither were they assemblies of heady, high-minded, contentious people, meeting together to argue on points of doctrine or discipline, and converting the worship of God into scenes of strife. They spoke the truth; but it was in love they observed discipline; but, like an army of chosen men, it was that they might attack the kingdom of Satan to greater advantage. Happy were it for our churches if we could come to a closer imitation of this model! *Andrew Fuller*

The wrath of God let loose upon His Son!

Divine holiness is best exhibited in the cross of Jesus. Not hell itself, as dreadful and eternal as is its suffering — the undying worm, the unquenchable fire, the smoke of the torment that goes up forever and ever — affords such a solemn and impressive spectacle of the holiness and justice of God in the punishment of sin — as is presented in the death of God's beloved Son!

An eminent Puritan writer thus strikingly puts it, "Not all the vials of judgment that have or shall be poured out upon this wicked world; nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience; nor the irrevocable sentence pronounced against the rebellious devils; nor the groans of the damned creatures — give such a demonstration of God's hatred of sin, as the wrath of God let loose upon His Son!"

Never did Divine holiness appear more beautiful and lovely — than at the time our Savior's countenance was most marred in the midst of His dying groans. This He Himself acknowledges in that penitential psalm, when God turned His smiling face away from Him, and thrust His sharp knife of justice into His heart, which forced that terrible cry from Him, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from saving Me, so far from the words of My groaning? Yet You are enthroned as the Holy One!"

Such an impressive view of God's holiness, the angels in heaven never before beheld — not even when they saw the non-elect spirits hurled from the heights of glory down to the bottomless pit, to be reserved in chains of darkness and woe forever!

Jesus was the innocent One, dying for the guilty ones — the holy One, dying for the sinful ones!

Divine justice, in its mission of judgment, as it swept by the cross, found the Son of God impaled upon its wood beneath the sins and the curse of His people. Upon Him, its judgment fell; on His soul, its wrath was poured out; in His heart, its flaming sword was plunged! And thus, from Him, justice exacted the full penalty of man's transgression — the last farthing of the great debt!

Go to the cross, then, my reader, and learn the holiness of God. Contemplate the dignity of Christ — His preciousness to His Father's heart — the sinlessness of His nature. And then behold

...

the sorrow of His soul;
the torture of His body;
the tragedy of His death;
the abasement;
the ignominy;
the humiliation

into the fathomless depths of which the whole transaction plunged our incarnate God!

And let me ask, standing, as you are, before this unparalleled spectacle, "Can you cherish low views of God's holiness, or light views of your own sinfulness?"

Octavius Winslow (1808 - 1878)