

"O Brother, pray; in spite of Satan, pray; spend hours in prayer; rather neglect friends than not pray; rather fast and lose breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper- and sleep too- than not pray. And we must not talk about prayer, we must pray in right earnest. The Lord is near. He comes softly while the virgins slumber." - Andrew Bonar



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. 71. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of, or doing anything against the honor and duty which belongs to every one in their several places and relations.

(Prov. 30:17; Rom. 13:7-8)

Q. 72. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve God's glory and their own good), to all such as keep this commandment.

(Eph. 6:2-3; Prov. 4:3-6; 6:20-22)

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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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POSSESSION AND PROTECTION

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4

Scriptural words of comfort and encouragement often appear as a direct reference to something that threatens either safety or peace. Such is the nature of this passage. Biblical words address spiritual issues. So it is that John here does not refer to men in general. He refers to believers here addressed as “little children.” The encouragement given is against a real and personal enemy and so it is dealt with from a personal perspective. It is to those who are of God (belong to God), and the strength to stand and overcome comes from within “you.” The tendency of men is to generalize the Word of God and adapt it to men without exception. As the nature of salvation unfolds to true believers there is, also, the realization that the meaning and application is only to those who are born of God and who know that they are the possession of God.

John was issuing a strong warning to those to whom he wrote. He would have them to know that not all things that pretend to be of the Spirit of God are of God. So he urges that they try the spirits to see if they be of God. The test of true identity is a biblical confession and representation of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Many name the name of Christ and deny that He is God manifest in the flesh. Others deny the dignity of Christ by putting Him on a level with themselves. Still others exhibit a form of Godliness but deny the power of God. This includes denying that the power to save is His and that He uses it as He wills and not as man

wills. It is denying that He is sovereign and rules exclusively over all His creation both now and forevermore. It is to confess that men are without recourse before God and therefore subject to His mercy alone.

John addresses, in particular, the fact that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Thus he declares the necessity of God “manifest in the flesh” coming into the world to identify with men and in that way to address the matter of their sin. Through His suffering and death He was touched with the feeling of our infirmity and in His resurrection He brought justification to those for whom He came to die. These are the “little children” of our text. It is through Him that true identity is certified to us and it is in Him that we are kept and Christ in us that brings peace and safety that are not to be disturbed.

The statement “you are of God” declares, of a certainty, that a true relationship with God is not one of mere cooperative association. It is much more. Paul declared that we are not our own, but that we are “bought with a price.” We are His by right of creation, but we are especially His by right of redemption. We are assured in knowing that God will protect and preserve that which belongs to Him. The endearing term “little children” suggests that we are “beloved” as John states in verse 1. It is interesting to note that the text does not say you shall overcome them; rather it declares that they (believers) have overcome them. When we realize this we are brought the more to

understand that the conquest has taken place in us already. We conclude that the victory has been claimed for us in Christ. Uncertainty terrifies. Knowing Christ assures and encourages. The enemy is greater in power than we are, but He is greater than the enemy and so we win!!

He is more than just around His people. He is in them. He is incorporated in them to the point that it is declared that Christ is our life. There is nothing figurative here. This is the very essence of salvation and this explains why so many are subject to these false prophets and the forces of evil in this world while claiming to be religious. This is why we are declared as not being of this world and that we are told that our citizenship is in Heaven and that we have been made to "sit together in Heavenly places in Christ." Such a relationship does not come to be as the result of some act of human will. It is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit whereby we are made to really be the "children of God."

So then in the face of "postmodern" teachings that would remove the absolute truths of the Bible and refer to it only as a guide

to be built upon by the ideas of men and the forces of evil that openly oppose God and His righteousness and that would seek to intimidate all that cling to God, we are enabled to stand strong. While it is wonderful to know that God is greater than them all and that God the Son has effectively conquered them all, it is even more wonderful to know that this is the same One who indwells His people. We are often called upon to face these enemies of the Gospel and the threat is very real against us. But, they shall not prevail against us. God works in us and through us and for us so that we may know victory and the peace that attends it.

"He that is in the world" is none other than Satan. But, the He that is in the true believer is the Christ of God and Champion of our salvation. How precious it is that "little children" are the overcomers in the face of all that opposes.

Make no mistake and do not presume. The power of Satan is great, but the One that is infinitely greater than Satan is in His "little children" to save and protect and assure them.

Bhs

SPIRITUAL DEATH. My dear reader, how can we close, our eyes to the solemn fact that spiritual death meets us at every turn? The world is one vast charnel house- a universal cemetery, well-near every dwelling represents a tomb, well-near every individual a corpse. This the Word of God most clearly affirms: "You has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." This is not a figure of speech, nor a flower of rhetoric, but it is the declaration of a solemn fact- the description of a real state. The natural world is in a state of spiritual death. Our Lord alludes to this- A disciple came to him and said, "Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father." What does Jesus say? "Let the dead bury their dead." That is, let those who are unconverted, or spiritually dead, perform that which is in harmony with their own nature. In John 6 our Lord refers to this truth, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, you have no life in you." Does the natural man eat the flesh of the Son of man? Does the world live on Christ? No, the natural mind hates that which is spiritual. It lives on the pleasures and pursuits of the world. It is a stranger to the blood and flesh of Christ, consequently there is no spiritual life in it. Oh, what an awful state is that of every unconverted man and woman who ponders this page! Those who live in pleasure are dead while they live. Sometimes your natural conscience seems alarmed, but the world comes in- your business, your family, your pleasures enter, and everything that did seem to have the semblance of life vanishes. You are dead to prayer, dead to faith, dead to love, dead to a life of holiness, and, your present death is but the prelude to that death that never, never dies. *Octavius Winslow*

TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD, he proclaims. He is actually a little more emphatic than that, because the Psalmist doesn't just say "the Lord" here in proper reverence: he says instead, "TASTE AND SEE THAT JEHOVAH IS GOOD!" "TASTE AND SEE THAT YAH-WEH IS GOOD!" That is: this is not God-in-Theory. This is not a system of understanding an ineffable and incomprehensible God. This is the God of Joshua, the God of Moses, and Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, and Noah. This is God who called Samuel by name and gave him explicit instruction to anoint David the King of Israel. This is God in Person, God in Fact, The God who has a living history of making promises, and keeping them.

And that's the Psalmist's trope here: Somehow, we have a God who is as real as a delicious meal. Somehow, we have to get our mouth ready to receive him. That's actually what John Calvin says about this Psalm: "the Psalmist indirectly reproves men for their dullness in not perceiving the goodness of God, which ought to be to them more than a matter of simple knowledge. By the word taste he at once shows that they are without taste; ... He, therefore, calls upon them to stir up their senses, and to bring a palate endued with some capacity of tasting, that God's goodness may become known to them."

Without overstating it, the Psalmist is saying that God is REAL – and that the primary way we know God is REAL is that He is knowably Good.

This is actually our problem, isn't it? This is actually the problem that we as people face all the time. We have lousy taste. I'm not talking about the way we dress, or the colors we paint our homes or the way we decorate them, or even the kinds of jokes we tell. I'm talking about keeping our sensibilities on what God intends for this world. And when bad things happen – things which are inexplicably bad, things which, let's face it, one Sunday school lesson cannot possibly explain – our bad taste tends to take over.

We forget the broad ways in which the fact that God is Good which must anchor us.

Phil Johnson



The Two Essentials at Conversion

"It ought always to be remembered that there are two distinct things which the Lord Jesus Christ does for every sinner whom He undertakes to save. He washes him from his sins in His own blood, and gives him a free pardon: this his justification. He puts the Holy Spirit into his heart, and makes him an entirely new man: this is his regeneration.

"The two things are both absolutely necessary to salvation. The change of heart is as necessary as the pardon; and the pardon is as necessary as the change. Without the pardon we have no right or title to heaven. Without the change we should not be ready to enjoy heaven, even if we got there." ~ J.C. Ryle

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3:5