

Often I have heard people say, "How good God is! We prayed that it would not rain for our church picnic, and look at the lovely weather!" Yes, God is good when He sends good weather. But God was also good when He allowed my sister, Betsie, to starve to death before my eyes in a German concentration camp. I remember one occasion when I was very discouraged there. Everything around us was dark, and there was darkness in my heart. I remember telling Betsie that I thought God had forgotten us. "No, Corrie," said Betsie, "He has not forgotten us. Remember His Word: "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him." Corrie concludes, "There is an ocean of God's love available - there is plenty for everyone. May God grant you never to doubt that victorious love - whatever the circumstances."
Corrie Ten Boom



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. 88. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but daily breaks them in thought, word, and deed.

(Eccles. 7:20; Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; 1 John 1:8; James 3:8; James 3:2; Rom. 3:23)

Q. 89. What then is the purpose of the law since the fall?

A. The purpose of the law, since the fall, is to reveal the perfect righteousness of God, that His people may know his will for their lives and the ungodly, being convicted of their sin, may be restrained therein and brought to Christ for salvation.

(Ps. 19:7-11; Rom. 3:20-31; 7:7; 12:2; Titus 2:12-14; Gal. 3:22-24; 1 Tim. 1:8)

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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

Volume 5, No. 40

September 30, 2012

AN INESCAPABLE FACT

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Ezekiel 18:4

When Old Testament Israel and Judah persisted in idolatry and disobedience the Lord gave them into captivity. First, the Northern Kingdom was taken by the Assyrians. Some years later, it was Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar that finally destroyed those in Judah and carried many select persons into captivity. It was to those captives in Babylon that Ezekiel ministered before the Lord. While some parts of the book are debated as to their meaning, certain things are not subject to interpretation. Such is the text before us.

Men under judgment tend to claim injustice or claim that others are at fault. This chapter began with a reference to a proverb that suggested that the Lord was unfair in that He had blamed the actions of their fathers on them. One of the greatest problems with men is their failure to take ownership for their own sins and iniquities. Even today we hear a number of excuses or rationalizations with regard to sin. There is even a parallel to this in claiming that men have always done certain things so it must be okay. A young child will often defend his actions by pointing to his friends with the accusation that “he did it too.” People in high crime areas blame their environment or associations. Poverty is often blamed for the sins of many. It is not unusual for one on trial to attribute his crime to alcohol or some other substance. It is rare for anyone to fully own his sin except the Holy Spirit prosecutes their case and convinces them of personal guilt before

God.

The inescapable fact is that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Most shrug off the idea of natural death in that it happens to all. It is accepted even if it is dreaded. But this passage and others like it raise a thought that most do not consider. That is, the sinning agent. The body and the mind are the means of sin, but in fact, it is the soul that sins. This takes our thoughts away from group participation or a sharing of guilt. When Daniel confessed that “we have sinned” he was referring to the fact that a nation made up of individuals had, in common, personal sin against God. So then, a man may be in the midst of a rioting mob, but it is his individual soul that is sinning. There was a mob that cried out for the crucifixion of Christ our Lord, but each individual was accountable for it all.

The verse begins with the declaration that “all souls are mine.” That is we are, all alike, His by virtue of creation. Understanding then that God is sovereign, we conclude that He can do as He wills with any and all of us. He would be perfectly consistent in casting all forever out of His sight. But, He rather lays it before us that the person who persists in sin and defiance of God and His Christ shall die. In contrast, He declares that the man who is just and pursues righteousness shall live. See Ezekiel 18:5-9. However, we are presented with an impossible situation in that, as previously mentioned, all have sinned. Furthermore, even those who love

righteousness are still found with sin in their lives. How then shall any escape?

Not only then is sin personal, but also death as a consequence of sin is personal. The Lord charged the Jews with the sin they were committing. He made reference to the sins of their fathers, but it was to them He said: *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Matthew 23:32.* This is not mere physical death; it is that death that separates from God for all eternity. It is a death with pain and suffering as its consequence. It is a death that reflects the awfulness of sin in God's sight. We may soften the idea of sin or treat it lightly, but not so with God. It is the soul that sins and it is the soul that dies and it is the soul that suffers bodily forever. For all this, God's hatred for sin is most displayed in the sufferings of Christ and especially in that He made His soul an offering for sin. The most terrible agony of Christ came as a result of the wrath of God upon His soul in the behalf of those who would believe on Him.

God does not deal unjustly with men. They are deserving of all they receive. We ask then with the Disciples, "who then can be saved."

This is only possible with God and so salvation is by His mercy and grace and not by any merit or action in men. It is critical that we understand that if sin is the personal action of the soul, and death comes personally to the soul of the persistent sinner, that salvation must be personally ministered to souls. Salvation is not a group issue. It is personal and we must be personally brought to Christ. So it is that life is given, ownership of sin is taken, and forgiveness is sought and received – all by the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Salvation is the sovereign decree of God, merited in the saving work of Christ and administered by Him, the Holy Spirit. Then with the Jailer we ask, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer was forthcoming – "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved..." Repentance and faith are thus brought to bear in the regenerated hearts of believers. Thus the command is to "repent and believe the Gospel" for one's self and to continue in these things. It is personal and Christ died for individuals and rose with new life for them all. The believing soul shall live and not die. *bhs.*

It is not enough for us to say to a dispirited person, it is your unbelief that is keeping you wretched; only believe, and all is well." This is true, but it is only general truth, which in many cases is of no use, because it does not shew him how it applies to him. On this point he is often at fault, thinking that faith is some great work to be done, which he is to labour at with all his might, praying all the while to God to help him in doing this great work; and that unbelief is some evil principle requiring to be uprooted, before the gospel will be of any use to him.

But what is the real meaning of this faith and this unbelief?

In all unbelief there are these two things—a good opinion of one's self, and a bad opinion of God. So long as these two things exist, it is impossible for an inquirer to find rest. His good opinion of himself makes him think it quite possible to win God's favour.

Horatius Bonar

Matthew Henry, when he was about to die, said to a friend, "You have heard many men's dying words, and these are mine: 'A life spent in communion with God, is the pleasantest life in the world.

What Does It Mean To Be Saved? -- (By Rev. Robert M. M'Cheyne)

MANY of you may be saying just now in your heart: It is quite true I am not at present a saved person; but I am not far from the kingdom of God. I have just to repent and believe on Jesus, and then I am saved. Now this is so short and simple a matter, I may do it at any time. I may enjoy the world and its pleasures a little longer; and then when death or disease threatens me. it may be a good time to become anxious. Now, all this argument proceeds upon a falsehood. You think you are not far from salvation; but Ah! my friend, you are as far from salvation as any one can be that is in the land of the living. There is only one case in which you could be further from salvation and that is in hell. You are as far from salvation as anyone that is out of hell. You may have much head knowledge of sin without the Holy Spirit, but He alone can convince you of sin. That Spirit is a Sovereign Spirit. He is given to the children of God as often as they ask Him; but lie is not at the bidding of unconverted men. You cannot bid Him come when you fall sick, or when you are going to die; or if you should bid Him. He has nowhere promised to obey. And now I wish you to see that there is a second Divine work needful on your heart before you can believe. The Spirit must convince you of Christ's righteousness. Flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ unto you, "but my Father which is in heaven." (Matth. 16.17) That God is a Sovereign God. He hath mercy upon whom He will have mercy. He is not at the bidding of unconverted men. He has nowhere promised to bring to Christ all whom He awakens. Oh! how plain that you are as far from salvation as any soul can be that is out of hell. And can you be easy when you are at such a distance from salvation? Can you go and sit down to a game of chance to while away the time between this and judgment? Can you go and laugh and be merry in your sins? How truly, then, did Solomon say: "The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot" — a loud noise for a moment, then everlasting silence — a short blaze, and a dark eternity.

Some of you may be awakened by God, but unless you attain to a conviction of righteousness, your conviction of sin will be all in vain. Remember, anxiety for the soul does not save the soul. Sailors in shipwreck are very anxious. They cry much to God in prayers and tears; and yet, though they are anxious men, they are not saved men — the vessel goes to pieces, and all are drowned. Travellers in a wilderness may be very anxious, their hearts may die within them, yet that does not show that they are safe; they may perish in the burning sands. So you are much afraid of the wrath of God, and it may be God has, in mercy, stirred up these anxieties in your bosom, but you are not yet saved; unless you come to Christ all will be in vain. Many are convinced who are not converted. Many are now in hell who were once as anxious to escape as you.

God only can give you this. The Spirit convinces of righteousness. It is not flesh and blood that can give you a sense of the preciousness of Christ. It is true, the Bible and preaching are the means through which God works this conviction. He always works through the Truth — never with. out the Truth. If you he truly awakened, I know how anxiously you will wait on these means; how you will search the Scriptures with tears, and lose no opportunity of hearing the Word preached. But still, the Bible and preaching are only means of themselves; they can only make natural impressions on your mind. God only can make supernatural impressions. Cry to God, then.

But remember, God is a sovereign God. Do not cry to Him to convert you, as if it were a debt He owed you. There is only one thing you can claim from God as a right, and that is a place in hell. If you think you have any claim on God you are deceiving yourself. You are not yet convinced of sin. Lie at the feet of God as a sovereign God — a God who owes you nothing but punishment. Lie at His feet as the God who alone can reveal Christ unto you. Cry night and day that He would reveal Christ unto you — that He would shine into your darkness, and give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. One glimpse of that face will give you peace. It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. -- *"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."* (Isaiah 55: 6.7.)