"Sometimes I go to God and say, "God, if Thou dost never answer another prayer while I live on this earth, I will still worship Thee as long as I live and in the ages to come for what Thou hast done already. God's already put me so far in debt that if I were to live one million millenniums I couldn't pay Him for what He's done for me." A. W. Tozer

"Whenever you get one inch above the ground in your own esteem, you are that inch too high!" Spurgeon

GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

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

Question LXI. Is man, in a state of nature, bound to obey this law?

Answer. Yes; and every act of disobedience deserves God's righteous wrath and indignation; for the law is holy, just and good.

Ezek. 18.4, 20; Matt. 5.19 & 22.37-40; Rom. 6.23 & 7.12; Heb. 2.2.

Question LXII. Wherein does disobedience to God's law consist?

Answer. Disobedience to God's law consists in sinful thoughts, words and works.

Deut. 27.26; Prov. 24. 9; Jer. 17.9; Matt. 12.36 & 15.18-20; Rom. 6.23; Gal. 3.10; I Jn. 3.4.

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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ASSURANCE OF HOPE

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Hebrews 6:11-12

The desire of the writer expresses a noble concern for those to whom he writes. They were probably converted Jews and the effort here is to direct them to a hope that exists outside the works of the Law and the ceremonies that were included. He would have them to engage in a way of life that reflected obtaining that hope which is real though distant as to completion. He would thus focus their attention upon the things promised and the One who promised.

The Poet Alexander Pope wrote: "Hope springs eternal in the human breast..." The thought of the poet is accurate in that man tends to be always looking ahead to something better or more desirable. Yet, with most such hope remains uncertain as to fulfillment. The implication of the poet is that when one hope disappears another soon springs up. The hope spoken of by the writer of Hebrews is filled with substance since it is based on the promises of One who had proven faithful is every case.

There are many who make promises that they will fulfill the hopes of the many. There is the hope of peace for which we are still waiting. There is the hope of prosperity which never comes for many. There is the indefinite reference to the "American Dream." We are never quite sure what that is since the leaders keep changing the definition. They have become skillful and adept at using hope to move the masses in their direction. But, in the end, death comes to all and it is the hope with regard to what happens then that matters. All else is

fleeting and elusive. There is religion that promises eternal life in exchange for good works and decisions. Again, in the end the good works of men, no matter how miraculous, are rejected and found to have held no hope at all.

How sad it would be to live without hope at last. Yet, many pass into eternity daily having had all hopes disappear or to be gone with the using. The condition of all that are outside of Christ and the faith of God's elect is described by Paul: That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: Ephesians 2:12. Such were they who mercy has visited and applied the Blood of Christ to them in salvation. Likewise. Paul addressed the matter of hope after death to the Thessalonians: But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Believers are encouraged to seize such hope and cling to it. This is why the Apostle desires that diligence be shown on the part of seekers. This is a provision of the grace of God and not something that is willed up by man. This is why the connection is made between diligence and "assurance of hope." The diligence, in fact, certifies to the believer that the hope that he has is real and is to be desired above all else. What is that end result? Paul expressed it this way as to his own hope which should be ours:

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 1 Thessalonians 2:19. The "full assurance of hope" comes as we are even now in the presence of Christ as true believers. It only follows that we would be there at His coming. There are many who express a hope of being with Jesus when He comes. This will not be if we are not with Jesus in this present life.

The thought of diligence does not imply in any way that we are saved by works. Yet, the desire to enjoy the presence of Christ in our lives is born in us at regeneration. In being made partakers of the divine nature we are necessarily drawn to Him. John wrote that "...when He shall appear, we shall be like Him..." It only follows that we should be diligently moving to attain thereto. Again, it is not that we could ever do that of ourselves, but grace provides even the desire. Likewise Paul wrote: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29. Such is yet another expression of the "hope" of the believer - to be conformed to Him. True diligence aims

for that goal. And, where that diligence exists there is also the ability to believe the promises and the One who promised and by faith our hope becomes one of substance. It is as real as Christ is real.

We read that all the promises of God are fulfilled in Christ. See 2 Corinthians 1:20. In verse 12, we are pointed to the example of those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises." Two things are of particular interest here. One is that the writer urges them not to be slothful or lazy. This would betray the very opposite of what he desired. Several of the Proverbs are hard with respect to slothfulness. It is the opposite of diligence in the things of grace. The second is that the word inherit can be read that they are inheriting the promises. Salvation is not merely something to be endured in this life in exchange for Heaven. Many have said, "I hope I make it to heaven." That is an empty hope if the desire is not to be with and delight in Christ now and forever.

There is no doubt that in this life we will have tribulation. But, we are also reminded that the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. bhs

In the world of men we find nothing approaching the virtues of which Jesus spoke in the opening words of the famous Sermon on the Mount. Instead of poverty of spirit we find the rankest kind of pride; instead of mourners we find pleasure seekers; instead of meekness, arrogance; instead of hunger after righteousness we hear men saying, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing"; instead of mercy we find cruelty; instead of purity of heart, corrupt imaginings; instead of peacemakers we find men quarrelsome and resentful; instead of rejoicing in mistreatment we find them fighting back with every weapon at their command.

Lord, make me childlike. Deliver me from the urge to compete with another for place or prestige or position. I would be simple and artless as a little child. Deliver me from pose and pretense. Forgive me for thinking of myself. Help me to forget myself and find my true peace in beholding Thee. That Thou mayest answer this prayer I humble myself before Thee. Lay upon me Thy easy yoke of self-forgetfulness that through it I may find rest. Amen. A. W. Tozer *The Pursuit of God*

MAN CENTERED HOPE

Oh, for Christians who reject man-centered hope and live with a holy expectation in God and a proper sense of their own unworthiness! Holy expectation is built on the Word and worked by the Spirit. It looks beyond self and man. It sees that although our sins pile up to heaven, Christ's substitutionary righteousness ascends still higher, to the very throne of God, with his Father's stamp of approval. "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Psalm 130:6–7). On that basis, holy expectation intercedes at the throne of grace, pleading that the great triune God of heaven and earth would pour out his blessings. Holy expectation cannot coexist with worldliness, unbelief, indifference, and ignorance. It abhors backsliding and seeks the honor of God, the conversion of sinners, and the welfare of the church. The church's only hope—our only hope—is in God, for God alone can reverse the damage done by backsliding. Only God can revive the backsliding of a single believer or an entire church. Pray that God would remember us in Christ Jesus, send forth his indispensable Spirit, and revive both our churches and us. May sons and daughters again be born in Zion, and may the old nature be crucified, the world despised, Satan resisted, and interceders at the throne of grace multiplied. May God himself receive his rightful place among us by divine conquest, so that Christ will become all in all for us (Colossians 3:11) and we might become increasingly conformed to his image as the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29). Joel Beeke – Getting Back in the Race: The Cure for Backsliding

Ministry — More Important Than Life

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:24)

According to the New Testament, "ministry" is what all Christians do. Pastors have the job of

According to the New Testament, "ministry" is what all Christians do. Pastors have the job of equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12). But ordinary Christians are the ones who do the ministry.

What ministry looks like is as varied as Christians are varied. It's not an office like elder or deacon; it's a lifestyle devoted to making much of Christ.

It means that we "do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Whether we are bankers or bricklayers, it means that we aim at advancing other people's faith and holiness.

Fulfilling your ministry is more important than staying alive. This conviction is what makes the lives of radically devoted people so inspiring to watch. Most of them speak the way Paul did about his ministry here in Acts 20. Doing the ministry that God gives us to do is more important than life.

You may think you need to save your life in order to do your ministry. On the contrary, how you lose your life may be the capstone of your ministry. It certainly was for Jesus, only in his thirties.

We need not fret about keeping ourselves alive in order to finish our ministry. God alone knows the appointed time of our service.

Henry Martyn was right when he said, "If [God] has work for me to do, I cannot die." In other words, I am immortal until my work is done. Therefore, ministry is more important than life.