

"The most vulnerable animals that can be hunted are the ones that allow themselves to be patterned. In the same way, if we keep entering the woods of our spiritual lives every day in the same exact place because we believe ritual equals righteousness, sooner or later our feathers are gonna fly." Steve Chapman

"You want to make people mad preach Law. You want to make people really, really mad preach grace." Tullian Tchividjian

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 LXXXII. Does the gospel require anything of believers towards God?

Answer. Believers are not their own, but are bought with a price. God, in the gospel, requires them to glorify Him in their body and their spirit, which are His, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth; and His grace enables them so to do.

Jn. 4.23-24; 1 Cor. 6.19-20; 2 Cor. 9.8; Tit. 3.8.

Question LXXXIII. How many ordinances has Christ instituted in His church?

Answer. Two, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Matt 3.15 & 28.19; Mark 1.9-11; Luke 22.15-20; Acts 9.18; 1 Cor. 11.23-26.

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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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THE SWELLING OF JORDAN

If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? Jer. 12:5

The history of the faith of God's elect is punctuated with the sufferings, tears and blood of those who dared to stand for it. These were and are those whom the Lord has called and enabled to stand by His grace. From the time of the fall, the message of the Lord and His righteousness and those who propagated it have been held in the deepest contempt by fallen man. Jeremiah was no exception. He grieved over his people and their sins and suffered rejection and persecution at the hands of those to whom he would render service.

It was often difficult to remain uncomplaining as we see in this text. This rebuke and challenge to the prophet came from the Lord in answer to Jeremiah's observation of the prosperity of the wicked while he had been faithful and was rejected. He could see the damage these were inflicting. *How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end. Jeremiah 12:4.* He was being tormented for preaching the message of deliverance to them. We might have expected tender expressions of sympathy from the Lord, but such was not the case.

What did come from the Lord were questions that would require self-examination. It is obvious that things were not as the prophet had expected since he had been sent by the Lord with the message of the Lord's choosing. The reaction to the Gospel message will validate

either salvation or condemnation. Jeremiah loved his people and preached and prayed in hopes of their salvation. His expectations were high and he had given himself in hopes of their realization. Both he and the message were attacked. He had taken their actions as a personal affront. It is to be observed that those living in and under the rule of sin and false doctrine are violent in proportion to the degree to which they and their positions feel threatened. They will first attack and attempt to discredit the messenger. Things were to get worse. How would Jeremiah respond?

The Lord's message to Jeremiah recognized that this opposition was bearing heavily on him. But, he was now running with the "footmen" or soldiers and was weary. The figure relates increasing opposition in that the "horsemen" or cavalry were coming. What then? The battle would get worse and he would still be Jeremiah, the Prophet. If he were running out of stamina under the lesser of the evils how would he do when the battle waxed hotter?

The parallel statement seems even more intense and warrants a closer look. Jeremiah was addressing his concerns with a degree of confidence. He was comfortable with his place. He was being wearied but felt he had standing. He did not understand why the Lord was not bringing results in answer to his message. But, he trusted in the Land. The "swelling of Jordan" would be far worse and would take away any sense of peace. The reference here is to the

heavily wooded areas along the banks of the Jordan River. They were dense and inhabited by dangerous animals. When the floods (swelling) came the animals would be driven from their place. It was not a place of comfort at any time, but was a horrible place to be when the floods came. Certainly, it was not a place where one would be trusting and confident.

While Jeremiah was being told that more troublous times were coming the promise of the Lord's presence was still there. *Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 1:8.* Such is often the manner in which we are driven to trust the Lord and not the "Land."

The sufferings of the prophets foreshadowed the ultimate suffering of Christ our Lord. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Matthew 23:37.* The Spirit directed the psalmists and the prophets to write of Christ and especially of His sufferings. An example is: *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Psalms 42:7.* But, at the end of the suffering of Christ came victory and such is enjoyed by all who are identified with Him in His

sufferings for us.

What of now? We are witnessing increased opposition to the Gospel. We have moved far from the position of the founding Fathers. We have passed through the times when the principles of righteousness held sway in the land even when not all believed. The times of tolerance of the community of the redeemed are fast coming to an end. Now the opposition is open and has the support of the leaders of our nation. It would seem that the sad note of Jeremiah has been sounded: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Jeremiah 8:20.*

What of now? Shall we stand or be overruled by the "horsemen?" Shall we persevere against that which is patently evil or shall we be lost and carried away in the "swelling of Jordan?" Do we endeavor to stand in our own strength and cry out as those personally offended or do we recognize that the battle is the Lord's? Do we dare do as the Psalmist: *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. Psalms 121:1-2.*

O Lord prepare us to receive the gift as did Paul: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Philippians 1:29. bhs*

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight." John MacArthur in *Standing Strong: How to Resist the Enemy of Your Soul*

"If we are true Christians, we must not expect everything smooth in our journey to heaven. We must count it no strange thing, if we have to endure sicknesses, losses, bereavements, and disappointments, just like other people. Free pardon and full forgiveness, grace by the way and glory to the end – all this our Savior has promised to give. But He has never promised that we shall have no afflictions. He loves us too well to promise that." ~ J.C. Ryle

What's So Important About Your Local Church?

What's so important about your local church? At a time when there's more Bible teaching than you could ever consume available through radio, television, and the Internet, why should it matter where and how you're taking in God's truth? What's wrong with virtual, web-based congregations for the digital-age church? Why can't your iPod be your worship leader, your tablet be your pastor, and your friends your fellowship and accountability?

The answer is simple: that's not the way God designed it.

The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of local assemblies. In fact, it was the pattern of Paul's ministry to establish local congregations in the cities where he preached the gospel. Hebrews 10:24-25 commands every believer to be a part of such a local body and reveals why this is necessary.

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

It is only in the local body to which one is committed that there can be the level of intimacy that is required for carefully stimulating fellow believers "to love and good deeds." And it is only in this setting that we can encourage one another faithfully and biblically.

The New Testament also teaches that every believer is to be under the protection and nurture of the leadership of the local church. These godly men can shepherd the believer by encouraging, admonishing, and teaching. Hebrews 13:7 and 17 help us to understand that God has graciously granted accountability to us through godly leadership.

Furthermore, when Paul gave Timothy special instructions about the public meetings, he said, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13). Part of the emphasis in public worship includes these three things: hearing the Word, being called to obedience and action through exhortation, and teaching. It is only in the context of the local assembly that these things can most effectively take place.

Acts 2:42 shows us what the early church did when they met together: "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." They learned God's Word and the implications of it in their lives, they joined to carry out acts of love and service to one another, they commemorated the Lord's death and resurrection through the breaking of bread, and they prayed. Of course, we can do these things individually, but God has called us into His Body—the church is the local representation of that worldwide Body—and we should gladly minister and be ministered to among God's people.

Active involvement in your local church is imperative to living a life without compromise. It is only through the ministry of the local church that a believer can receive the kind of teaching, accountability, and encouragement that is necessary for him to stand firm in his convictions. God has ordained that the church provide the kind of environment where an uncompromising life can thrive and His people can grow spiritually.

– John MacArthur