

"What is a "Christian"? One who holds membership in some earthly church? No. One who believes an orthodox creed? No. One who adopts a certain mode of conduct? No. What, then, is a Christian? He is one who has renounced self and received Christ Jesus as Lord (Col. 2:6). He is one who takes Christ's yoke upon him and learns of Him who is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). He is one who has been "called unto the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9): fellowship in His obedience and suffering now, in His reward and glory in the endless future."~Arthur Pink, "The Cross and Self"

GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

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Question XCV. Ought all men to pray?

Answer. All men ought to pray for the things which they feel they need, and which God, in His Word, has promised to give; and it is their sin if they do not.

Isa. 55.6-7; Ezek. 36.37; Luke 18.1; Rom. 12.12; 1 Thess. 5.17; 1 Tim. 2.8.

Question XCVI. What shall be done to the wicked at their death?

Answer. The souls of the wicked shall, at their death, be cast into the torments of hell and their bodies shall be in their graves till the resurrection, and the judgment of the great day.

Psa. 9.17; Matt. 3.12 & 24.51; Luke 16.23-26; 2 Cor. 5.10; Heb. 6.2 & 9.27; Jude 7.

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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 6, No. 52

December 29, 2013

FORGETTING

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, Philipians 3:13

One of the most difficult things facing one newly born again of the Spirit of God is how to deal with his past. It is inevitable that there will be repentance with regard to the past as well as confession. It is well known that Satan is the accuser of the brethren and will assault the conscience with such things as condemn them. I am amazed at the things from my past that are painfully brought to mind and often at the most inopportune times. Among the devices of the enemy are accusations designed to draw us away from true worship. (*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Corinthians 2:11*)

Paul is quite emphatic that he considered the sins of his past to be the worst. He is reminded of the fact that he persecuted the Lord's people. He had held the coats of them that stoned Stephen. He had hounded them to the point of imprisonment and death. He had done so from a basis of self-righteous zeal. It was personal with Jesus. *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Acts 9:4.* He could have spent a lifetime of self-inflicted punishment for these crimes against the Lord. While Paul's situation is unique as to details, he is not alone with regard to being awakened to one's own sins and sinfulness.

Many would consider their situation as being worse than Paul even if he did claim to be the “chief of sinners” (this writer included). Apart from being awakened from the being dead in

trespasses and sins many go on their way with no thought of consequence to the past. Sadly, however, many having been awakened to their situation before a Holy God fail to fully claim what is fully given us in faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. So, they continue to suffer in the unbelief that they could have ever been forgiven such sin.

Others may entertain the idea that they were not too bad in the past. That may be comparatively so, but in the light of such scripture that declares “none righteous, no not one” and “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” they are left no room for self-merit. Paul spoke of his life as a Pharisee with some emphasis. Perhaps, this was because he knew himself to be a good moral man in the past. But, he held no hope for any credit for his own righteousness. None of it mattered in the realm of grace where it is the righteousness of Christ alone which avails.

The question remains, how can I forget? Is it possible to do so in this life? I do not think so. The sins of the past have an integral relationship to our “old nature” and the flesh. Paul did not say he had forgotten. He rather spoke of a process that would move him away from dwelling on the past or believing he could undo it. We are filled with so many regrets both from before and after we were saved. As I have looked back nothing has changed. Often with each backward look my past seems worse that I first supposed. This may have been the reason

the aging Paul called himself the “chief of sinners.” So what did he do? He turned his attention to the future.

We are given two reasons to look to the future. First, regardless of the enormity of our sins in our own minds, they are far worse. But, that notwithstanding, the “blood of Christ cleanseth us from all our sins.” He bore our sins in His body on the tree. He was our “scapegoat” who by the hands of a fit man took our sins to a place where they could never find their way back. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Psalms 103:12.* We are blessed by the forgetfulness of God: *“And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more...”* We can never forget that we are sinners by nature, but we are comforted in that God does not remember them against us.

The second reason lies in the promise of the future. Paul was not where he wanted to be and did not “count himself to have apprehended that which was determined for him. He would not intentionally direct his attention to the dismal scenes of the past. He would rather reach for those things that lay before both in

this life and in the life to come. He knew that salvation was assured to him by the grace of God. He knew that he had been made complete in Christ. He knew that the work of the Spirit of God was without flaw. But, he would not be satisfied until he was completely as God had designed him to be. Thus, he was ever reaching to greater accomplishment in this life. He had no illusion that it was of him, but God was working in him to “will and to do of His good pleasure.”

It is well that we are reminded of that from which we are saved. That is, a life lived in opposition to God which can only end in eternal destruction in hell. But, we must focus on that to which we are saved. That is, a life with Christ, fully acceptable to God in eternal joy and praise. We must not be as those who think that there is nothing more than to wait for the inevitable. We would rather be numbered with those who “love His appearing” and are pressing ever forward and upward.

Help, O Lord that we with Paul might be forgetting those things which are behind and reaching for the blessedness in Christ which is ever before us. *bhs*

The Perils of Legalism

But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him. - Matthew 12:14

Sometimes neither the most persuasive arguments nor the most convincing deeds will change someone’s hard-hearted opposition. Such was the case for the Pharisees’ challenge to Jesus in considering the proper significance and use of the Sabbath. He had irrefutably connected the divine virtues of benevolence, kindness, mercy, goodness, and compassion with scriptural Sabbath observance. But the Phari-sees stubbornly rejected His exhortations and clung to their legalistic works and self-styled traditions. Not even God’s Word or the powerful demonstration by His Son would change their hard hearts.

Such legalism has always been an implacable enemy of grace. Even the law of Moses, with all its demands, reflected a strong measure of God’s grace in that it pointed men and women toward Christ as the only true hope of salvation. Paul says this about it: “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be

justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). If the very law of God has this more secondary role, how much less place does human tradition have in pleasing God?

Legalism and man-centered customs are also barriers to faithful, biblical sanctification after we are saved. The apostle again asked the Galatians, “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (3:3). We must make sure that we, too, can answer this question rightly, bearing in mind Paul’s later admonition to the Galatian believers: “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1).

John MacArthur

THE LORD FOUND ME!

I hear some folks boast “I found the Lord!” I suppose such an ability is commendable if one’s lord was lost, misplaced, or stolen.

I speak differently – “The Lord found me!” I acknowledge that it was me, not the Lord, who was lost. I believe the Holy Spirit when He says, “There is none who seeks after God” (Romans 3:11). I believe Jesus Christ when He says that “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Who are the “lost” whom Jesus Christ came to seek and save?

They are God’s elect, His people chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3f). But they strayed from Him when they sinned against Him in their father Adam (Romans 5:12, 17a, 18a, 19a). They therefore confess, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). Many of the lost are driven farther from the Lord by false shepherds (Jeremiah 23:1f). These include shepherds telling people that they are able to seek and find Jesus through their own “freewill”.

But Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, purposed to find and save every one of His lost sheep (Ezekiel 34:11-16): “For thus says the Lord Jehovah: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. ...’”

And He did! (Luke 15:4-6). “The Lord found me!” I rejoiced when He said to His friends, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost” (v.6).

Therefore, believers in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ must not boast “I found the Lord!” Rather, we confess “The Lord found me!”

– Daniel E. Parks

GIVE THANKS FOR SOMEONE

There are so many things for which we are constrained by the love of Christ to be thankful. It is an interesting note on giving thanks that Paul often gave thanks for people. He gave thanks at the remembrance the Philippians. Five times he expressed thanks for the Thessalonians. And there are others. What a precious gift that we might see and rejoice in the operations and evidence of the grace of God in others. Certainly we are thankful for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ our Lord. Seeing it in others is yet another precious evidence of His grace in us. We thank God for His gift to us in others. *bhs*