

It is God's will that we should love; it may not always be God's will that we should be loved. —J.R. Miller

There is no body so broken that it cannot be offered to God as a living sacrifice, and there is no arm too feeble to wield the sword of the Spirit. —Betsy Childs Howard

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

36. Q. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins (Rom. 3:24, 25; and 4:6, 7, 8), and accepteth us as righteous in his sight (2 Cor. 5:19, 21), only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom. 5:17-19), and received by faith alone (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

37. Q. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace (1 John 3:1), whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17).

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Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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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REJOICE, BEWARE, IDENTIFY

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Philippians 3:1-3)

I can remember several instances in which a calm and pleasant day in the outdoors was interrupted by a sudden storm. Blue skies, a sunny day, pleasant temperature, all suddenly overcome by dark clouds, visible lightning, the claps of thunder, and a sudden downpour. In such instances one scurries for the nearest shelter and the place of safety from the elements. The conditions that brought such a storm to bear were, no doubt, sometime in the making. Perhaps a weather forecast was simply ignored.

Believers in America have enjoyed a long period wherein all seemed well, and appearances were such that it seemed nothing could disturb our sense of comfort and ease. Now dark clouds are hanging over us and we are witnessing a visible threat to our safety and an open attack on the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. While it has not fully fallen yet, the threat seems more ominous than ever. The warning that such a time might come has long been heralded from the pulpits and referred to in the Word of God. It was amid such times as these that Paul penned these words of comfort and encouragement. We will note that he uses such terms as “safe” and “beware” from which we may understand that he was acutely aware of such dangers.

Persecution of the Lord’s people is rampant around the world. The reason is the enemy, our

adversary, hates Christ and will try to stamp out faith in Him and the liberty that comes in knowing Him. We send to the aid of suffering saints in these places as they stand faithfully against the oppressors. We must be advised that the same powers of darkness that oppress them are on the rise in our land as well. It has moved from a subtle undermining of values to outright contempt for the Gospel and they who will live by it. Our constitution addresses that danger to a degree and so guarantees religious liberty, freedom of speech, and other seemingly inalienable rights. All these freedoms and more are under attack from the enemy of our faith. Yet, despite all that the people of Paul’s day were suffering, his was the voice of hope and proclaimed the reason for rejoicing. We would hear the same.

While we are inundated with political rhetoric, we must be reminded that our only issue of relevance is the Gospel and it behooves us to not only stand for it, but also to rejoice in it. Regardless of the political posturing of men, it is the attention to the Gospel that matters and in its absence from the conversation, nothing else matters. So, as a concluding argument from all that has preceded in this epistle Paul exhorts us to rejoice. He refers to rejoicing throughout. See Philippians 1:18, 1:25, 2:17, 4:4, and vv. 1 and 3 of this text. This is not an exhortation without substance. Our rejoicing is to be

centered in the knowledge of and in relationship with Christ. Paul makes no apology for redundancy. He is repeating things both written and spoken to them before. And he does not consider it an inconvenience. He considered it a matter of safety for them.

There is value to redundancy (not mere repetition). The reasons of rejoicing are presented from the various ways they occur in scripture; they all emanate from Christ. Thereby reinforcement to the faith is given and made the more effectual. Assurances are anchored as the teachings that confirm are repeated. The encouragement to duty (loving obedience) is confirmed and thus we are benefited – they are not grievous and are safe.

There is rejoicing in every consideration of Christ. John Gill wrote concerning this thought: "A believer has always reason to rejoice in Christ; in the greatness of his person, he being in the form of God, and equal to him, and therefore able to save his to the uttermost by his obedience and death, and has interest enough in heaven to make his intercession prevalent and successful and power to keep safe all that are committed to him; and in the fitness of his person to be a Mediator, and daysman, to take care of things pertaining to the glory of God, and to make reconciliation for sin; and in the fulness of his person, he having all grace in him for his people, which is all theirs, and with joy may they draw water out of the full wells of salvation in him; and in the beauty of his person which surpasses all others, a sight of which fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." The gathering storm is not a reason to cease rejoicing; rather it is a reason to consider that in Christ we are safe evermore.

It is interesting that Paul quickly adds a word of warning. Much of that which opposes the Gospel in our land is quite vocal. There is an agenda in which we are being told what we should think and the steps we should be pursuing. Some of this is openly demanding equal standing with that which is clearly identified as biblical morality. Often there is persuasive argument attending their programs, but what is glowingly absent is the Gospel, the grace of God and the sovereignty of God. For them to acknowledge any of these, they would have to acknowledge Christ and the authority of the Word of God. As it was with the Judaizers of Paul's day, these are aggressive in pursuit of their agenda and so characterized here as dogs. They are scavengers given to violence and vicious assault. These will tell you what you think and then condemn you for what they think you believe. They hate liberty and seek to destroy it in the Lord's people. See Paul's words to the Galatians. They are "evil workers" and promote unrighteousness. They were there in Paul's day and have always been around – seeking whom they may devour. These were insisting on ritual circumcision and were thus referred to as concision (cutters).

We are they, who having put off the old man, worship God in the Spirit. By virtue of the Spirit's operation within us we have a true identity with God in Christ and worship accordingly. We neither have confidence in the flesh nor are we subject to it – theirs or ours. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Galatians 1:4-5).* Thus, we would stand fast in the liberty given us in Christ and rejoice in Him alone. *bhs*

"DEPEND UPON IT, OUR HEARTS ARE ALL ALIKE. TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE DECEITFUL AND DESPERATELY WICKED, AND TO LOOK TO JESUS FOR MERCY, HELP, AND SALVATION--ARE, I THINK, THE GREATEST ATTAINMENTS WE CAN RISE TO IN THIS IMPERFECT STATE." JOHN NEWTON

Who, indeed, can describe the pleasure with which the members of Christ's flock do meet each other face to face? They may have been strangers before. They may have lived apart and never been in company; but it is wonderful to observe how soon they seem to understand each other. There seems a thorough oneness of opinion, taste, and judgment; so that a man would think they had known each other for years. They seem, indeed, to feel they are servants of one and the same Master, members of the same family, and have been converted by one and the same Spirit. They have one lord, one faith, one baptism. They have the same trials, the same fears, the same doubts, the same temptations, the same fainting of heart, the same dread of sin, the same sense of unworthiness, the same love their Savior. Oh, but there is a mystical union between true believers, which they only know who have experienced it. The world cannot understand it—it is all foolishness to them. But that union does really exist, and a most blessed thing is; for it is like a little foretaste of heaven.

Beloved, this loving to be together is a special mark of Christ's flock—nor is it strange, if we consider they are walking in the same narrow way and fighting against the same deadly enemies—and never are they so happy as when they are in company. The unconverted know nothing of such happiness. --J.C. Ryle

The formula "Accept Christ" has become a panacea of universal application, and I believe it has been fatal to many.

The trouble is that the whole "Accept Christ" attitude is likely to be wrong. It shows Christ appealing to us rather than us to Him. It makes Him stand hat-in-hand awaiting our verdict on Him, instead of our kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting His verdict on us. It may even permit us to accept Christ by an impulse of mind or emotions, painlessly, at no loss to our ego and no inconvenience to our usual way of life.

For this ineffectual manner of dealing with a vital matter we might imagine some parallels; as if, for instance, Israel in Egypt had "accepted" the blood of the Passover but continued to live in bondage, or the prodigal son had "accepted" his father's forgiveness and stayed on among the swine in the far country. Is it not plain that if accepting Christ is to mean anything there must be moral action (repentance) that accords with it.

A.W. Tozer , That Incredible Christian

THE COMMANDER AND HEARER OF PRAYER

You who commands and hears prayer! You who helps your people to pray!
Pour out the spirit of grace and supplication, that your throne of grace may be surrounded by supplicants, that there may be a great flocking to the mercy seat, and grace may be imparted abundantly to your own glory, through Jesus Christ the high priest, who is passed into the heavens, and is at your right hand forever. Amen.

— Nathanael Vincent

AS FAITH IS MERELY A RECEIVING GRACE, SO PRAYER IS A BEGGING GRACE.

--THOMAS GOODWIN