

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH is true, for God's Word teaches it; it is important, for God's Word insists upon it. It is the great theme of two of Paul's epistles (Romans and Galatians). Elsewhere it is brought up again and again. If God says a thing once, we know it is true. If He says it often, we should think of it habitually. William S. Plumer

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*)

60. Q. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known (Mal. 1:6, 7, 12; 2:2; 3:14).

61. Q. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment (1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22, 29; 3:13; Deut. 28:58, 59).

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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

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"The Pillar and ground of the Truth" -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen. (Mark 16:19-20)

The parting words of our Lord did not go unheeded by the Apostles and those that followed them. There was a time lapse between those words being spoken and the confirmation of the truth of them that came on the day of Pentecost. But Mark records for us in a simple declaration that they, in full surrender to their Lord's commission, moved with dispatch to do as He had bidden them. They had been told to go into all the world with a specific objective – to make disciples. The means to accomplish this was not complicated. They were to preach the Gospel, and this they did.

Men tend to either hold back or forge ahead with respect to their own wisdom which is the kind of wisdom the Bible soundly condemns. Holding back is disobedience pure and simple. Going ahead in one's own wisdom is presumptive and lacks the essential element of faith. It is our business to hear and act on such as the Lord commands and not to wait and see if He is going to go first. I have both said and heard said, "Let us wait and see how the Lord leads." Such statements usually express unwillingness or fearfulness to act. Where there is obedience to the Word of the Lord there will be the presence of the Lord working alongside to empower, to direct, and to encourage.

The command had been simple, and their response was in kind. C. H. Spurgeon said that "our thoughts might be that we go from "He prayeth" at conversion to "He is singing in

Heaven" directly. But it is essential that we be here in that there is much to be done – Christ finished what He was to do on earth but there remains much to be done on earth – we need to undergo the formative process of serving with the Lord here even as He reigns in Heaven above." But they went as they had been commissioned to do. Throughout His ministry on earth with them they had been hesitant and slow of understanding. Perhaps the intent of the Lord was that we might see them as men not unlike us. They were certainly not of superior intelligence and wisdom. He often had to redirect their focus. But now they went forth without hesitation. As Paul said to Agrippa, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

They were outwardly on their own. Jesus was no longer with them in bodily form bidding them to come here or go there. They had their orders. Again, it was His word that was enough as they remembered that He had promised: "...and lo I am with you alway even to the end of the world." We remember as well, *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Psalms 126:6.*

And they preached everywhere. We are immediately pointed to the primacy of preaching. There were no campaigns or programs initiated. What would the many religious organizations of our day do on being given the task of "going into all the world?"

Committees would be formed; projections would be made. We know how all that goes. They did go everywhere, and they started from where they were. They started in Jerusalem. Then it was in all Judea. Then to Samaria and on to the uttermost parts. And they preached the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They preached Him as Lord, and they preached Him as the only One through whom salvation must come. They did not jump from place to place. The Kingdom simply radiated out through the preaching of the Word of Truth. Tradition tells of the many places that each of the Apostles went and that they were established in all directions – Africa, India, Europe, and beyond. The Kingdom was set up to be expanded everywhere and it was. The fact of divine design and order was evident. Consider: *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.* 1 Corinthians 3:6.

And true to His promise, the Lord worked with them and confirmed to them His presence. It follows that if we are coheirs with Christ, we are co-laborers as well. They went and He went with them in the person of the Holy Spirit. We would emphasize the fact that they were to go and then they would discover Christ working with them. The Lord's presence was, of course, the essential thing. We cannot make that happen. We walk by faith and by implication, we obey by faith. (The presence of Christ with the obedient believer is not a prediction; it is a revelation). The word indicates that the Lord was working with them so as to "put forth power together with [them] and thereby to assist (Thayer)." And we pray that He be with us

as well. John Gill saw His working together with them as to "...making their ministry useful, for the conviction and conversion of large multitudes, and for the forming and settling abundance of Gospel churches, and for the comfort and edification of the saints; all which was done, by the power and grace of Christ, without whom they could do nothing..."

The signs followed. There were many mighty works done by the Apostles with "the Lord working with them." They, in fact, duplicated many of the miracles of our Lord. There was never a sensational inference made in these things – they bore witness to the mighty working of God in Christ. In Paul's testimony he paid tribute to the essential help of God. *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.* (Acts 26:22-23). The greatest confirmation was that they witnessed the effectual working of God in them to whom they preached.

We must be reminded that the signs did not precede – they followed. It is to us to go everywhere preaching. We are not to go or preach for the purpose of a planned outcome – we are to go because He told us to go. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.* (Ecclesiastes 9:10). May Jesus Christ be praised in all we do. bhs

"Every Christian can preach sermons every day, at home and among neighbors and friends--by the beauty of holiness in his own common life. Wherever a true Christian goes, his life ought to be an inspiration. Our silent influence ought to

touch other lives with blessing--shining like holy lamps into sad and weary hearts. Our lives ought to be blessings to human sorrow and need all about us."

– J.R. Miller

Each Gift Has Its Place – Tim Challies

I once read the fable of a little bluebell that had been planted in the shady corner of a great garden. Though it was thriving in its place, it one day cast its eye toward the roses that had been planted where the sun was brighter and where more visitors could pause to gaze at their beauty. Suddenly discontent, the bluebell asked the gardener if it could be transplanted to a brighter and more visible location. The gardener granted the flower its wish, but no sooner had it been moved than it began to decline—its blooms became dull, its leaves began to wither, its roots began to shrivel. And soon enough it begged that it might be moved back to the place from which it had been taken. It knew now that its original location had been no mistake but had reflected the wisdom of a skilled gardener who knows that bluebells bloom best in the shade.

We trust a skilled gardener to know how each plant can best serve the design of his garden. He knows the plants that thrive in full sun and the ones that need shade, the plants that bloom early in the season and the ones that bloom only as summer turns to fall, the plants that display their blossoms for a month and the ones that display them for merely a day. His skill is displayed in a garden that is beautiful from sun to shade, front to back, spring to autumn.

And as the gardener suits the plants to his garden, God suits the gifts to his church. He dispenses gifts to each person, each to be used in love and service to others. To some he gives the gift of evangelism and to others the gift of teaching. Some he equips to be especially generous and others to emphasize acts of mercy. These gifts differ according to the wise dictates of divine grace so that some are private and some public, some are visible and some inconspicuous, some require great mental exertion and others great physical effort. Yet not one of these gifts is superfluous and not one redundant. It falls to us to identify the gifts he has bestowed upon us, to accept them from his hand, and to deploy them skillfully and faithfully for the good of others and the glory of God. Yet we must always guard ourselves against either envying or denigrating the gifts of others. If the bluebell had no right to take the rose's place in the sun, the rose had no right to disparage the bluebell's place in the shade. Each had its own place, its own purpose, and could thrive only there. Likewise, we gain nothing by casting our envious gaze upon others and wishing we had been assigned their gifts instead of our own. We should instead joyfully take up our calling and give it the very best of our efforts. But then we also gain nothing by casting our disparaging gaze upon others and taking pride that our gifts appear to be more prominent or more public. We should instead affirm that person's gifting as every bit as sacred and as essential as our own since it does, after all, originate from a common Giver to serve a common purpose.

Thus the Christian gifted in hospitality must not speak of that gift as if it is preeminent among all others or as if it is the essential mark of Christian obedience. He must not look down upon a person who places less emphasis on hospitality but greater emphasis upon giving or service or evangelism. And then the person gifted in teaching must not allow his conscience to be afflicted by the person gifted in hospitality so that he neglects his own gifting in order to pursue someone else's. Though the day lily blooms for just a few hours, it is neither greater nor lesser than the petunia that blooms all summer long. Each has its place in a garden that has been carefully designed by a skilled gardener. And so, too, each gift has its place in a church that has been carefully designed by a wise God.

When he was helping the church at Rome navigate matters of conscience, the Apostle Paul called them to the virtues of love, humility, and forbearance. The exhortation he spoke to their issues of conscience could as easily pertain to our issues of gifting. "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls." Each of us will have to give an account to God, not for the gifts he has given others, but for the gifts he has given us. And so it becomes our responsibility, our calling, our joy, to accept them, to pursue them, and to deploy them for his glory.