

Loving your neighbor as yourself, when the category of neighbor includes everyone you meet, including your enemies, is a supernatural action, and it is an action that is the proof of our salvation. —Alistair Begg

Spurgeon's Catechism
Compiled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon
[1834 -1892]

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

76.Q. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God (Acts 2:38; Matt. 3:6; Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-37; Acts 10:47-48), and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

77.Q. Are the infants of such as are professing to be baptised?

A. The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptised, because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures for their baptism (Exod. 23:13; Prov. 30:6).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

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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FOLLOWERS OF GOD

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (Ephesians 5:1-2).

The Ephesian epistle is eminently practical in that Theology, Redemption, and application are so efficaciously presented. Watchman Nee, Chinese evangelist and author of the twentieth century, preciously outlined the epistle in his book – *Sit, Walk, Stand*. His thoughts were that we are seated in Christ as to redemption. We are enjoined to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. And then we are empowered to stand against the forces that relentlessly attack the people of God. Thus, we are made to look at the divinely appointed relationship with God as a matter of blessedness. We see the sacrifice of Christ as the means of our redemption and are so directed in worship toward Him. But we also see in Christ the pattern to be followed in both love to God and love to others. The thought here continues as one of the characteristics of a “worthy walk” (v. 4:1). Other characteristics include but are not limited to such things as departure from the ways of the Gentiles (v. 4:17), putting off the old man (v. 4:22), grieving not the Holy Spirit (v. 4:30). We will focus on one of the marks of a worthy walk which is the practiced valuation, divinely determined, to be placed on the objects of our affection.

We would first look at the mandate here. We are to be followers of God. It is certain that we are not capable of following God in all His mighty works. Neither may we plumb the depths of His infinite wisdom and knowledge

(we are totally dependent on Him). What we may do, by the provisions given us in mercy and grace, is follow the enjoiner here to be as His dear children. After all, He has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying “Abba Father.” We would note that this was the manner in which Jesus prayed in the Garden. (See Mark 14:36). In so doing Jesus shows the nature of His relationship with the Father as intensely identified with Him (an understatement). The fact that we are enabled to do so suggests that we are enabled to know the same identity with the Father as does Christ our Lord. Faith makes us one with Him. Jesus further intensified this thought after the resurrection when Mary Magdalene was sent with a message for the disciples and identifies with them in saying “My Father and Your Father.” It is that we are, by virtue of the Spirit within, constituted as sons. We are enabled to think of ourselves as His “dear children.”

The mandate is clear, and grace is given so that we may respond to the great love wherewith He has loved us. This stands in stark contrast to the self-love that is so evident among fallen men. Even the pretenders to faith cannot avoid drawing attention to their own righteousness seeking to substitute that for the essential righteousness of Christ. It is rather that we delightfully acknowledge His claims upon us, not only as creator and redeemer, but also as His children fully submitted to Him in all our ways.

We are enabled to sense that these are the expressions of love to us, and we are striving toward the perfect relationship with Him. We are sweetly exercised in loving obedience in which it is not a matter of what is allowed or commanded; it is rather what is pleasing unto My Dear Father. We consider such thoughts expressed elsewhere as: *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).*

Peter wrote of our Lord in this way: *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (1 Peter 2:21).* We read in the Old Testament of a precious expression of what the example of Christ looks like in us. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:8).* It is a most difficult concept among men that Christ alone is acceptable with God and that the perfections found in Him must be found in all who are accepted with Him, all who come to Him. I despair of hearing men being encouraged to accept Christ – it is He who must accept us. We quickly recognize that this is impossible with us and that we must have the righteousness of Christ to be accepted with God. We further understand that this is a work of sovereign mercy. It is He who has made us “accepted in the Beloved.”

Thus, we are constrained to look to not only

the redeeming work of Christ in repentance and faith, but we must also look to the example of Christ in practice – the thrust of Paul’s directives here. Certainly, the first love of Christ was directed to the Father (another understatement) and that love constrained Him to seek the will of the Father in every way and His obedience took Him to the cross for His people! His love for the Father was so perfect that His love for His own matched that of the Father who gave them to Him. It is the manner of His love to the Father and to us that dictates the manner of our love to Him and to others. We are reminded of this in such expressions uttered on the eve of the crucifixion as “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” He directed them that they were to “Love one another as I have loved you.” And the example of “Greater love hath no man that this, that a man lay down His life for His friends.”

These precepts are not only revelations of truth concerning the love of Christ – they are examples for us to follow. As to His sacrifice, a love that does not sacrifice is some lesser form of love and falls short of that for which Christ died to create in us. Such is a “sweetsmelling savor to God. We witness the reaction of God in such sacrificial expressions of love: *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: (2 Corinthians 2:14-15).*

Oh, that the example of Christ Jesus might be more visible in us! *bhs*

The Scripture emphasizes that much can come from little, if the little is truly consecrated to God. There are no little people and no big people in the true spiritual sense, but only consecrated and unconsecrated people. . . . We are talking about quietness before God as we are in his place for us. The size of the place is not important, but the consecration in that place is. –Francis Schaeffer

Consider a few contrasts between them -- (Arthur Pink)

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" John 1:17

Law and grace are antithetical terms. Consider a few contrasts between them:

The Law manifests what is in man--sin. Grace manifests what is in God--love and mercy.

The Law speaks of what man must do for God. Grace tells of what Christ has done for men.

The Law demands righteousness from men. Grace brings righteousness from God to men.

The Law brings God's justice to men. Grace brings men to God's mercy.

The Law sentences a living man to death. Grace brings a dead man to life.

The Law never had a missionary. The Gospel is to be preached to every creature.

The Law makes known the will of God. Grace reveals the heart of God.

Grace is the sinner's only hope. Unless we are saved by grace, we can never be saved at all.

Grace is God's provision for those who are . . .

so corrupt that they cannot change their own natures; so averse to God that they cannot turn to Him; so blind that they cannot see Him; so deaf that they cannot hear Him; so dead in sin that He must open their graves and give them spiritual life, if ever they are to be saved.

Grace implies that the sinner's case is desperate, yet that God is merciful.

"You are not under law, but under grace." Romans 6:14

Gospel preaching never needs to be reformed.

Whose doctrine is to be preached? Are we to preach the doctrine revealed by God or the doctrine revealed by man or a syncretistic mix of the two? The answer is that we are to be God-centered and Bible-centered in all that we do! The path of least resistance is the path to ruin for anyone desiring a Biblical ministry. Clearly people will tolerate evangelical truth that has been modified which renders it lifeless, but unadulterated truth is like salt in the spiritual raw wounds of hearers. If preachers seek to please men Paul notes they are not the servants of Christ. C. H. Spurgeon asserted, "Christ's ministers must never be men-pleasers, or they are false to their trust. Offend or please, their one business is to preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Any gospel that is not over two thousand years old isn't gospel and will never lead men to Christ.

—Dr. H. Rondel Rumburg, excerpted from *A Lord's Day Snippet*