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West Suffolk Epistle

West Suffolk Baptist Church

“Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant”



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Relevant, Old Paths

My dad was fifty-two years old when I was born. When I was thirteen, he asked me if I was embarrassed that he was so much older than my friends’ dads. I told him I wasn’t embarrassed but that I respected him and learned more from him because he was older. He was born a few years after the end of World War I and fought in World War II. He had a newspaper route during the Great Depression, and he told me stories about real cowboys, bank robbers, and his father, who grew up at the turn of the twentieth century in the old West in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. My dad wasn’t just older than my friends’ dads, he was from a different era, an era when young men respected old men and when old men raised young men to be men and not just guys. It was a time when older men and older women took seriously the biblical charge to teach and train younger men and women in old values such as integrity, service, loyalty, sacrifice, honor, wisdom, hard work, and humility.

My father’s values were old, traditional values. But just because they were old and traditional didn’t necessarily make them good. They were good values because they were biblical values, and biblical values are relevant in every generation. But although they are relevant in every generation, they are disappearing from the rising generation. The problem today is not so much that young people have consciously rejected ancient biblical values but that they have not been taught what they are, much less been trained in them. Many teenagers simply do not know the old values that many of us take for granted. For decades now, many parents have turned over to Hollywood the responsibility of teaching values to their children. As a result, many young people have been left to fend for themselves and figure out their own personal sets of values, whether or not those values are biblical or conflict with other people’s sets of values. The result is that many young people, in the world and in the church, not only don’t know right from almost-right and truth from half-truth, they don’t even know right from wrong and truth from falsehood. They have not been taught the old values and they have not been guided down the old paths. Thus, they have had to make new paths, not knowing the old paths of their fathers or the ancient path of the Lord.

These new paths have, in turn, become the path of our culture. Much of society is being overtaken by a youth-driven culture because we have neglected God’s call to train up the next generation of young people in the way they should go. If we are to redirect the current paths of young people, we must begin in the church by taking up the charge to come alongside younger men and women, and teach them the old, ancient values of God’s Word. ~ *Burk Parsons* ~ *Editor of Tabletalk magazine and co-pastor at Saint Andrew’s Chapel in Sanford, Florida*



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Luther Finds Assurance

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it — the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.” - Romans 3:21-22a

Early in his life, while he was an Augustinian monk, Luther slowly came to realize that there is nothing we can do to be set right with our most holy Creator. In fact, as he confessed sin and read Scripture, he came to understand that no fallen person could have any hope of salvation if, in fact, divine forgiveness depends on a sinner’s obedience to the law of God.

Besides Luther’s existential struggle with his guilt, we can see other events in which God was working providentially to show him the gospel of Christ’s sufficient work in behalf of His people. In 1510, Luther traveled to Rome to represent his monastery before the Vatican, and was shocked by the debauchery and licentiousness he saw in what was supposed to be a holy city. Priests were engaged in flagrant prostitution, homosexuality, and hypocrisy, prompting Luther to question many of the non-biblical traditions embraced in the medieval church.

All of these things — Luther’s existential guilt, the church’s moral failings, and his study of Scripture — came to a head in 1515. While lecturing through Psalms and Romans that year as a professor of theology, Luther finally saw that he could be forgiven and that he could find peace with God based on the righteousness of Jesus, which the Lord would credit to his account if he would abandon his attempt to earn his own righteousness and trust in Jesus alone (Romans 3:21–22a).

Luther slowly grew in his understanding that Christ’s work is sufficient to meet the sinner’s need for forgiveness. In 1517, the crass sale of papal indulgences moved Luther to nail the Ninety-Five Theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenburg. This document of protest against the abuses of the medieval church was intended to provoke academic debate about indulgences in the isolated town of Wittenburg, but others copied the theses and distributed them throughout Germany.

The pope did not take kindly to Luther’s protest, especially when the study of other Reformers also showed the insufficient biblical basis for all manner of medieval church traditions. But Luther and these other men could stand firm despite threats of death because they understood the sufficiency of Christ, that He was all they needed in life and death. And so the reformation of the church began. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*



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Exposing the Heresies of the Catholic Church: Grace vs. Works

The New Testament is clear about the nature of saving faith. “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Romans 3:28). “A man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus . . . since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” (Galatians 2:16). “But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:4-5).

According to Scripture, salvation is by faith in Christ alone through God’s grace alone. When you put your trust in Jesus Christ He declares you righteous—not because you are, but because He imputes His righteousness to you, and because He paid the penalty for your sin. Christ bears our sin and we receive His righteousness. That is the indescribable glory of the doctrine of justification (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church stands in stark opposition to that biblical understanding. Rather than salvation by grace through faith, they preach a false gospel of works.

The words of the Council of Trent—convened to affirm and codify the teaching of the Catholic Church in response to the Reformation—clearly spell out the Catholic version of justification that still stands today. “Hence, to those who work well unto the end and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered, both as a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Christ Jesus, and as a reward promised by God himself, to be faithfully given to their good works and merits.” Salvation in the Catholic system is something you earn “by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life.”

That is an absolute and total contradiction of the Word of God. It’s a completely foreign gospel, manufactured by the Catholic Church and able only to condemn, not save. No amount of repetitious prayers, veneration of the saints and other church relics, or masses attended can redeem a sinner’s soul. No priest has the power to forgive sins, and no indulgence bought and paid for can hold back the due punishment of those sins.

At the heart of the merit-based Catholic system is the unbiblical concept of purgatory. In fact, it’s the invention of purgatory that makes Catholic dogma attractive at all—without it, Catholicism would be a very hard sell. Catholics are never really on solid spiritual ground. They can’t know for certain if they’re saved or whether they will ever make it into heaven. And even confident, pious Catholics live in perpetual fear of committing a mortal sin that will throw them out of favor with God and the church.

It’s the false doctrine of purgatory that provides Catholics their spiritual safety net, bringing false hope to people trapped in a hopeless system. It’s the one relief in their entire guilt-ridden, fear-ridden system of works righteousness. And it is complete fiction—a tragic farce that’s led countless souls to hell.

The apostle Paul could not have been clearer about the true nature of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). That gracious, glorious gospel has been rejected by the Catholic Church, and they have replaced it with a corrupt, unbiblical system of works righteousness and merit-based salvation. Presiding over that twisted system of satanic lies is the pope. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**



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The State of Our Soul on Sunday

Let us never forget that our feelings about Sundays are sure tests of the state of our souls. The person who can find no pleasure in giving God one day in the week, is manifestly unfit for heaven. Heaven itself is nothing but an eternal Sabbath. If we cannot enjoy a few hours in God's service once a week in this world, it is plain that we could not enjoy an eternity in His service in the world to come. Happy are those who walk in the steps of her of whom we read today! They shall find Christ and a blessing while they live, and Christ and glory when they die. ~ *J.C. Ryle*

10 Things You Shouldn't Say to a Pastor Right After the Sermon

Pastors often take 10 to 20 hours to prepare a sermon. They pray for God to speak through them. They preach with conviction and fervency. And then they hear one of these sentences. These ten responses are close approximations of what pastors have actually told me. I am sure there are many more.

I've actually assembled more than ten things church members have told pastors immediately after they preached. But these are ten responses where pastors have had the most visceral reactions. ~ *Dr. Thom S. Rainer - President and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources*

1. "I am going to be late for lunch because you preached so long."
2. "You must not have had much time to prepare that sermon."
3. "My former pastor preached a much better sermon from that text."
4. "I wish {**fill in the blank**} would have heard that sermon."
5. "You act like you weren't feeling well while you preached."
6. "I'm sorry I fell asleep while you were preaching. Your voice just puts me to sleep."
7. "Your subject/verb agreement was incorrect three times in your sermon."
8. "I wish you wouldn't preach from the Old Testament."
9. "Let me tell you what you missed in your sermon."
10. "Are we ever going to be done with this sermon series?"

These ten responses are close approximations of what pastors have actually told me.



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Wisdom in War

But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle - I Samuel 13:20

We are engaged in a great war with the Philistines of evil. Every weapon within our reach must be used. Preaching, teaching, praying, giving--all must be brought into action, and talents that have been thought too mean for service must now be employed.

These various tools may all be useful in slaying Philistines; rough tools may deal hard blows, and killing need not be elegantly done, so long as it is done effectually. Each moment of time, in season or out of season; each fragment of ability, educated or untutored; each opportunity, favorable or unfavorable, must be used, for our foes are many and our force but slender.

Most of our tools need sharpening; we need quickness of perception, tact, energy, promptness--in a word, complete adaptation--for the Lord's work. Practical common sense is a very scarce thing among the conductors of Christian enterprises. We might learn from our enemies if we would, and so make the Philistines sharpen our weapons. This morning let us note enough to sharpen our zeal during this day by the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Witness the energy of some, how they travel over sea and land to make one proselyte--are they to monopolize all the earnestness? Consider what tortures some endure in the service of their idols! Are they alone to exhibit patience and self-sacrifice? Observe the prince of darkness, how persevering in his endeavors, how unabashed in his attempts, how daring in his plans, how thoughtful in his plots, how energetic in all!

The devils are united as one man in their infamous rebellion, while we believers in Jesus are divided in our service of God and scarcely ever work with unanimity. O that from Satan's infernal industry we may learn to go about like good Samaritans, seeking whom we may bless!
~ *Dr. Alistair Begg - Senior Pastor of Parkside Church - Cleveland, Ohio*

Preach on Hell...Because it is Scriptural!!

If you would ever be a healthy and scriptural Christian, I entreat you to beware of any ministry which does not plainly teach the reality and eternity of hell. Such a ministry may be soothing and pleasant, but it is far more likely to lull you to sleep than to lead you to Christ or build you up in the faith. It is impossible to leave out any portion of God's truth without spoiling the whole. That preaching is sadly defective which dwells exclusively on the mercies of God and the joys of heaven, yet never sets forth the terrors of the Lord and the miseries of hell. It may be popular, but it is not scriptural; it may amuse and gratify, but it will not save. Give me the preaching which keeps back nothing that God has revealed. ~ *J.C. Ryle*



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Is the Church Full of Hypocrites?

About thirty years ago, my close friend and colleague, Archie Parrish, who at that time led the Evangelism Explosion (EE) program in Fort Lauderdale, came to me with a request. He indicated that on the thousands of evangelistic visits the EE teams made, they kept a record of responses people made to discussions of the gospel. They collated the most frequent questions and objections people raised about the Christian faith and grouped these inquiries or objections into the ten most frequently encountered. Dr. Parrish asked if I would write a book answering those objections for evangelists to use in their outreach. That effort resulted in my book *Objections Answered*, now called *Reason to Believe*. Among the top ten objections raised was the objection that the church is filled with hypocrites. At that point in time, Dr. D. James Kennedy responded to this objection by replying, “Well, there’s always room for one more.” He cautioned people that if they found a perfect church, they ought not to join it, since that would ruin it.

The term hypocrite came from the world of Greek drama. It was used to describe the masks that the players used to dramatize certain roles. Even today, the theatre is symbolized by the twin masks of comedy and tragedy. In antiquity, certain players played more than one role, and they indicated their role by holding a mask in front of their face. That’s the origin of the concept of hypocrisy.

But the charge that the church is full of hypocrites is manifestly false. Though no Christian achieves the full measure of sanctification in this life, that we all struggle with ongoing sin does not justly yield the verdict of hypocrisy. A hypocrite is someone who does things he claims he does not do. Outside observers of the Christian church see people who profess to be Christians and observe that they sin. Since they see sin in the lives of Christians, they rush to the judgment that therefore these people are hypocrites. If a person claims to be without sin and then demonstrates sin, surely that person is a hypocrite. But for a Christian simply to demonstrate that he is a sinner does not convict him of hypocrisy.

The inverted logic goes something like this: All hypocrites are sinners. John is a sinner; therefore, John is a hypocrite. Anyone who knows the laws of logic knows that this syllogism is not valid. If we would simply change the charge from “the church is full of hypocrites” to “the church is full of sinners,” we would be quick to plead guilty. The church is the only institution I know of that requires an admission of being a sinner in order to be a member. The church is filled with sinners because the church is the place where sinners who confess their sins come to find redemption from their sins. So in this sense, simply because the church is filled with sinners does not justify the conclusion that the church is filled with hypocrites. Again, all hypocrisy is sin, but not all sin is the sin of hypocrisy.

When we look at the problem of hypocrisy in the New Testament era, we see it most clearly displayed in the lives of those who claimed to be the most righteous. The Pharisees were a group of people who by definition saw themselves as separated from the normal sinfulness of the masses. They began well, seeking a life of devoted godliness and submission to the law of God. However, when their behavior failed to reach their ideals, they began to engage in pretense. They pretended they were more righteous than they were. They gave an outward facade of righteousness, which merely served to conceal a radical corruption in their lives.



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Is the Church Full of Hypocrites? - Continued

Though the church is not filled with hypocrites, there is no denying that hypocrisy is a sin that is not limited or restricted to New Testament Pharisees. It is a sin with which Christians must grapple. A high standard of spiritual and righteous behavior has been set for the church. We often are embarrassed by our failures to reach these high goals and are inclined to pretend that we have reached a higher plateau of righteousness than we've actually attained. When we do that, we put on the mask of the hypocrite and come under the judgment of God for that particular sin. When we find ourselves enmeshed in this type of pretense, an alarm bell should go off in our brains that we need to rush back to the cross and to Christ and to understand where our true righteousness resides. We have to find in Christ, not a mask that conceals our face, but an entire wardrobe of clothing, which is His righteousness. Indeed, it is only under the guise of the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, that any of us can ever have a hope of standing before a holy God. To wear the garments of Christ in faith is not an act of hypocrisy. It is an act of redemption. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*

Dealing with Sin

Christians struggle with sin. That surely comes as no surprise to you. As you mature in Christ, the frequency of your sinning decreases, but your sensitivity to it increases. That doesn't mean you are more easily tempted, but that you are more aware of the subtleties of sin and how it dishonors God.

Some people think you should never confess your sins or seek forgiveness, but the Lord instructed us to do so when He said for us to pray, "*Forgive us our debts*" (Matthew 6:12). That's the believer's prayer for the Father's forgiveness.

John said, "*If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us*" (1 John 1:8-10). That passage doesn't tell us how to get saved, as many have taught. It tells us how to distinguish believers from unbelievers: believers confess their sins; unbelievers don't.

The phrase "forgive us" in Matthew 6:12 implies the need for forgiveness. "Debts" translates a Greek word that was used to speak of a moral or monetary debt. In Matthew 6:12 it refers to sins. When you sin, you owe to God a consequence or a debt because you have violated His holiness.

When you sin as a believer, you don't lose your salvation but you will face God's chastening if you don't repent. Hebrews 12 says, "*Those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives . . . He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness*" (vv. 6, 10). ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**



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Did Jesus Suffer the Wrath of the Father for All Sinners?

Just for the elect. This truth is hard for some people for what seems like a good reason—it shows God treating people unequally. If Christ’s atoning work covers only some people, doesn’t this somehow make God unfair, treating one group of people one way, and another group of people another way? If people end up in different places, some in heaven and some in hell, then we can either attribute the difference to how God acts in our lives, or in how we act in ourselves. The latter choice has a great deal going for it. It absolves God of the charge of treating people differently. And no one in hell, of course, can complain about being there. They are there by their own doing.

The *first* choice, however, has three things going better for it. *First*, it means some people will actually go to heaven. Given the scope of our sinfulness, were God merely to make our salvation possible (which is itself a limitation of the atonement) and then dependent upon our natural obedience to His call, none would come. Dead people do not respond to the call to repentance, unless they are first made alive.

The *second* advantage is that this is what the Bible teaches. Consider, for instance, Jesus’ High Priestly prayer. If it is incumbent upon God to treat all men the same, would it not be incumbent on Jesus to pray for all men the same way? What, then, are we to make of this—“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours” (John 17:9). Here Jesus explicitly denies praying for those who are not His, while affirming that He prays for those who are His. Now if Jesus is unwilling to pray for those who were not chosen, on what grounds can we claim that He suffered the wrath of the Father for the sins of those for whom He would not pray? Remember that God explicitly affirms His liberty to treat some people differently than others—“For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion’” (Romans 9:15). What we try to free God from, the accusation that He treats some people one way and others another, God proudly affirms.

There is a *third* serious problem with the notion that Jesus died for all sins of all people. **Hell**. If Jesus atoned for all sins, just for what are the sinners in hell suffering? Those who seek to “protect” God’s integrity by arguing He must treat us all the same end up, accidentally, affirming that God punishes the same sins twice, once on Calvary and again in hell. Some might object in turn that the sinners in hell are being punished for their unbelief. But that too is a sin, and thus would have already been punished. If all sins have been atoned for, they can’t be punished.

God owes man nothing but damnation. What He chooses to give, outside of damnation, is all of grace. Which means in turn that He treats His elect one way, and the reprobate another. All to the everlasting praise of His glory. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Jr.*



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Why Celebrate the Lord's Death?

At the time of Christ's death, Passover was the oldest of the Jewish festivals—in fact, it was older than any other celebration of the Lord's covenant with Moses and Israel. It was established before the priesthood, the Tabernacle, and even before the law. It was ordained by God while Israel was still enslaved in Egypt, and it had been celebrated by His people for more than 1,500 years.

Why does that matter in a discussion about communion? Because in the intimacy of the upper room, with His closest followers by His side, Christ celebrated the last legitimate Passover, transformed its meaning, and replaced it with a new ordinance for the people of God.

For centuries, the Passover celebration was the Israelites' commemoration of their deliverance from four hundred years of bondage to Egypt. It was their national memorial of God's faithful provision and protection for His people.

The principal lesson of the Passover was that deliverance from judgment requires bloodshed, and that the shed blood could come from a substitute—in the case of the Passover, the substitute was an unblemished lamb. From that point on in Israel's history, its entire sacrificial system reinforced the substitutionary nature of judgment and deliverance. The sacrifices themselves didn't accomplish anything (cf. Psalm 40:6, Mark 12:33)—they foreshadowed God's ultimate provision.

Sitting in the upper room, Jesus was only hours away from fulfilling those centuries of foreshadowing. He was prepared to be the sacrificial Lamb that Israel had waited so long for. And in His final, private moments with those closest to Him, He established a new memorial to God's provision and protection, not from temporary judgment in Egypt but from eternal judgment in hell.

What's pertinent to this discussion is the collective nature of those two celebrations. Passover was no small event in the lives of the Israelites. It was a symbol of their national unity, bound together in the protection and provision of the Lord.

In the same way, observing communion, or the Lord's Table, is a collective reminder of God's provision through Jesus' death. It unites us as people who have been rescued, transformed, and grafted into God's family—all made possible through the sacrifice of Christ.

It doesn't have some deeper spiritual significance—celebrating communion doesn't re-offer Christ as a sacrifice. His death was God's once-for-all provision for our sin, and any desire for another sacrifice is an implicit rejection of Christ's death. Also, Christ does not inhabit the elements in some mystical way—they're simply reminders of the body and blood He sacrificed to secure our salvation.



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Why Celebrate the Lord's Death? - Continued

For our sakes, the Lord instituted a new memorial—one that points us back to His life and death, unites us in love for our common Savior, gives profound testimony to His sacrifice to the unsaved world, and builds in us an anticipation of His return (1 Corinthians 11:26). If you're a Christian, these reminders should spur you to greater love for the Savior and the church He died to redeem.

The Lord's Table also helps guard the church against the presence of unchecked sin. The apostle Paul exhorted the Corinthians to thoroughly examine themselves before they celebrated the Lord's Table to be sure they weren't inviting punishment or even death (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). Along with church discipline, communion works to guard the purity of Christ's bride until His return. Regularly celebrating the Lord's Table provides positive reinforcement to confess and repent; it forces us to consistently weed out and destroy our sin.

If that's not happening—if sin is allowed to fester and take root in our lives—the Lord has a plan for dealing with that sin through church discipline. That's where we'll pick it up next time. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

When Not to Take Communion

When I was growing up, I did not like going to church. For a young boy in a rural town, church was boring, long, and filled with old, stodgy people singing old, stodgy songs. I would have rather been playing and watching football. However, there was one Sunday out of every month in which I did look forward to church—the first Sunday.

The first Sunday was communion Sunday. The mothers (older woman) of the church would dress in all white. The pastor would wear his white robe. The communion table, normally bare, would be draped in a white cloth under which was clearly the communion ware containing the bread and the wine.

I was impressed with the ceremony involved and the care taken in preparing the table. There was care in handling and distributing the elements. The deacons wore white gloves and the trays were passed between them with a deliberate orchestration of movements and reverence. I really enjoyed the anticipation and celebration of the Lord's Table. Unfortunately, for all the care taken with the elements of the table, similar care was not taken by the participants, those receiving the table.

Contrary to some assumptions, the Lord's Table is not for everyone. It is a blessed sacrament, like baptism, given to the church as a sign of God's faithfulness to His promises and an assurance in the heart of the one to whom the promises are given. With this in mind, we should understand that there are at least two groups of people who should be discouraged from partaking at the Lord's Table, namely, the unconverted and the unrepentant.



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When Not to Take Communion - Continued

The Unconverted. The Lord's Table is for those who have professed true faith in the Lord. It is referred to variously in the church because it is referenced variously in the Scriptures. Besides being called the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20), it is also often referred to as communion. This is due to the fact that in 1 Corinthians 10:16, the bread and the cup are understood to be a "communion" or "sharing" in and with Christ.

Communion, or common union, is born out of union with Christ. Only those in union with Christ have fellowship with Him. They share in His body and His blood and are consequently united to Him (John 6:56). The unconverted has no fellowship with Christ. The unconverted has no union with Him. There is no promise of Christ's abiding with him. He has no portion in the body of Christ broken or the blood of Christ shed. Consequently, there can be no sharing in the elements that signify the person and work of Christ for the church (1 Corinthians 11:24). The converted, on the other hand, discern that such are the blessings of being united to Christ.

The converted understand that the bread and the cup are a proclamation of the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:26). The elements move the believer to reflect upon the sacrifice of Christ and the abiding blessedness of knowing that Christ is for us. The blood of Christ is the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:28). The body is Christ broken, suffering in our place (1 Corinthians 11:24). These are the blessings that belong to those united to Christ by grace alone through faith alone. Only the converted, the truly regenerate, can be assured of these truths communicated in and through the Lord's Table.

The Unrepentant. While the Lord's Table is only for the converted, it is also only for the convert who is living the examined and, consequently, repentant life. The sacrament is for believers. And yet, the admonition to believers is clear: "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28).

The Christian life is the examined life, the life that takes seriously the call to repentance and the promise of forgiveness (1 John. 1:8–9; 2:1). Unfortunately, there are those who deny the grace of repentance by hardening their hearts and refusing to forgive or be forgiven. Those who refuse to acknowledge their sin, but harbor bitterness, malice, and hatred in their hearts, and refuse godly counsel toward reconciliation with God and others, and thus neglect the grace of repentance—let them refrain from the Lord's Table. Otherwise, to eat and to drink in such a state is to call forth the disciplining hand of God (1 Corinthians 11:32).

Nevertheless, such a condition is not the desire of God for His people. Our God delights to forgive (Micah 7:18). Consequently, His people can be assured "of better things—things that belong to salvation" (Hebrews 6:9), namely, the blessed union and communion with Christ. To you, Christ says, "Come!" (Isaiah 55:1). To you, Christ says "Welcome!" To you, Christ says, "Enjoy!"

And there is no more blessed grace than that of sweet communion with and in Christ. ~ ***Reverend Anthony Carter / Pastor of East Point Church in East Point, Georgia***



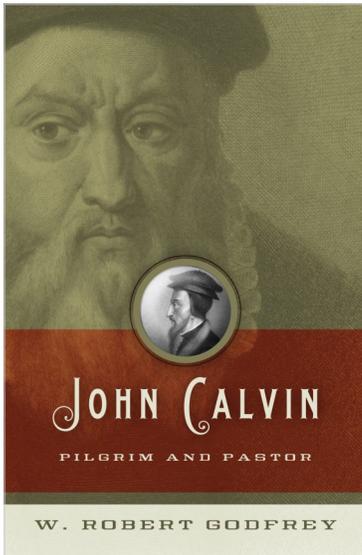
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Book and Audiobook Review

John Calvin: Pilgrim and Pastor

Dr. W. Robert Godfrey



An introduction to the essential life and thought of one of history's most influential theologians, who considered himself first and foremost a pilgrim and a pastor.

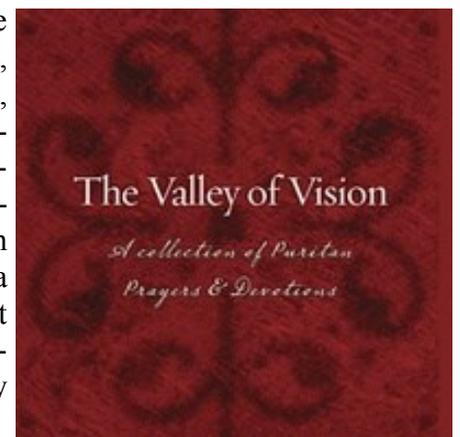
July 10, 2009, marks the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. As controversial as he was influential, his critics have named a judgmental and joyless attitude after him, while his admirers celebrate him as the principal theologian of Reformed Christianity. Yet his impact is unmistakable—a primary developer of western civilization whose life and work have deeply affected five centuries' worth of pastors, scholars, and individuals.

What will surprise the readers of this book, however, is that Calvin did not live primarily to influence future generations. Rather, he considered himself first and foremost a spiritual pilgrim and a minister of the Word in the church of his day. It was from that "essential" Calvin that all his influence flowed.

Here is an introduction to Calvin's life and thought and essence: a man who moved people not through the power of personality but through passion for the Word, a man who sought to serve the gospel in the most humble of roles.

Listener's Valley of Vision Max McLean

The Valley of Vision is a collection of prayers and devotions taken from the writings of spiritual giants like John Bunyan, Charles Spurgeon, Isaac Watts, and Richard Baxter. These men were not only devoted students of the Bible, but men who expressed an enthusiasm for prayer that is inspiring and contagious. Compiled by Arthur Bennett, Canon of St. Albans Cathedral, England, The Valley of Vision captures their devotion and reflects the wide variety of joys and struggles that we are privileged to bring before our Father in heaven. In this audio collection, gifted narrator Max McLean presents a heartfelt narration that releases the passion within these prayers in a way that will assist your own personal devotion. Listening to these prayers will inform your own prayer life and help you to approach God with humility and faith.





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The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

Sanctification - Chapter 13

1. Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them; and by His Word and Spirit dwelling within them, this personal work of sanctification is indeed carried further. All these blessings accrue to them by reason of the merits of Christ's death and resurrection. Sin's mastery over them is completely broken; the evil desires to which it gives birth are increasingly weakened and dealt their death-blow; and saving graces in them are increasingly enlivened and strengthened. The practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, is thus promoted.
2. Sanctification, as defined in this way, extends to every part of man, yet remains incomplete in this life. Sin's corrupt remnants continue to defile all parts of man, causing within him a continual warfare that does not admit of reconciliation; the flesh rises up against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.
3. In the war of flesh versus Spirit, sin's corrupt remnants may for a time gain the upper hand, yet the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables man as a new creature to gain the victory. And so the saints grow in grace, moving on towards a fullness of holiness in the fear of God. They earnestly endeavor to live according to heaven's laws, and to render gospel obedience to all the commands which Christ, as their head and king, has laid down for them in His Word.

Increase of Faith

The way in which most men get their faith increased is by great trouble. We do not grow strong in faith in sunshiny days. It is in stormy weather that faith grows stronger. Faith is not an attainment that droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven; it generally comes in the whirlwind and the storm. Look at the old oaks; how is it that they have become so deeply-rooted in the earth? Ask the March winds, and they will tell you. It was not the April shower that did it, or the sweet May sunshine, but the rough wind shaking the tree to and fro, causing its roots to strike deeper and to take a firmer hold. And so must it be with us. We cannot make great soldiers in the barracks at home; they must be made amidst flying shot and thundering cannon. We cannot expect to make good sailors on the Serpentine; they must be trained far away on the deep sea, where the wild winds howl, and the thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies. Storms and tempests are the things that make men tough and hardy mariners. They see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. It is thus with Christians. Great-faith must have great trials. Mr. Great-heart would never have been Mr. Great-heart if he had not once been Mr. Great-trouble. Valiant-for-truth would never have put to flight those foes, and have been so valiant, if the foes had not first attacked him. We must expect great troubles before we shall attain to much faith. ~ *"Gleanings Among the Sheaves" - C.H. Spurgeon*



West Suffolk Epistle

West Suffolk Baptist Church

*“Thoughtfully Reformed -
Redemptively Relevant”*



Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America

Birthday and Anniversary Corner - April 2015

Birthdays

April 7 - Carol Lawrence
April 8 - David Allesandro
April 27 - Sarah Lootens

Anniversaries

Walt and Carol Lawrence - April 15

Heresy

Unfortunately, preachers who distort God's Word are all too common today. Sometimes this springs from a sincere desire to soften hard hearts, but hearts aren't changed by compromise. ~ **Dr. Alistair Begg**

A gospel that does not confront sin is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

The fanaticism which discards the Scripture, under the pretense of resorting to immediate revelations is subversive of every principle of Christianity. For when they boast extravagantly of the Spirit, the tendency is always to bury the Word of God so they may make room for their own falsehoods. ~ **John Calvin**

It is a remarkable fact that all the heresies have arisen in the Christian Church have had a decided tendency to 'dishonor God and to flatter man.' ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Disclaimer

The views and opinions from the contributors to this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of West Suffolk Baptist Church or its leadership.



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Please submit information to Walt Lawrence by the second Sunday of the month preceding publication by e-mail, in person or at the church office. The editor reserves the right to edit for content or space. May the Father be glorified in every word.

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