



The

ENJOY THE BIBLE

Quarterly

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This issue of the *Enjoy The Bible Quarterly* contains two articles, each dealing with the privilege we have of glorifying God in this dispensation. The first deals with the general glorifying capacity associated with our sanctified position “in Christ.” While the second looks at a particular way that we can glorify God, which unfortunately is often overlooked.

“To The Glory of God”

Without a doubt, being “justified freely by God’s grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” is the most wonderful thing that God has done for us. It is an indescribable joy to know that we have been forgiven all of our sins, have been made the righteousness of God in Christ, and as such have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” and “the hope of the glory of God.” No more wonderful possession could ever be ours than this, especially when we remember that we were guilty sinners by nature and enemies of God, who not only rightfully deserved His wrath but had it coming. God’s grace unto us in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross indeed is astounding, and because of it we possess the wonder of wonders — justification unto eternal life.

If justification is the most wonderful thing God has ever done for us, then our sanctified position “in Christ” is the second most wonderful thing we have from God. In Romans 6 Paul teaches us that God not only justified us unto eternal life the moment we trusted Christ as our all-sufficient Savior, He also *sanctified us* by His grace through faith. The Holy Spirit baptized us into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, and by so doing put us into a sanctified position before God. As Paul declares,...

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)

“In Christ” we are now set apart *from* sin’s automatic mastership over us and we are set apart *unto* God’s use. We are now freed from slavery to sin’s beck and call being “dead to sin,” and have been put into the position of being able to “live unto God” by being made “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Hence Paul goes on to say,...

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

¹¹ Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:6-11)

In view of being made “alive unto God” we can now actually “live unto God”; we can do things to “the glory of God.” This is the wonder of our sanctification. As Paul goes on to declare in the remainder of Romans 6, before God justified and sanctified us we were “the servants of sin” and as such we were “free from righteousness.” (Romans 6:20) Therefore, we could not do one thing that honored, pleased, and glorified the Lord. All we could do was bring forth things that provoked God’s wrath as the “children of wrath” that we were. Hence, Paul asks,...

²¹ What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. (Romans 6:21)

But now being justified and sanctified “in Christ” we can ‘yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.’ Consequently, we now have the capacity to be glorifiers of God instead of provokers of His wrath and displeasure. In view of this, Paul exclaims:

²² But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (Romans 6:22)

“Servants to God” is what our sanctified position “in Christ” has made us to be, and being so we have our “fruit unto holiness” by which God is actually glorified through us. This wonderful sanctification “in Christ” is put into practice as we “walk in the Spirit,” (i.e. being mindful of who

we are “in Christ” by the Spirit’s baptism of us “into Christ” and responding to the details of our lives on the basis of that.) The Spirit of God produces His fruit in us and God is glorified through us.

Hence it is that our sanctified position “in Christ,” with its gracious privilege of being glorifiers of God, is the foundation upon which Paul builds every exhortation he gives to us concerning our conduct and behavior as the members of the body of Christ that we are in this dispensation. We are “saints,” (sanctified ones), and we ought to live consistent with who we are. (See, for example, Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:24-26; Ephesians 4:1,17-24; 5:3; Colossians 3:12; et al.) The doctrine of who we are “in Christ” ought to thrill our hearts, especially as we think about the privilege of being able to live “to the glory of God.” Notice the emphasis Paul places upon this in the following examples.

¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD’S. (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

³¹ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all TO THE GLORY OF GOD. (I Corinthians 10:31)

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment;

¹⁰ That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

¹¹ Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, UNTO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD. (Philippians 1:9-11)

We have a tendency to think that our capacity to glorify God awaits the time when the Lord comes for us, changes our bodies, and takes us into the realm of our inheritance with Him in the heavenly places. It is true that we will do so at that time in the fullness of God’s plan and purpose for us as His “new creation.” However, our sanctified position “in Christ” has given us the capacity to glorify God right now, even in these mortal bodies. The Holy Spirit, as we “walk after the Spirit,” quickens our mortal bodies making them functionally fit as “instruments of righteousness unto God.” Hence, Paul declares...

¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

Such is the fundamental grandeur and magnificence of our sanctified position “in Christ.” Being sanctified by grace through faith truly is the second most wonderful thing that God has done for us. The grace of being given the capacity to functionally live “to the glory of God” right now is eclipsed only by the grace of being given the gift of justification unto eternal life.

“Redound To The Glory of God”

Amazingly, however, the magnificence of our grace-given-capacity to glorify God only increases the more closely it is looked at. And there are aspects of it that almost seem too good to be true. One such aspect is the capacity we have to bring glory to God through the unlikely experiences of suffering trouble and tribulation. In particular is this so through “the sufferings of this present time” and also through “the sufferings of Christ.” Indeed this capacity not only sounds amazing and too good to be true, but the wisdom and genius of God associated with providing for it is equally amazing. In allowing us in this dispensation to experience both the “sufferings of this present time” and “the sufferings of Christ,” God has ingeniously designed for Him to be glorified in a very special way — in a way that brings chagrin to the Adversary and his policy of evil against us. Yet though this is true, this particular means of glorifying God is often overlooked, if not even disliked.

In Romans 8:18ff and in II Corinthians 1:3ff where Paul deals respectively with the issues of the “sufferings of this present time” and “the sufferings of Christ,” God has Paul teach us to expect sufferings and tribulations from these two sources. However He also has Paul teach us to understand and appreciate His wisdom in having us experience them. And indeed God is wise in not shielding us from such sufferings. He is wise in ordaining that we should encounter them in this dispensation. For as Paul first of all gives us to understand, it is through the experience of them that we ourselves come to understand and appreciate God as “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort” and become “more than conquerors through him that loved us.” However in addition we also learn to understand and appreciate “the excellency of the power” of God’s word operating within us as it overcomes the natural tendency for troubles to disturb, distress, and discourage us. Yet in addition to all of this we are also taught that through the effectual working of God’s word within us we have the extraordinary high privilege of actively bringing glory to God. In other words, through His genius God has made it so that even though the source of “the sufferings of this present time” is sin’s “bondage of corruption”; and even though the source of “the sufferings of Christ” is Satan’s policy of evil against us; both can result in the glorification of God when we respond to them appropriately. Both can be taken in their own craftiness, so to speak, and they can actually work out to the glory of God by us. And with this being the case, this means of

bringing glory to God is truly very special and is something that we ought to deeply appreciate.

How It Works

It is specifically in II Corinthians 4 that Paul teaches us in no uncertain terms about the effectual function of “the excellency of the power” of God’s word within us when it comes to enduring “the sufferings of Christ.” And this is just how God has designed for us to cope with and endure *any* suffering or trouble. God has set forth specific doctrines for us in Paul’s epistles to us that He has designed to effectually work within us when it comes to any trouble. And it is when we operate upon those doctrines by having a “spirit of faith” regarding them, that they work within us to produce comfort, consolation, and stability, regardless of the trouble. Hence the “excellency of the power” of God’s word works within us, and by doing so we not only come to appreciate that God’s word has more excellent power than that of any suffering, but the reality of the more excellent power of God’s word operating within us is even made evident to the angelic realm, much to the chagrin of Satan and his policy of evil against us. Moreover all of this, as Paul also teaches in II Corinthians 4, ends up working out to the glory of God.

¹⁵ For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. (II Corinthians 4:15)

As if our own deep appreciation and thanksgiving to God for the “excellency of the power” of His word effectually working within us wasn’t enough, our thanksgiving to Him for the power of His word actually redounds to His glory. Therefore God’s word not only does not return to him void, but it returns accompanied by thanksgivings for the magnificence of the excellency of its power, which in turn bring glory to God for His word’s sake.

Hence, amazingly enough, God in His wisdom has made it so that we can actually glorify Him in the midst of any of “the sufferings of this present time” and through the experience of any of the afflictions associated with “the sufferings of Christ.”

“Redound,” Not Abound

God’s use of the word “redound” in this verse is noteworthy, for not only is it the only time He uses it in His word, but it is also a highly meaningful word. Resident in its meaning is the issue of a thoughtful consequence to one’s action, rather than a random occurrence, and hence it takes into account God’s wisdom. However it also conveys the fact that the contemplated consequence was not designed to be the primary result of one’s action, but a secondary result. And so “redound” also takes into account God’s selfless love for us and real charity towards us, as He puts our needs first in His thinking and has designed for the effectual working of His word to actually benefit us first and then Him.

Unfortunately, “redound” is often mistakenly thought of as being synonymous with words such as “abound,” “overflow,” “teem,” and the like. Hence the tendency is to think that the issue in II Corinthians 4:15 is one of an abundant amount of glory to God. But such is not the meaning of “redound.”

“Redound” belongs to the class of words that denote consequence and/or effectual results, including the idea of certain things being the effective aids to achieving some result. Fundamentally it means to flow back; to flow back upon or come back upon. It therefore bears kinship to words such as “accrue,” “conduce,” “devolve,” “supervene,” and even “contribute.” However it is specifically discriminated from these terms in that it denotes a consequence (or flowing back upon) that was contemplated in advance by the one upon whom it comes, and that the consequence is actually a secondary result. There being a primary or previous consequence that needs to be recognized.

Therefore when something is said to “redound,” it indicates that the one upon whom it redounds had it in view as a consequence of his actions, but that it would be the secondary effect of his actions; the primary effect of his actions usually coming upon someone else.

And so it is with the “redounding” described in II Corinthians 4:15.

God, (in accordance not only with the genius of His wisdom, but also in accordance with His love for us and charity towards us), has designed for the abundant grace of “the excellency of the power” of His word to first of all work within us and result in our deep appreciation for it as it produces comfort and the like, and then secondarily for it to result in His glory as we thank Him for it. Hence, it “redounds” to His glory.

It is no wonder, therefore, that as the Apostle Paul teaches us to understand, appreciate, and operate upon the “excellency of the power” of God’s word like he did, that he not only extols its “excellency,” but he also rejoiced in his sufferings and did not disdain them. He knew especially that his thanksgiving for the effectual working of the power of God’s word within him redounded to the glory of God. May this be the way it is with us as well. — K. R. Blades

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