



Sunday, June 8, 2014

Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

ROMANS Part 26

Chapter 3:21-24 (again)



Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul just spent two chapters detailing our inability to impress the Deity. Why bring it up again? That's how important it is. That's how easy it is to forget.

We are, all of us, wanting of the glory of God. If this is our default setting, then why curse ourselves for lacking glory? I contend that lacking glory is hard enough without cursing it. Weeping and gnashing the teeth exhausts

a person. Why not just lack glory and be done with it? Can you just sit there and not be God? It's harder than it looks, I know. I do manage it on occasion, however.

"What is Zender doing over there?"

"Him? Oh, he is lacking glory."

"He seems rather good at it."

"I suppose he is one of the best."

"Yes. I am detecting no glory whatsoever. None."

"It's what he does. It is even what he is. It explains him. He not only *is* it, but he *does* it."

"Oh, come now. As if God made him that way."

"That's exactly the case. It's the secret to peace. Look at him again."

"Must I? The man is alarmingly content."

"He lacks glory better than most, I admit."

"If this were an Olympic event, Zender would be a medalist."

"Instead, he is infamous."

"He is *so* not God. What is his future?"

"That's easy. His future is insane glory that will make you sick with envy."

"You jest."

"Really? The contrast with Zender will stun you. Look well now, my friend. Memorize how the man looks now. Cry, if you want to. He won't mind. When you see what he shall be, you will puke up your breakfast and wish you were him."

"Never!"

"Wait and see."

If we are going to lament our lack of glory, we may as well lament our humanity. I have wanted to be a cat. Or a dog. At various low points in my life, I have envied cows and goldfish. Let me low in the field or send little water bubbles to the surface of my glass home. Sometimes life is so hard that I envy any being blissfully ignorant of life's most lamentable evils. Dogs and cats are pleasantly unattuned in this regard, as are goldfish. Cows

are *exceptionally* unattuned. God did not want me to be either a dog, cat, goldfish or cow. If He did, then I would be one of these four things. But no. I am a son of Adam. I won the lottery. I must often remind myself that Adamic identity is a lottery win of staggering proportions.

Goldfish and cows have fewer troubles in this life, but also less glory in the next. A particular cow and I in a nearby field here in Pennsylvania stare at each other on occasion, envying one another. The cow at least entertains the constant premonition (Romans 8:19) that I shall be unveiled as a son of God. I only occasionally fondle this happy thought. The cow, in this sense, is wiser than I. So now I am depressed that I am dumber than a cow. Oh, well. It is but another example of wanting of the glory of God. I may as well chew my cud and like it.

NO CARROT ON A STICK

The glory of God is over *there*, while we are over *here*. The glory of God is not a carrot tied by string to the end of a stick. God's glory is as unobtainable as the most distant celestial body is to an earth-bound being. We are not it, and it is not us. It is not as though we are missing it, or screwing up our lives so badly that we will never attain it. It is not as though we are on the wrong path, and that if we correct course and try harder, we will at last find the proper way. No. Humanly speaking, there is no right course. There is no proper way. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the only right course. There is no way, truth, or life in any human technique or guidance system that would gain God's audience.

"WANTING" NOT "SHORT"

For the famous Romans 3:23 verse, the King James version has, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." As is their habit, these English translators step to the plate, swing hard and miss. The Greek word they translate "come short" is *hustereo*. The English element of this word is "want," and the CLNT translates it that way. The Keyword Concordance of the Concordant Literal New Testament defines *hustereo* as, "to be without something needful."

Focus on the two words, "without something." We are not merely coming short, as suggested by the KJVers. "Coming short" suggests getting *somewhere*—at least—along the path to God's perfection. Some "competitors" are athletes, while others are sick and sed-

entary. The athletes ran a hundred laps around the track before tuckering out, while the sick people lurch ahead six inches and collapse. The King James translators would say, "Even though some have come far and some have come little, we have all fallen short."

It's a nice thought, but it falls short (to quote the Englishmen) of what God is telling us through Paul. He is communicating to us the completeness of our failure. No one even starts this "race." In the race toward divine effulgence, not one competitor has gotten off the starting block; none are even *on* such a block. The very idea of entering—let alone lining up—to compete in a race toward the righteousness of God, is ludicrous. The term "competitor" is ludicrous. It is not that we start the path to glory, and God finishes it. Neither is it that God starts it and we finish it. Rather, God starts it and He finishes it. We are in the stands, watching. Everything in this so-called competition centers upon a Man dying upon a Roman stake. God saves us through the faith of Christ, then grants us each an amount of faith sufficient to grasp Christ's faith on our behalf.

"Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

Concentrate on the word "gratuitously." God used this same word in a special context that will help you better understand the nature of your justification, that is, the reason God can look at you and say, "You are right."

THEY HATED CHRIST "GRATUITOUSLY"

He who is hating Me is hating My Father also. If I do not the works among them which no other one does, they had no sin. Yet now they have seen also, and they have hated Me as well as My Father, but it is that the word written in their law may be fulfilled, that they hate Me gratuitously. —John 15:23-25

There was no reason to hate Christ. He was the image of the invisible God. Since God is love, then His image could not be anything but love. Jesus Christ never did anything wrong. He loved everyone perfectly. He got up every morning and bedded down each night with a perfect record. Anyone who hated Him, therefore, did so without cause. There was absolutely nothing in Jesus Christ that could have inspired hate. Hate reflected something rotten and reeking in the hearts of the haters, not in Jesus Christ.

Now transfer this to "being justified gratuitously in His grace." There is no more reason to think your life war-

rants justification than there is to hate Christ. Only someone who could imagine something within Christ to hate could imagine some reason within him to cause God to call him, “righteous.”

The next time you think God chose you because you are better than someone else, try to hate Christ. If you can’t manage that feat, then give up the feat (and it would be a feat) of locating anything worthy within you that would earn God’s smile.

God smiles at you gratuitously. That is, He has no damn reason for it except His own good pleasure and to hear you babble your thanks. —MZ

YOU CALL THIS PROGRESS?

by Martin Zender



Life is complicated. Technology makes everything worse. If there were no trains or planes or buses, then none of us would be fuming over ticks on a clock. You say, “But then we would not get anywhere.” Untrue. We would get to other places by other means. The places would still be places, and the means would still be means.

I wish computers had not been invented. Phones, too. I hate both my phone and my computer. I carry my phone around with me constantly, when what I really want to do is throw it in a lake. I was the last guy to get a cell phone. I will be the first guy to throw it in a lake. I have succumbed to this current wicked eon for now, and am the worse for it. There are too many buttons on my phone, and I press them too frequently. I hope for the courage to one day press nothing except my shirt

between an iron and a board, then go to dinner at a nice restaurant boasting no mounted televisions.

If the Internet disappeared tomorrow, most people would panic. I’d be troubled for two days, possibly three. Possibly ninety minutes. After that, I would laugh with maniacal rejoicing at life’s new possibilities. Everything would seem possible again. Much of my mental clutter would disappear. I wish “the net” were only a way to catch fish. Fish know nothing about the World Wide Web (of Confusion). Fish swim, eat, make bubbles, mate, and die. This is what humans used to do, before the Internet. Now we die every day, only slower. We die of caring too much about everything except what is important. Humans are meant to care only for their immediate circle. This stretches us enough. Now we are stretched across vast latitudes by unknown cyber people. We can’t talk to Dad at the dinner table because some Chinese kid way down our contact list just ate breakfast and can’t wait to share how badly he burned his toast. BRB, Dad.

Texting trumps any real conversation, every time. If you are speaking with your daughter and she receives a text, then you are history. If you are sitting across the room from her and desire her complete attention, then text her. It is the only way to speak with her undividedly. Interruption is her god. Fluidity and continuance are the nemeses of modern cerebral capabilities. The human attention span is now down to 20 seconds. Stare down at the phone, then, and tap the small buttons repeatedly, even incessantly. OMG, LOL, maybe your daughter will BFF you with a JPEG. See how far we’ve come. In the name of liberation, we buy expensive products made by Steve Jobs. In the name of irony, we become slaves to them.

Global awareness can blow me. Being constantly able to reach people and, worse, to be available to every earthly entity both inanimate and human, steals wads of joy from life’s fabric. Paul wished for us a mild and quiet life (1 Timothy 2:2), but we’ve shot that. Instead, we choose connectivity with everything. Being connected with everything, we connect truly with nothing. We care for too many non-essentials to be able to care for ourselves. We must be non-essential then. Yet without self-care, a true caring for others is impossible. While the faceless guy in China earns a smiley face and another stupid acronym, those closest to us die small deaths. Who are we? What have we become? Self-awareness requires thought, and thought requires quiet. Since there is no quiet, there is no thought. Self-awareness waits in the wings until we can

heave the phone toward the lake and lower the laptop into its final sleep.

I was born in the wrong era. This explains why I am so pissed. Everyone around me boils slowly and happily with the other frogs. I, on the other hand, feel as though I have been removed from a peaceful place and suddenly dropped into a cauldron of madness. I'm desperately clawing at the sides of the pot, screaming. Why is everyone looking at me like *I'm crazy*?

Who's crazy? Who's going to soon have their legs fried and served on a platter? —MZ



Dear friends,

Two weeks ago, I found myself burned out. For four months, I lived out of a suitcase. During this time, I texted, emailed and called dozens of people, possibly millions, while at the same time producing the show and the newsletter. When I returned from Birmingham, my patience was worn as thin as a first-century papyrus. I needed a break before *I* broke. Now that I've not given a crap about anything for two weeks and ceased going places, I need to make changes before continuing my usual pace and eventually falling into this same funk.

I regret that I cannot answer any more Scriptural questions via email, text, or telephone. If, after reading everything I have ever written and listening to everything I have ever spoken, you still have a question—Dan Sheridan will be happy to assist you. (I haven't asked him yet; I am only assuming he will be happy to assist you. He may not be happy, but I'm pretty sure he will assist you.) I still need and want to hear from you, and will respond to everyone. My responses, however, will be short and sweet—perhaps even cute, if I can manage it. But probably not cute. Likelier it will something lame

like, "Thanks, God bless." Or, "This was wonderful," or, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all," or, "Hello," or "How *could* you?" (I will be much more flowery and fun in this newsletter because here I can write to 1,200 people simultaneously.) I promise not to cut and paste. I will respond to *you*. You have no idea how hard it will be for me to not be verbose and clever. In the past, I have felt responsible to be bubbly. Watch for a marked decrease in effervescence; it's too hard. It taps too much of the bubbly reserve needed for books and this newsletter.

If you wrote me over the last two months, I have read everything, but responded to little. I am sorry. There was nothing in the tank. I pray no one has taken it personally. I have literally lost sleep over this.

The reason I didn't get as many books out last year as I wanted was because I lacked the discipline to ignore emails. That's right. For me, it requires discipline to *not* answer emails. It will take discipline for me to *ignore* questions and to respond to you with clichés such as, "Thanks a lot."

Folks, it's gonna kill me.

But I have to do it. I *have* to. Otherwise, no books will get written.

Concerning my books, I have decided to farm out my writing to another member of the body of Christ for typesetting. This will bring much relief and bear much fruit. I will farm out as many other technical tasks as I can so that I can produce more original material that will bless you, keep you encouraged, and bring others into the body of Christ.

Thanks for listening. You have all been very patient with me. You have all been so good to me. I could not ask for a better bunch of folks. You mean so much to me. Some of you have been here for over twenty years.

The future is exciting. The next time you hear an audio from me, it will be the Revelation series. The next book you see from me will be *Eve Raised*. It's all coming. With this new resolution comes not only new material, but new enthusiasm.

God is still good—to all of us. —MZ

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