

“Redoubtable, or Formidable Faith”
 “Shameless, or Unshameable”
 Draft A Sermon for 20th March 2022
 Gal. 3:23-27; Matt. 10:16-25; Acts 6:8-15

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Romans 8:36-37

On the face of it, Romans 8:37 is a repudiation of victimhood: are we merely sheep for the slaughter? **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.** Nay to victimhood, yea to **more than conquerors.** There were two crucial meanings to Galatians 3:23: **Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law.** The first relates to fear of death, with **the dread of judgment.** The second relates to shame. Shame is a negative social sanction; many nations and who cultures practice shaming, particularly Muslim cultures and, more pressingly, our own culture under the auspices of polarized politics, political correctness, ideological conditioning (propaganda?) and “wokeness.” Shaming is a force of coercion, aimed at keeping people in line, compliance and conformity—and that is public enemy number one! Consider the force of Hebrews 12:2: **2 looking to, or fixing our eyes on Jesus, the leader, author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God** is found in the contempt, the **despising the shame**, which Jesus modeled for us in dying for our sins. Fear is canceled, and shame is nullified on the cross. These benefits of the faith make us properly fearless and shameless; and they combine to ***make our faith formidable—a force to be reckoned with—or redoubtable!***

“God of grace and God of glory,

On Thy people pour Thy power;
 Crown Thine ancient Church’s story,
 Bring her bud to glorious flower.”

Grant us wisdom, grant us power
 For the facing of this hour,
 For the facing of the hour.

Having dispensed with fear, we, having appeared before the judgment seat of Christ, have disarmed death—there’s no more fear of judgment for us who believe!—We proceed this week to demolish shame. We who are justified by faith in Christ are now sons of God above all other distinctions and spiritually united in Him! Remember Paul who declared **I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth!** (Romans 1:16) Praise be to God who gives us these victories.

I sincerely wish that John Paul Jones had actually said, “I have not yet begun to fight.” during the battle of Flamborough Head on Sept. 32, 1779 in the North Sea. Capt. Jones led a “commercial raiding squadron” which consisted of three ships of war. But, alas, there are so many variants of the defiant phrase, some exceedingly colorful and equally likely, that the catchy phrase cannot be fixed in any certain way. And the catchy phrase seems to have arisen not from primary, or on the scene sources, but in a work published forty-six years afterwards! “So, thanks to an old sea dog’s memory, an amateur biographer, and some reprints, a snappy but probably false version of Jones’s refusal to surrender became part of American history.” [Michael Schellhammer, 2015] This sad critical conclusion, enormously disappointing to the patriot mind, however; does not detract from the “redoubtable, that is to say, formidable courage of the man hailed as “the father of the American navy.” The ferocious engagement of the *H.M.S. Serapis* and the *Bonhomme Richard*—a Royal Navy frigate versus “a slow, refurbished, 14-year old former French East Indiaman frigate—was an illustrious *battle to the death*. The *Serapis* surrendered and the *Bonhomie Richards* sank Saturday Sept 25, 1779. Capt. Jones ran to danger—he engaged the foe in battle—and metaphorically that is what we are called to do, following Jesus’, our Captain’s lead!

Wednesday, March 16, 2022, I attempted to restart the women’s jail ministry, after nearly a two year hiatus. Sue Warehouse and I had no takers from the very limited jail population (two women in a non-quarantined pod) and that was rather underwhelming. But as I listened in, I learned that Sue felt outgunned entirely in the battle we are in: “You can’t fight the Globalists, the Reset elite school of Charle Swaub. *They have all the power—the media, the corporate world, the schools—what can we do against such forces as this?*” What we need in this hour is a redoubtable faith—a formidable faith—a faith that leans into the breach, that holds its line, that establishes its quarter! Don’t be discouraged, don’t let the turkeys get you down! Jesus said, **You believe in God, believe also in Me!**

We remember that the odds have seemed insurmountable before . . . many times before. Pharaoh had all the power before the God of Israel rendered him powerless, **the horse and rider thrown into the sea**. The Midianites, the Canaanites, the Philistines . . . the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and then, in Jesus’ day, the Romans. Many ruthless dictators, absolute monarchs and vicious tyrants have risen to dominance and then been defeated, overthrown, passing away into oblivion save for historical recollection—yes, recollections very like that of John Paul Jones wherein fact, fantasy, romance and reality are so thoroughly blended that we, left to sort it all out, must settle for something rather less “than I have not yet begun to fight—” these supposedly heroic words, could be the plain expression of an ambitious naval commander seeking another commission to further his career in self-promotion. Still, the tiny

American colonies did defeat the most formidable international power of the day, the day when Great Britain ruled the waves.

The words of Scripture rise, like the majestic European alps, above the mists of myth and patriotic folklore. I can assure you that Capt. Jones, a privateer, was viewed as “a terrorist” in the day, who, if he had been captured would have been hung as little better than a pirate, a sea bandit, who took prize and plunder from robbery on the high seas. Disrupting commerce, shades of the Freedom Convoy perhaps in his day, was a factor in our War of Independence. The more ships of line deployed in protecting commerce, the fewer that were available for military adventurism is securing the benefits of the colonial empire for the motherland..

We are in a battle; but our battles transpire in a war already won! Politically, it would appear that we have lost the practice of local self-government. Federal mandates appear to have stripped self-determination from us and as well as personal autonomy over health care—our inalienable rights have been trampled by coercive acts, by shaming, excluding, cancelling, ostracizing, the stifling of dissent as fact-checkers filter our messaging (on line) and censoring slurs of “misinformation” are used to shut down debate, free speech, and to infringe on religious freedoms (i.e. to assemble, to fellowship, to practice our religion without governmental inference). Where our beliefs run contrary to the culture, they are reportedly “penalized”—through law suits, discrimination and threatened legal action. Still the only rights that can be taken from us must be yielded first.

Unless you have redoubtable faith, the outcome is retreat,
sheltering in place and silence . . . an impoverishment.

Tolerance is rather “dead” in the face of “wokeness,” cultural sensitivity and political correctness. If we are afraid of prison time, fines (often cripplingly effectual), bankruptcy and financial ruin, those driven by their “market share” will not merely ridicule and disparage us—they will “crush” us. Those “greedy for gain” will tolerate repression, and genocide, just so long as they can peddle their sneakers. The profit motive, is not self-governing and has no ethical standards therefore data mining is here to stay because, despite the horrors of surveillance, that is where the globalists mistakenly believe wealth and power come from. So, control by crisis continues apace—people exist, the elite assumes, to be managed (they cannot rule themselves being too ignorant, superstitious and stupid). I know, because some have voiced this superiority to me! Capitalism is the current scapegoat, the “system” responsible for all our ills. ***Capitalism is not sin! Only capitalists do sin. It couldn't be the covetousness, avarice and greed that commandeers productivity and business life, could it?*** It couldn't be that wealth is created and distributed by God, could it? It couldn't be that the call to be productive is both from God and fully honorable in and of itself, could it?

The real culprit, cause of our distress, is, according to Galatians 3:23, **our captivity to the law** and our **imprisoned condition as lost sinners, in bondage to our flesh, chained to our lusts, our impulse to evil and satanic rule**. We were **dead in our trespasses and sin as manifest in our depravity!** Satanic rule is secured by the threat of death; and by accusations that induces guilt and shame. Those were the shackles Christ came to strike off. The threat of judgment was removed when Christ brought our sin before the judgment seat: sin was condemned, we assented to the verdict and then He paid the price, the debt, suffered the penalty in our place and we were acquitted. We are freed from dread of judgment. We are also freed from shame because our champion held our shame in contempt when He despised it! *As forgiven saints we must follow His lead in holding contempt the shame that others use, or seek to impose to silence, or dismiss us! Death cannot fright us, shame cannot deter us—never again!* Rejoice, if they say all kinds of evil against you for My sake! *Be prepared to fire back!* ***For the death Christ died to these things—death and shame, on our behalf, He died once for all.*** What of our dread of death (that **fearful expectation**) and what of our shame? They were executed on the cross. And, as Jesus declared, **It is finished.**

Christ came to secure our release, to obtain freedom from guilt, shame, and fear . . . among other things.

He came to set the **captive free**; we were those captives. *Now we are “freedmen” in His kingdom!* Answering our plight, ending our oppression, healing our suffering as slaves to sin and Satan—yes, the world, the flesh and the Devil!—*that was the purpose of his mission.* Jesus didn’t die to free us merely from ideology, from politics (although that would seem very beneficial), or from deceptive philosophy—*although those things follow in the train of His spiritual deliverance.* He has come to set us entirely free; yes, from communists and capitalists together and if humans have voted themselves into such systems, they do not cease therefore to be human, and they do not cease thereby to be sinners in need of salvation by grace. **In order that we might be saved by faith.** (vv. 24-26)

That we might be justified by faith. (v.24) That means, among other things, we are not justified by our wealth, our prosperity, our military strength . . . nor by our race, or ethnicity, education, professional credentials . . . nor by our social roles, our gender. For being **sons of God** is the most important thing. And that comes by faith, no other way. **In Jesus Christ you are all sons of God.**

On the basis of Galatians 3:23-27, namely our release from **captivity to the law** as well as ***our liberation from bondage to sin, actualized by the coming of faith—chiefly, by the advent of Christ***

- who atoned for our sins,
- brought salvation by faith

- and rose from the dead, introducing resurrection life
- with the end goal of eternal glory

With this new age of faith, *the age of the persecuted church begins, birth pangs*. We inhabit that age of persecution! That's is the spiritual/historical framework, the setting in which we shall live until the return of Christ. The message of Galatians, related to shame, is this: the shackle of shame was struck off when Jesus carried it to the cross ***and now you are as dead to shame as you are to fear and, yes, by extension to sin itself.***

However, the warnings/prophecies of the Lord *regarding persecution* were not long in arriving. The whole episode of Stephen (Acts 6:8-15) demonstrates that persecution was a piece of the landscape very early on. Now the fact that Stephen was **doing great wonders**, being **full of grace and power**, is a difficulty for those who might maintain that the performance of wonders and signs was restricted to the apostles because Stephen was not an apostle, but a deacon. So the authentication of the apostolic office cannot be the sole explanation for Stephen's miraculous deeds (I believe this is part of the "cessationist" position) which attended his preaching which went forth in wisdom and Spirit causing a great stir, precipitating controversy first and then persecution. ***That power which eludes every constraint possible in the world come directly from God—He is the source of tyranny toppling power.***

As Jesus had forewarned us in Matt. 10: 17-22:

17 But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20 For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and ^[a]cause them to be put to death. 22 You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

That is why I want to billboard before you the warning in Matt. 16:16:

16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so ^[a]be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

Secondly, it would appear that the liberals of Jesus' day (**the elders and scribes**—probably Sadducees) were not very nice people. I sadly report that liberals today are not much different from those who hauled Stephen before the court, pilloried him and brought false witnesses and accusers out to have they way with Stephen—a scene reminiscent of Jesus' mistrial. A learned liberal in

this country advised the Prime Minister of Canada to “crush the Freedom Convoy.” No wonder the President of the United States has sought to “crush” the opposition to his legislative ambitions including COVID restrictions. “Liberal” governors and mayors, perhaps following his “liberal” leadership(?) have pursued lock-downs and mandates with a similar tyrannical motivation.

So we have Acts 6:11-15:

11 Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God.” 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Sanhedrin, or the Council. 13 They put forward false witnesses who said, “This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us.” 15 And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

We also have “liberal” dictators in Cuba, Venezuela and Russia and elsewhere who are as *hard-hearted* as they come! Perhaps it has not occurred to you, but Ebenezer Scrooge is a stereotypical “liberal” who evades compassionate responses to the pain and suffering of others by referring them to prisons, and poor houses as if these are sufficient remedies and care for those of “inferior” economic standing. I am afraid in our current climate we must paint him more blue than red but politics should not allow anyone to take away from the clear directives of our Lord found in John 13:1-20, especially vv. 12-15 and then more forcibly in John 13:vv.34-35. Pay attention the next time you view “A Christmas Carol,” and you will see what I am suggesting! And the same lesson is driven home in John 15:9-13. Here they are in order:

12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord; and [a]you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. 12 “This is My commandment

that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

I earnestly hope that these directives from the Lord are plain enough for each of to receive regardless of party affiliation, and without the requisite visit from the ghosts of Christmas. But sometimes, it would appear, it takes a whole siege of truth to beat down the walls erected around the citadel of ourselves as in Scrooge's case.

You are the witnesses to Christ in the world. You bear the good tidings of Galatians 3:23-27:

23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a [a]tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

It is urgent that this news gets out on two fronts: first, there is a desperate need for the truth; and, second, we have no idea how little time there is left. Needy and timely.

You are the light of the world . . . in the darkening world, in the eclipse of reason and of common sense, your light, be it ever so little, is all it takes to break the hold of that darkness.

I know that the times can seem so overwhelming. It seems as if they have all the power, *they own all the institutions*—or so it seems, but one, the church of the living God! Jesus Christ is the only hope of the world and because He has entrusted His message to us; we, you and I, *we are it*. Let's be the church!

Amen.