

The Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards

Resolution #38: Resolved, never to speak anything that is ridiculous, sportive, or matter of laughter on the Lord's day.

Anchor Text: Hebrews 10:24-25

I have always believed that transparency is a good thing and today provides me opportunity to exercise a bit of openness with you. Frankly, I do not like this resolution... at all. To be fair, my assumption is that Edwards is talking here about frivolous, perhaps even sinfully distracting, discussions. Nevertheless, I do believe there are two problems with this resolution, and I will endeavor to give them to you.

1. A needless qualification
 - a. While I understand the desire to not waste time on affairs and discussions that bring no glory to God and, therefore, no value to ourselves or our fellow man, it must also be stated that these desires should extend to all days
 - b. Stated differently, would Edwards state that it is ok to say ridiculous things on Mondays or Tuesdays?
 - c. Biblical ethics and sinful practices are not more sinful on the Lord's Day than any other day
 - i. This is not to say that we ought not have a reverence for God as we meet to worship
 - ii. It is not to say that we should not prepare ourselves for worship nor is it to discount the need for sincerity of heart, but we must acknowledge that we live our entire lives "Coram Deo" (before the face of God)
 - iii. The odd view that states that sin "inside the church" or sin "on the Lord's Day" is somehow worse than sin on any other day or in any other location misunderstands the unbending nature of God's righteousness and our enduring call to holiness in all times and at all places
2. An odd line in the sand
 - a. We often speak to you about the joy we gain as pastors when we hear our people enjoying fellowship
 - i. I believe that God gains much glory in our joy and I also believe that joy leads to... laughter
 1. Now, to be charitable, I am sure that Edwards would point to context here... the surrounding verbiage would lead us to

believe that Edwards is thinking about frivolous or even carnal laughing

- b. Nevertheless, there should be great joy in our fellowship which means, I believe, the Lord's Day should be full of righteous, holy, sincere laughter!

3. A grain of truth

- a. There is something redeemable here and that is the significance and sanctity of our day of corporate worship
- b. The "Lord's Day" is intended to refer to our day of corporate worship
- c. The author of Hebrews speaks about the importance of this day in 10:24-25
 - i. Our day of "assembly" (meaning the day we gather to exalt Christ) should be a top priority in our lives precisely because it constitutes a rhythm of worship and edification through the means of grace that all believers need!
 - ii. This is why the author emphasizes the importance of the assembly and implores us not to miss it!
- d. In this respect, the Lord's Day is special and it is sacred
 - i. We should gather for the purpose of "stirring one another up to good works" which means that we must be intentional about our desire to edify in the faith instead of fixating on foolish, trivial matters
 - ii. We should be expectant that our ministers and teachers would teach us truths that help us to faithfulness
 - iii. We should be overwhelmed with gratitude to the Lord for His saving us which leads to heartfelt praise
- e. Sunday, dear ones, is a special day
 - i. Sunday should be a holy day but, just as importantly, Sunday should be the day that we are stirred so that Monday-Saturday are just as holy as well!