

Lewis's own rules about prayer.

31 July 1954

I am certainly unfit to advise anyone else on the devotional life. My own rules are (1) To make sure that, wherever else they may be placed, the main prayers should not be put 'last thing at night'. (2) To avoid introspection in prayer—I mean not to watch one's own mind to see if it is in the right frame, but always to turn the attention outwards to God. (3) Never, never to try to generate an emotion by will power. (4) To pray without words when I am able, but to fall back on words when tired or otherwise below par. With renewed thanks. Perhaps you will sometimes pray for me?

C. S. Lewis Collected Letters

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

87. Q. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God (Ecc. 7:20; 1 John 1:8, 10; Gal. 5:17), but doth daily break them in thought, word, or deed (Gn 4:5, and 7:21; Rom. 3:9-21; James 3:2-13).

88. Q. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others (Ez. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 Jn. 5:16; Ps. 78:17, 32, 56).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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A LARGE ROOM

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room. Psalms 31:7-8

David often found himself in apparently impossible situations. The precious thoughts expressed in this Psalm and these verses in particular reflect the lessons he learned during these times. From the time of his anointing to be king the adversary was hot on his trail and would have destroyed him in the way. In his awareness of this David often expressed sorrow at the persistence of his enemies in their quest to destroy him. David was hated of Saul and of the devil who worked in the heart of Saul. It was evident that this man was to be no ordinary king, but one through whom King Jesus would come into the world. History reveals that the pretender to lordship in the world waited every opportunity to stop the coming of Christ into the world. Of course, it was not to be and David would not be stopped.

David often expressed a sense of great distress as he contemplated both the intent and the power of the enemy. These times were followed by a sense of the Lord's presence and the ability to rest upon the promise to deliver and ultimately establish him in the appointed office. He might on the one hand declare that "there is but a step between me and death" but on the other hand sing of the fact that "thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy." We are blessed in that the Lord has shown us both the desperate times in David's life alongside the absolute expressions of faith in the Lord to accomplish all His glorious purpose in him. Through much of this Psalm

David lays his condition as a hunted fugitive before the Lord and sees no end in sight. His recoveries are simple expressions of the fact and the manner of the Lord's attendance to his needs.

There is great depth of experience to be understood here. Our tendency is to seek after and trust in the mercy of our God as a last resort. The only ones living in this present world and not troubled are most certainly in concert with and walking happily according to "the spirit that even now worketh in the children of disobedience." Our troubles come from many sources including but not limited to our old nature, friends and family, illness and affliction, concern for our nation and especially a marked decline in attention to the revealed will of God. Yet, David was able to "call to remembrance my song in the night." His is a study in contrasts in that he had just mentioned those that regard lying vanities but declares his ability to rejoice in the mercy of the Lord. Two precious thoughts embolden this rejoicing. The first is that he declares the omniscience of God and claims the divine consideration of his troubles. Such an understanding is not too difficult for most. It is the next thought that we treasure. It is that the Lord had known David's soul in adversities. The Lord's attendance with His people is to the most infinite detail. It is not a matter of material prosperity or even of physical soundness and health. The ultimate concern of the Lord is the preservation and wellbeing of the souls of His

people. He was in essence saying “Lord you not only know of my troubles, you know of their effect and potential harm to my soul and you are with me to assure that no damage is done.”

But, neither is the mercy and grace of our God restrained or confined. Again, two thoughts are brought to our minds for precious consideration. The first is that in spite of relentless pursuit, the enemy was not able to entrap David. David sought the will of the Lord when he heard of Philistine intrusions against Keilah. At the direction of the Lord and over the objections of his fearful men David delivered them. But, it was revealed to David that Saul knew of his location and considered him trapped there. The Lord further revealed that Keilah would give him up and so he escaped. So it was that many times Saul fell short of closing his grip around David. So it is with us who trust the Lord. The way of escape had been forever secured through Christ our Lord and we are forever delivered from the bondage of sin and death. We may be sensitive to the pursuit but not subject to such captivity.

The second precious revelation here is that we are not limited as to what we may claim in the Lord. Joshua was told that he had been

given every place where the sole of his foot would tread. He was further told that “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life.” David realized that he was given ample space to move about and that Saul would never take him. As we think of David and Joshua and others who have claimed the promise of God we note that He has never placed limitations on our inclinations to follow Him and to do His will and to go wherever we would go. How sad that we do not often take Him at His word and ask for what He has proffered: *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11:13.* C. H. Spurgeon wrote, “Blessed be God for liberty: civil liberty is valuable, religious liberty is precious, spiritual liberty is priceless.”

By virtue of the new birth we have entered into the Kingdom of God. We seem to be “hunkered” down not knowing what to make of the enemy. We are worrying over a defeated and restrained foe. If the Lord has indeed “set our foot in a large room,” why are we sitting in a corner? *bhs*

EXPERIENCE—Variety of

RUSKIN, that most accurate observer, says:—“Break off an elm-bough three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough (provided you do not twist it about as you work) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have one complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another.” If such infinite variety prevails in creation, we may reasonably expect to find the same in the experience of the saints. Uniformity is no rule of spiritual life. Let us not judge others because their feelings have not been precisely similar to ours. All the saints are led in a right way, but no two of them precisely in the same way. Far be it from us to set up a standard and expect all to be conformed to it; if we reject all believers who labour under infirmities, or are marred with faults, our fellowship will be scant indeed.

--C. H. Spurgeon

What can God's people do in a reprobate age?
2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

There is no question about the fact that we are living in a reprobate age. Ours is a generation under the judgment of God. The spirit of antichrist is so thick in this generation of will-worship religion that you can cut it with a knife! Read the first chapter of Romans and tell me that I am mistaken! The marks of divine judgment, - Spiritual Blindness (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12) - Moral Perversity (Romans 1:27-28), - Self-Serving Chaos and Rebellion (Romans 1:29-32), are evident throughout our society.

These things are the results of what the Spirit of God calls "will-worship," putting man in the place of God (Colossians 2:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:4), freewill, works religion, religion that debases the character of God and exalts the dignity of man. The more thoroughly convinced men are that salvation depends upon them the more vile they become!

In the light of the fact that we live in such a dark, dark day, this question weighs heavily on my heart: What can I do? What should I do to serve my generation by the will of God? What can we do to serve God our Savior and the souls of eternity bound sinners in this apostate generation?

What can God's people do in this reprobate age? If we could outlaw abortion, shut down the peddlers of pornography and smut, banish all drugs from our culture, and eradicate sodomites from the world, it would not move our generation one step closer to God. Our problem is much deeper than these things. These things are only the branches. The root is in the wicked heart of man. Nothing can deliver us from the judgment of God but the free and sovereign grace of God, electing grace, redeeming grace, regenerating grace.

Yet, there are some things we can and must do in this reprobate age. In these days of wholesale apostasy, in these days of spiritual darkness, famine, and utter perversion, we can give thanks to our God for his electing love by which we have been and are preserved from the delusions of freewill/works religion of antichrist (vv. 13-14).

We who have been taught of God must stand fast in the traditions, not in the traditions of religious custom and superstition, but in the traditions of Holy Scripture and gospel truth. Let others say and do what they will, for those of us who have experienced grace, hesitation, shifting, shirking, shrinking, evading, and compromise would be treason to the Son of God! We must stand fast in the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ (v. 15).

I will tell you something else we can do. We can pray, like Habakkuk of old. -- If God is pleased to work his works of grace in this age, he can. And if it is his purpose to do so, he will do so in response to the fervent prayers of his people. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). - We might well pray the prayer of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:2). "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid. O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make known. "In wrath remember mercy!" - There is yet a remnant, chosen of God and redeemed by Christ, who must be saved. Let us plead with God, putting him in remembrance of his covenant (Isaiah 43:26), that he might have mercy upon some, even in this Day of Judgment.

--Don Fortner



A CHRISTIAN'S EXPERIENCE

Experience is like a rainbow, made up of drops of the grief of earth, and beams of the bliss of heaven. Spurgeon