

“Oh, how I cried, how I groaned before him; and he has pardoned me, and blessed be his name for it. But I cannot estimate the value of his pardon to-day so well as I could when I was seeking it-almost driven to despair. Oh, remember soul, when thou didst ask for pardon thou wast asking for that which worlds could not buy; thou wast asking for that which could only be procured through the lifeblood of the Son of God. Oh! what a boon was that! And yet he did not look thee in the face and say, "Thou hast asked too much." No, but he gave it freely.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon

## 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)*

93. Q. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, baptism, the Lord’s supper, and prayer; all which means are made effectual to the elect for salvation (Mt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:42, 46, 47).

94. Q. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation (Neh. 8:8; Acts 26:18; Ps. 19:8; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1: 15, 16, 10: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 15:4; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25; 2 Tim. 3:15, 16, 17; ).

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WXTH-LP FM – In Richwood

#### Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

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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### HELPERS OF JOY

*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. 2 Corinthians 1:24*

The word joy does not occur in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. Much of that epistle addresses problems and aims at setting things in order. They were reprimanded with respect to divisions, their tendency toward carnality, lack of separation, laxity in discipline, indifference to immorality, marital issues, and abuses of spiritual gifts and so on. It seems that this brought a lot of criticism of Paul and even questions as to his apostolic authority. Of course we understand that the intent of Paul was misunderstood and personal pride in them kept them from seeing that the message was ultimately for their good. The state of their fellowship and the evidence of sinful pride did not leave much room for true joy. While many are able to see the problems of the Corinthians, few are able to see the heart of Paul in addressing the matters. The end of that is an oppressive legalism that engenders bondage and certainly not joy.

John Gill commented on joy thusly: “Joy is a grace wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God, of which Christ is the object; it goes along with faith, and as that improves, so does this; it is often interrupted by the corruptions of the heart, temptations of Satan, and divine desertions, and so in this life is imperfect...” Dr. Gill went on to explain that faith, and therefore joy, is increased with proper doctrine and instructions which are accomplished by the ministration of the Gospel.

It behooves us to approach the ministry with a proper objective. It would seem with many

that they are more concerned that all “i’s” are properly dotted and all “t’s” are properly crossed than with the attaining of true joy. This is not to say that we should ever become lax with regard to any aspect of the truth, but it does say that one may be able to recite the letter and be dead. Dead orthodoxy is as much of a problem as is perverted truth. Often we find men checking ID's with regard to doctrine and conformity to perceptions of polity and accepting that in lieu of any evidence of citizenship in the Kingdom of God. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17.* Paul's objective for the Romans should be the objective for all who would bear witness to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus the Lord: *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Romans 15:13.* It is to be observed that in this way God is glorified in that true joy displays Christ as the object and the cause of it.

Joy resides in the heart of those bought by the blood of Christ and born again of the Spirit of God. We are often reminded of its importance in reading: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23.* Moreover, if it is divinely produced in us it is a treasure not to be taken lightly. Consider the effect of its loss in David: *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast*

*broken may rejoice. Psalms 51:8.* For whatever the cause, the absence of joy produces an immediate sense of sadness and loss. When it is non-functioning in us we are incapable of honoring the Lord in a manner of which He is worthy. We should thus be concerned with others that might suffer as well. And so, Paul saw himself and others as “helpers of your joy.”

Two important things are to be noted here. It was not the intent of Paul to dictate to their faith. Even with all his authority as an apostle, he knew that faith is the gift of God and is inwrought by the Spirit of God. Peter gave the same disclaimer in saying that he and other elders were not to be “Lords over God’s heritage” but rather be examples to the flock. The second thing is that Paul ties the joy that he would help to faith and it is the “faith wherein ye stand.” This was not a mere matter of believing but looked to the things which were most assuredly believed and He who is believed. It is critical to understand that “without faith (believing) it is impossible to please God.” And we would be concerned with the “faith once delivered unto the saints.”

The prophet of old posed the question; *Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3.* We would be reminded that true joy

cannot be experienced in the absence of Christ. Indeed the Psalmist so delighted in declaring: *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalms 16:11.* It is to this end that we would see grace ministered to all. We read of the function of Scripture and know that it “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” These are the things that enhance our consciousness of Christ and thus grow our faith. Thus is our joy helped: *And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation. Psalms 35:9.*

Earlier in this epistle Paul brought profound truth to bear: *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. 2 Corinthians 1:20.* It would seem safe to conclude from this that all the great truths of the Bible are Christ-centered and invariably bring joy in Him. Learning these great truths is not an end in itself. It is only as they bring us to Him and His joy that they are of consequence. Paul wrote: *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; Philippians 1:25. bhs*

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## On Soul Winning

It is a vast mistake to imagine that any bungler can do God’s work. The soul is too delicate a thing to be mauled about by an unthinking man. The spirit is too sensitive to be dealt with otherwise than with the greatest care. Soul winning is a holy art, and he has need to study the soul well who thinks of trying to capture it for Christ. Merely hurling texts at the heads of hearers is not likely to result in any great blessing. Nor must all be treated alike. The thunders of the law necessary in one case would be perilous in another, and the gentle wooing successful in one would be like oil on a granite slab in another. No profession on earth needs more skill than does the right sowing of the seed of the Word. Souls are fearful things to be mistaken about.

Archibald G. Brown 1874

## REFLECTIONS on 2 Corinthians 1:24

READER! let you and I seek for grace to do as Paul did; and, looking up with holy faith and love, to a Covenant God in Christ, bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hail him, as the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort! And oh! how sweet the thought to my soul, that as a Father of mercies, he can, and will beget mercies for me, suited to my wants, and to his glory. I shall have pardoning mercy, and renewing mercy, and refreshing mercy, yea, every mercy, to help in every time of need; for my God can supply all my need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. And, he will not only be my Covenant-God, and Father in mercy; but the God of all comfort. Who then shall want comfort, who hath God for their portion? And who shall question divine love and faithfulness, when God hath given all mercy, and all comfort in his dear Son? Oh! for grace to be everlastingly reading, and enjoying the inscription of the cross: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him, freely give us all things?

Precious Lord Jesus! the Amen! the faithful, and true witness! Oh! how blessed, and delightful to my soul's joy, that the blessings in thee, and from thee, are not at a yea, and nay uncertainty; but all the promises in thee, are yea, and in thee Amen. Lord grant, that in thee, the testimony of my conscience may be in simplicity and godly sincerity; and that I may thus have my conversation in the world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of thy great day, when I shall see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee forever.

And oh! Almighty Spirit! do thou establish me, and anoint me, and seal me, to the day of redemption; that I may have the earnest of the Spirit in my heart! --Robert Hawker

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### What We Were Made For

Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

The gospel is the enjoyment of fellowship with God himself. This is made explicit here in 1 Peter 3:18 in the phrase "that he might bring us to God."

All the other gifts of the gospel exist to make this one possible.

- We are forgiven so that our guilt does not keep us away from God.
- We are justified so that our condemnation does not keep us away from God.
- We are given eternal life now, with new bodies in the resurrection, so that we have the capacities for enjoying God to the fullest.

Test your heart. Why do you want forgiveness? Why do you want to be justified? Why do you want eternal life? Is the decisive answer: "because I want to enjoy God"?

The gospel-love God gives is ultimately the gift of himself. This is what we were made for. This is what we lost in our sin. This is what Christ came to restore.

"In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

--John Piper