

Spurgeon on Preparation

We are told men ought not to preach without preparation. Granted, but we add, men ought not to hear without preparation. Which, do you think, needs the most preparation, the sower or the ground? I would have the sower come with clean hands, but I would have the ground well-plowed and harrowed, well-turned over, and the clods broken before the seed comes in. It seems to me that there is more preparation needed by the ground than by the sower, more by the hearer than by the preachers.

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)

109. Q. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, Thy kingdom come (Mt. 6:10), we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed (Ps. 68:1, 18), and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced (Rev. 12:10, 11), ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it (2 Thes. 3: 1; Rom. 10: 1; Jn. 17:19, 20), and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened (Rev. 22:10).

110. Q. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10), we pray that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things (Ps. 67: throughout; Ps. 119:36; 2 Sam. 15:25; Job 1:21), as the angels do in heaven (Ps. 103:20, 21).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

WXTH-LP 101.7 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

Volume 8, No. 43

October 25, 2015

TEACH ME THY WAY

Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. Psalms 86:11

One of the most arrogant expressions of human pride and defiance of the sovereignty of God is found in the long popular song, “I Did It My Way.” The singer is characterizing one who near the end of his life looks back and celebrates the fact that he had exercised his own will and was satisfied with the outcome. To we who know the Lord such expressions are anything but a reason for celebration. We are reminded of the wise man who wrote: *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Proverbs 14:12.* Man in his foolishness devises his own way, but in the end it is the Lord who has the last word and whose assessment is final.

This prayer of David is rather to be imitated in the life of all who would know a true celebration of life as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Psalms 34:2.* Upon learning of the Lord and the salvation that is Him alone, we are made to separate ourselves from any semblance of hope in a way of our own choosing. Such love that sent His Son to die was accompanied by infinite wisdom to accomplish the application and outcome in the lives of those He came to save. In the revelation of Himself to His people He was careful to note that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In preaching Christ we must therefore counter the idea of human methodology that would presume to impress God with devices and endeavors that would improve on that which was given us in Him from

the beginning. Not only do we understand that believers are given new life in regeneration, but we are further given instruction as to the way both to Him and in Him.

Thomas complained to the Lord that they lacked understanding: *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? John 14:5.* But, he would come to understand both where Jesus was going and the way that would define a true relationship with and access to Him. Such has been the sense of many to whom the Lord has graciously revealed Himself. The way of life that had been known to the blind beggar Bartimaeus was one of misery indeed. Even so, he had willed himself to go to his place where he might receive a handout. Hearing of Jesus, his cry for mercy is exemplary. “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” But, we are also impressed with the result in this man’s life. His eyes were opened to behold the Lamb of God and it is doubtful that he ever looked away from Him. It is rather that we read: *And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. Mark 10:52.*

Paul understood more than a mere method for religion in Christ and the Gospel. He was often called upon to defend and explain his manner and his method. Perhaps one of the greatest answers to the reason of the hope within was given to Governor Felix: *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers,*

believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: Acts 24:14. This is “the way” that David learned and taught and, no doubt, for which he sought the Lord all his life. In praying here David expresses a great need, desires a life in the presence of the Lord and looks for a glorious outcome.

It is at the outset understood by the true seeker that he is not capable of self-teaching. Such knowledge is infinitely too high for us. There is a confession of ignorance in submitting to the only One who can impart such knowledge. There is implied what was expressed in challenge to Job: *Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Job 11:7.* The answer is obvious, but in learning Christ we are taught the Way. Paul would refer us to the lessons of the Master and so we are reminded: *But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: Ephesians 4:20-21.*

When David declared “I will walk in truth,” it was not a so much a matter of personal resolve as a confidence in what he would be taught. In other words he was saying that “I will walk in

thy truth” as a result of such teaching as the Lord alone provides. How often do we begin with a determination to fill up something that is lacking only to miserably fail? When we begin with seeking instruction from the Lord and submitting humbly to His instruction, more grace is given. John rejoiced at the sight of such an outcome: *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 2 John 4.* See also *3 John 3.*

The ultimate desire of the Lord’s people is to find their hearts as described in Robert Robinson’s hymn: “Tune my heart to sing thy grace...” David was aware of the tendencies of the heart to be conflicted and affected by the things of the world. He would have the Lord to be the sole object of both his affections and his devotion. For this he was praying as he sought the Lord as His exclusive teacher – “unite my heart...”

As to man, it is obvious that our ways are not His ways and so we would call upon Him to be so taught. Christ is our Teacher, Our Lesson, our Example and we would be ever found in the Way with Him. *bhs*

The poor worm is secretly indulging self-applause!
(Letters of John Newton)

Among the many general causes of decline in grace, we may assign a principal place to spiritual pride and self-admiration. If our attainments in knowledge and giftedness, and even in grace—seduce us into a good opinion of ourselves, as if we were wise and good—we are already ensnared, in danger of falling every step we take, of mistaking the right path, and proceeding from bad to worse, without a power of correcting or even of discovering our deviations! That is—unless and until the Lord mercifully interposes, by restoring us to a spirit of humility, and dependence upon Himself. For God, who gives more grace to the humble—resists the proud! He beholds them with abhorrence—in proportion to the degree in which they admire themselves! It is the invariable law of His kingdom, that everyone who exalts himself—shall be abased!

True Christians, through the remaining evil of their hearts, and the subtle temptations of their enemy, are liable, not only to the workings of that pride which is

common to our fallen nature—but to a certain kind of pride, which, though the most absurd and intolerable in any person—can only be found among those who make profession of the gospel. We have nothing but what we have received, and therefore to be proud of our titles, wealth, knowledge, success, or any temporal advantages by which the providence of God has distinguished us—is downright sinful! For those who confess themselves to be 'sinners', and therefore deserving of nothing but misery and wrath—to be proud of those peculiar blessings which are derived from the gospel of God's grace—is a wickedness of which even the demons are not capable of!

The apostle Paul was so aware of his danger of being exalted above measure, through the abundant revelations and peculiar favors which the Lord had afforded him—that he says, "There was given me a messenger of Satan to buffet me." He speaks of this sharp trial as a great mercy, because he saw that it was necessary, and designed to keep him humble and attentive to his own weakness.

Ministers who are honored with singular abilities and success, have great need of watchfulness and prayer on this account! Simple-hearted hearers are apt to admire their favorite preacher—taking it for granted that he is deeply affected himself with the truths, which, with so much apparent liberty and power—he proposes to them. While, perhaps—the poor worm is secretly indulging self-applause, and pleasing himself with the numbers and attention of those who hang upon his words!

Perhaps such thoughts will occasionally rise in the minds of the best ministers; but, if they are allowed, if they become habitual, and enter strongly into the idea he forms of his own importance; and if, while he professes to preach Jesus Christ—he is preaching himself, and seeking his own glory—he is guilty of high treason against the Majesty of Him in whose name he speaks! And sooner or later, the effects of his pride will be visible and noticed. Doctrinal errors, gross misconduct, an abatement of zeal, of gifts, of influence—are evils, always to be dreaded, when spiritual pride has gained an ascendancy, whether in public or in private life.

"The Lord Almighty has planned it, to bring low the pride of all glory and to humble all who are renowned on the earth." Isaiah 23:9

"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have—that you did not receive? And if you did receive it—why do you boast as though you did not?" 1 Corinthians 4:7



Christ is exalted — and Self is abased!

The longer a redeemed sinner lives — the more he will want to know Christ.

The brighter the revelation of Christ to his soul — the blacker SELF will be in his apprehension.

The more his heart is warmed with a sense of the love of his God — the more he will mourn because of his coldness and deadness.

This is a paradox which no hypocrite or mere professor can understand. As the child of God grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and . . .

sees more of His beauty, enjoys more of His bounty, and feels more of His blessedness — the more he is brought into a true conception of what he is in himself — as a wretched, ruined, undeserving, and Hell-deserving sinner!

Yet he discovers something else — a heart, yearning, longing, panting and desiring after communion with a glorious God, and fellowship with a precious Christ! As he grows in grace, Christ is exalted — and Self is abased!

--Thomas Bradbury