

“Long, long before matter existed, before the cosmos took its first breath, before the first angel opened his eyes, when there was nothing--God had already lived forever,. He had not just lived forever. He had been contented forever. And whatever God was, He still is and always will be.”

Joni Eareckson Tada (from her book *When God Weeps: Why Our Sufferings Matter To The Almighty*)

GADSBY'S CATECHISM

by William Gadsby (about 1800)

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

Question LXXIII. How many ordinances has Christ instituted in His church?

Answer. Two, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Matt 3.15 & 28.19; Mark 1.9-11; Luke 22.15-20; Acts 9.18; 1 Cor. 11.23-26.

Question LXXXIV. What is Baptism?

Answer. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the person baptized a sign of his fellowship with Him in His death, burial and resurrection; of his death unto sin, wrath and the law, and all other lords; of his resurrection unto life, and of his giving up himself unto God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

Rom. 6.3-5; Gal. 3.27; Col. 2.11-13 & 3.1-3; 1 Pet. 3.21.

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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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SURROUNDED BY MERCY

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. Psalms 32:10

The blessedness of the saints' position before the Lord is here declared in stark contrast to the misery of the wicked. The fact that mercy is the order of the day for believers does however remind us of the reason of that infinite difference between those who trust the Lord and those who continue in that way that proceeds from the depravity of men. It is important that we remember the “rock from when we are hewn and the hole of the pit whence we are digged.” When we do we will conclude that as to deservedness there is no difference.

Happiness to the freely justified sinner is declared in the opening verses of this Psalm and an encouragement to “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice...” is found at its close. David rehearses the reasons of this joy in the verses between. He recounts his experience of true repentance and the acknowledgment of his sin and his sins. There was no effort to hide or minimize them as the manner seems to be in this day. Having described his own repentance and faith as a matter of wonder, he then observes: *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Psalms 32:6.* This blessedness (happiness) is fueled with the knowledge and experience of being both delivered and forgiven. This is more than merely feeling good about one's self or of having satisfied a legal obligation. It is the infinite joy of being discovered as accepted in the very presence of

God. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6.*

Many are given to reflection on their situation as having material provision, health and a sense of security. It is to be noted that such thought is often expressed relative to the lot of others. Even among believers they may think that their superior lot in life is owing to some merit in themselves or that perhaps the Lord just wanted them to be happy in this present life. The words of the prophet might suggest a different reason for gladness: *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. Lamentations 3:22.* David in the second part of the verse sees himself as separated from those in the first part by the mercy of Him in whom he trusts.

The words of this verse are words of instruction and exhortation. There is a shift in the manner of speaking beginning at verse 8 (*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Psalms 32:8*). The issue here is whether it is the Lord speaking or does David here assume the role he claimed in Psalm 51. The words, *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Psalms 51:13,* followed a lengthy prayer of penitence. Either way, it is the inspired record that we have here and David is declaring the will of the Lord.

Bearing this in mind, we would understand two things here. First would be the fact that those found fully trusting the Lord will be

conscious of the fact that they are a product of mercy and undeserving of salvation and any subsequent blessedness. They would see themselves as the result of the awful suffering of our substitute who is Christ Jesus the Lord. Secondly, we would note that since he was in the mode of instruction that we are directed to trust the Lord fully and so be exercised in the faith of God's elect. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:6.* The result of these two things would be a sense that all that comes to us has the mercy of the Lord as His reason for giving and forgiving!

What a delightful thought it is that in whatever direction we look or in whatever way we might go that we are attended by the mercy of the Lord. The Scripture abundantly declares that we are justified freely by His grace alone. It is through Christ our Lord that the forgiveness of sins is preached to us. Mercy does not stop there. It continues on with us in the pursuit of the Lord and the life that is in Him. As we look at the threats around us we may be fully assured that mercy attends and prevails. John declared that "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." This was a declaration of fact with the intent of the Lord to exercise that greatness

in overcoming. The servant of Elisha when in craven fear of a fearful enemy force was shown the host of the Lord standing between them and danger. So we are assured that the Lord has provided that even the angels are employed to minister to the heirs of salvation.

Two things are a source of happiness to believers. The first is that God sovereignly dispenses mercy – "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Thus we are assured that He will have mercy. The second is that He delights to do so: *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. Micah 7:18.* So, it is to the great joy of those who trust in the Lord to behold Him and His mercy at every turn.

Not only are we surrounded by mercy, we are surrounded by the effects of it and given the ability to both acknowledge it and celebrate it. So David expressed it thusly: *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. Psalms 32:7.* May we not "sing of the mercies of the Lord forever?" *bhs*

A Summary of the Character of the Gospel

The Gospel is a wise and gracious dispensation, equally suited to the necessities of man and to the perfections of God. It proclaims relief to the miserable, and excludes none but those who exclude themselves. It convinces a sinner that he is unworthy of the smallest mercy, at the same time that it gives him a confidence to expect the greatest. It cuts off all pretense of glorying in the flesh, but it enables a guilty sinner to glory in God. To them that have no might, it increases strength; it gives eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; subdues the enmity of the heart, shows the nature of sin, the spirituality and sanction of the law with the fullest evidence; and, by exhibiting Jesus as made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to all who believe, it makes obedience practicable, easy, and delightful. The constraining love of Christ, engages the heart and every faculty in his service. His example illustrates and recommends his precepts, his presence inspires courage and activity under every pressure, and the prospect of the glory to be revealed, is a continual source of joy and peace, which passeth the understanding of the natural man. Thus the gospel filleth the hungry with good things, but it sendeth the rich and self-sufficient empty away, and leaves the impenitent and unbelieving in a state of aggravated guilt and condemnation.

--John Newton *Works Volume 2*

ATONEMENT

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. Genesis 6:14

It may be surprising to learn that God's instruction to Noah concerning the Ark's design contain the first reference in the Bible to the great doctrine of atonement. The Hebrew used here for pitch (*kaphar*) is the same word translated "atonement" in many other places in the Old Testament.

While the New Testament word "atonement" implies reconciliation, the Old Testament word "atonement" was merely a covering (with many applications). As the pitch was to make the Ark watertight, keeping the judgment waters of the Flood from reaching those inside, so, on the sacrificial altar, "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11), keeping the fires of God's wrath away from the sinner for whom the sacrifice was substituted and slain. The pitch was a covering for the Ark, and the blood was a covering for the soul, the first assuring physical deliverance, the second spiritual salvation.

However, not even the shed blood on the altar could really produce salvation. It could assure it through faith in God's promises on the part of the sinner who offered it, but the "blood of bulls and of goats" could never "take away sin" (Hebrews 10:4).

Both the covering pitch and animal blood were mere symbols of the substituting death of Jesus Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:25). Through faith in Christ, our sins are 'covered' under the blood, forgiven by God, and replaced by His own perfect righteousness, by all of which we become finally and fully reconciled to God. --Henry Morris



The Deepes

(A Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*)

Lord Jesus, give me a deeper repentance, a horror of sin, a dread of its approach. Help me chastely to flee it and jealously to resolve that my heart shall be Thine alone.

Give me a deeper trust, that I may lose myself to find myself in Thee, the ground of my rest, the spring of my being. Give me a deeper knowledge of Thyself as saviour, master, lord, and king. Give me deeper power in private prayer, more sweetness in Thy Word, more steadfast grip on its truth. Give me deeper holiness in speech, thought, action, and let me not seek moral virtue apart from Thee.

Plough deep in me, great Lord, heavenly husbandman, that my being may be a tilled field, the roots of grace spreading far and wide, until Thou alone art seen in me, Thy beauty golden like summer harvest, Thy fruitfulness as autumn plenty.

I have no master but Thee, no law but Thy will, no delight but Thyself, no wealth but that Thou givest, no good but that Thou blessest, no peace but that Thou bestowest. I am nothing but that Thou makest me. I have nothing but that I receive from Thee. I can be nothing but that grace adorns me. Quarry me deep, dear Lord, and then fill me to overflowing with living water.