

There is nothing little in God. His mercy is like Himself--it is infinite. You cannot measure it. His mercy is so great, that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time — and then gives great favors and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great Heaven of the great God!

--Charles Spurgeon

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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16. Q. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God (Gen. 3:6, 7, 8, 13; Eccles. 7:29).

17. Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God (1 John 3:4).

18. Q. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6, 12, 16, 17).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthjsj@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

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UNPROFITABLE

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke 17:10

The words “please” and “thank you” fit well in the vocabulary of common courtesy among men; we teach our children to use them along with other good manners. Even employers, in giving a directive, might adorn the order with “please,” and add a “thank you” when the task is accomplished. The thought with them is not obligation so much as gentleness and courtesy. It is to be noticed that the Lord never said “please” in conjunction with any commandment nor ever said “thank you” in the matter of the deeds of his servants. The words of our text place these thoughts into proper perspective as to our relationship with the Lord as His servants.

This verse comes at the end of an exchange with the disciples that began with the first verse of the chapter. Our Lord first warned of offenses that were sure to come; He indicated that the offenders would be properly punished. But, then He directed the matter of warning to themselves. It would seem that there was a dual message. They were warned to take heed to themselves that their actions be consistent and not after the manner of this world. It would be important that they be not found as offenders themselves. Furthermore, they were warned in the matter of being ready to forgive their brother even in the matter of repeated offenses. This presented a double difficulty to them. The first being simply the matter of rebuking the offending brother with the aim of winning him. The flesh finds it more desirable to harbor the offense than to take the initiative in

a resolution. The second issue was that of being able to truly forgive in such extreme cases. It is to be remembered that “through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

This led to the prayer of the disciples: *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. Luke 17:5.* The endurance of offenses to the overcoming of the tendencies of fallen men all seemed too much for them and so they prayed. In answering, our Lord proceeded to tell them of the great value of the faith for which they prayed. Indeed, they would see greater things than that described come to pass as a result of the faith He would give them. But, then He would reinforce this thought with a most powerful parable.

We must not miss the fact that this parable is descriptive of the relationship of the Lord to His people. In reading it, a first thought might be that it seems rather harsh and emphatic. In fact, it is. But, like all else that the Lord says and does it is profitable for the Lord’s people. Alexander MacLaren observed something to the effect that inside a rough outward husk was enclosed a precious kernel that would bless those who find it.

The fact that the Lord began the parable with a connecting phrase and a question leads us to note the proper reference. With this parable, He is still answering the prayer of the disciples – “Lord, increase our faith.” The parable portrays the relationship between a slave and a master. The slave belongs to the

master and is kept for the purpose of serving him as he wills. The question is pursued with the pictures of the slave coming in after a hard day's labor in the field and then being required to prepare the master's evening meal and waiting until he has eaten before he is allowed to eat. He asks the disciples to put themselves in the place of the master. The question is, does he thank that servant for having done what is understood to be the duty of the slave. Jesus answered the question for them. This would seem hard to most.

How then does this connect to the matter of increasing their faith? Several things come to mind. He would have them to know that being a child of God, a Christian, is not a mere sideline. It is the life to which the believer has been called. The disciples would come to know themselves to be the slaves of the Lord. *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; Titus 1:1.* The word for servant here is "slave." It is true that the true believer enjoys many relationships with Christ, and none supersedes any other. He is Prophet, Priest and King. He is our Brother and our friend – "the firstborn among many brethren. But, we also know that "we are not our own" and that we

"are bought with a price." As such then all our lives and our service are at the disposal of the Lord and He claims an absolute title to all. Were it not for the realization of the love of God that brought us into such a relationship it might seem hard.

Our Lord taught His disciples, and us, that we can bring nothing to the Lord that He does not already have. We can make no additions to His being, His attributes or to His glory. We can make no contribution even to our own salvation. It is to be noted that even a horrible master must care for his slave if he is to serve him. We are brought preciously to know that Lord has made the care of our souls a matter of infinite priority in that, in mercy, He gave His Son to redeem us by His own blood. He abundantly provides.

Our faith is increased as we come to know that His absolute ownership of us is not remotely connected to the oppression of the evil taskmasters of this world. And, while we render unquestioning service to Him here (a matter of personal delight to those who do), the time will come when the role will be reversed: *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Revelation 7:17. bhs*

Will You Go to Heaven?

Some religionists seek converts by asking "Would you like to know how to go to heaven when you die?" If you do, they coax you to do what they say will save you, and assure you that you will go to heaven when you die. It is not unusual to see such converts living like the devil and a child of hell until they die. But they are assured that they will then go to heaven to be with Jesus as children of God, because someone told them so.

No such thing happened in God's Word. You will not find a Biblical preacher asking sinners if they would like to know how to go to heaven when they die. And all who live like the devil and a child of hell go to hell to be with the devil.

I will not ask you "Would you like to know how to go to heaven when you die?" – for I am not a peddler of worthless hell insurance or spiritual fire escapes.

But I will ask you this question: "Will you go to heaven when you die?"

And I have Scriptural warrant for doing so. The Holy Spirit asks “Who may ascend into the hill of Jehovah? Or who may stand in His holy place?” (Psalm 24:3). He then answers His own question: “He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully” (v.4).

None will go to heaven – Jehovah’s hill and holy place – except those who are described by these four characteristics:

First and second, you must be holy in your deeds and motives – one who has “clean hands and a pure heart”. “Hands” represent deeds (Ecclesiastes 9:10, 2:11). “Heart” represents thoughts and motives (Proverb 23:7a; Matthew 5:19). Hands and hearts that are “clean” and “pure” have been washed from their sins by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ (Zechariah 13:1; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:5). They received this purification through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 15:9). Afterward their motives and deeds are holy.

Third, you must be holy in your desires – one “who has not lifted up his soul to an idol”. To lift up your soul to something is to set your heart or mind upon it (as the Hebrew term is rendered in Deuteronomy 24:15). To lift up your soul “to an idol” (unto vanity in KJV) is to set your heart upon a worthless thing and to make your desires to be regarding it. You must not set your heart on iniquity (Hosea 4:8) or riches (Psalm 62:10) or other earthly things (Colossians 3:2) or a manmade god. Rather, you must set your heart upon Jesus Christ (Psalm 25:1) and heavenly things (Colossians 3:1f).

Fourth, you must be holy in your speech – one “who has not ... sworn deceitfully”. Your speech must be godly, honest and faithful. You must not take God’s name in vain, nor be a liar or perjurer or deceitful speaker.

None will go to heaven but they who are holy in their motives and deeds and desires and speech.

Will you go to heaven?

– Daniel E. Parks, Saint Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands

In all your course, follow Christ as a little, poor, helpless child, taking hold of His hand, keeping your eye on the mark of the wounds on His hands and side, whence came the blood that cleanses you from sin, and hiding your nakedness under the skirt of the white shining robe of His righteousness.

--Jonathan Edwards

"Prayer runs parallel with the will of God. Prayer reaches up to heaven and brings heaven down to earth. Prayer contains a double blessing. It rewards the person who prays and blesses him who is prayed for. It brings peace to places of conflict. There is an inner and outer calm that comes to him who prays. Right praying not only makes life beautiful and peaceful, but it also infuses righteousness. Honesty, integrity and strength of character are the natural and essential fruit of prayer."

--E.M. Bounds