

“If we do not abide in prayer, we will abide in temptation. Let this be one aspect of our daily intercession: ‘God, preserve my soul, and keep my heart and all its ways so that I will not be entangled.’ When this is true in our lives, a passing temptation will not overcome us. We will remain free while others lie in bondage.”

- John Owen

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)

23. Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (Eph. 1:4, 5), did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 3:20-22; Gal. 3:21, 22).

24. Q. Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5, 6); who, being the eternal Son of God, became man (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4), and so was and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever (Rom. 9:5; Lk. 1:35; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24, 25).

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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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GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Timothy 1:2

How sweetly and easily do the terms Grace, Mercy, and Peace roll off the tongues of those who have been precious brought into a saving relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. When the source of these things in us is the subject of our meditations, the confidence of our prayers, the aim of our desires, and the foundation of our hope, these three things appear sweeter still. In that these are bound up in the infinite person of our Triune God we find that individually and collectively they become a great deep into which we would be plunged often. And so, it occurs to us that the use of these terms in biblical salutations is not merely a matter of routine well-wishing by the Apostle; they are rather prayers that the addressee would experience these things to the fullest. Such was the desire of Paul for His beloved son Timothy. Such should be the desire of we who follow after that this same depth of experience be unto us.

It is of interest that Paul often uses this form of greeting in his epistles. Only in the letters to Timothy and Titus did he insert the word “mercy” between “grace and “peace.” Some express doubt that the use of “mercy” in Titus is correct. In thinking of the tasks that lay before both men, it seems consistent that the same desire should be expressed for both. The challenges to both were great as they faced a world where wickedness and idolatry were deeply ingrained in the culture and were constantly roaring against the Gospel they

preached. To be personally anchored in the truth was critical. To be personally assured of it was essential. It was for the ministering of these things to the heart of Timothy that Paul prayed and expressed the same to him.

It is unthinkable that Timothy would not have understood much of the workings of the grace of God. He would have heard Paul say, perhaps often, that: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Ephesians 2:8.* He would have been sensitive to the fact that the grace of God which “appeared to all men teaching...” was in existence in eternity past and thus salvation in time was determined. The realization of his election unto salvation could only have been of grace since by grace he would have known that there was nothing in him to merit divine favor. The initiation and completion of every step of the way in Timothy’s life, from the preparations in childhood, to the issuing of the divine call, to conviction, to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, to the implementation of the gifts now being called forth, all was of grace and he surely knew it to be true. But, Paul knew that grace was not finished with him and much awaited accomplishment. Grace realized and understood in this way places one squarely in the purpose of God with the assurance that there can be no failure there. Paul would not have Timothy to presume; he would have him to experience the grace of God.

It has been well said by many and in

different ways that “grace is God giving us what we do not deserve and that mercy is God withholding what we do deserve.” There is a simplicity in that statement that might cause us to miss another aspect of divine mercy. We often hear of governors and presidents commuting the sentences of criminals which certainly may be seen as acts of mercy. It is highly doubtful that any of them have further dealings with those set free. David, Zacharias and James all characterized the mercy of the Lord as “tender.” It is perhaps in this we understand what Paul desired for Timothy. We should direct fallen men to cast themselves on the mercy of God as their only hope. But, there is more in mercy than an escape from hell or even of justification. J. B. Owen wrote that “mercy develops the counsel of redemption. This he based on the thought that a consciousness of mercy received entails a realization of a judgment incurred from which one is delivered. The fact of mercy implies a victim in that if none were ever punished the term would be meaningless. The implication to us is obvious. Christ is the “Lamb of God...” It behooved Timothy, and us, to realize that mercy is in every expression of the love of God to His people and most prominently in the giving of His Son. The determination to show mercy drove every bit of the suffering of Christ from the manger to the cross.

A. R. Faussett (JFB) wrote: “‘Mercy’ is grace of a more tender kind, exercised toward the miserable, the experience of which in one’s own case especially fits for the Gospel Ministry.” In drawing closer to the Lord in devotion and service there is a greater consciousness of sin and guilt. Mercy realized is a healing balm. Paul had not forgotten his own circumstance and wrote: *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 1 Timothy 1:13.*

Grace and mercy are not to be separated. We would rather join them in our thoughts and as a result of that which is so ministered to us experience peace – even “peace on earth.” We are reminded of the precious grace of God by which we are justified and the merciful presence of He who is our peace. How precious are the words of the Psalmist: *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Psalms 85:10.* And, likewise, the words of the prophet: *And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Isaiah 32:17.*

May it be the prayer of all that these things be unto us, as they were desired for Timothy, and that coming from “God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” produce the peace with God and the peace of God that are for His Glory. *bhs*

The Divine Light in Darkness

For thou wilt light my candle. (Psalm 18:28)

It may be that my soul sits in darkness; and if this be of a spiritual kind, no human power can bring me light. Blessed be God! He can enlighten my darkness and at once light my candle. Even though I may be surrounded by a “darkness which might be felt,” yet He can break the gloom and immediately make it bright around me. The mercy is that if He lights the candle none can blow it out, neither will it go out for lack of substance, nor burn out of itself through the lapse of hours. The lights which the Lord kindled in the beginning are shining still. The Lord’s lamps may need trimming, but He does not put them out. Let me, then, lite the nightingale sing in the dark. Expectation shall furnish me with music, and hope shall pitch the tune. Soon I shall rejoice in a

candle of God's lighting. I am dull and dreary just now. Perhaps it is the weather, or bodily weakness, or the surprise of a sudden trouble; but whatever has made the darkness, it is God alone who will bring the light. My eyes are unto Him alone. I shall soon have the candles of the Lord shining about me; and, further on in His own good time, I shall be where they need no candle, neither light of the sun. Hallelujah!

C. H. Spurgeon *Faith's Checkbook*

IT TOOK ONLY ONE GENERATION for the human race to produce its first murderer (Gen. 4). Two reflections: (1) In the Bible, there are many motives behind murder. Jehu killed for political advantage (2 Kings 9–10); David killed to cover up his adultery (2 Sam. 11); Joab murdered out of revenge, and out of the fear of having his privileged position usurped (2 Sam. 3); some of the men of Gibeah in Benjamin killed out of unbridled lust (Judg. 19). It would be easy to enlarge the list. On the occasion of the first murder, the motive was sibling rivalry out of control. Cain could not bear to think that his brother Abel's offering was acceptable to God, while his own was not. Instead of seeking God so as to improve his own sacrifice, he killed the man he saw as his rival. What is common to all these motives is the assumption entertained by the murderer that he or she is at the center of the universe. Even God must approve what I do; if not, since I cannot kill God, I will kill those whom God approves. Instead of the glorious situation that obtained before the Fall, when in the minds of God's image-bearers, God himself was at the center, and loved and cherished as our good and wise Maker and Ruler, now each individual wants to be the center of the universe, as if saying, "Even God must serve me. If he does not, perhaps it is time to invent new gods...." Among the shocking elements in the murder of Cain is the stark fact that Cain's nose is out of joint because he does not have God's approval. The fatal sibling rivalry lies in this instance in the domain of religion. No matter: once I insist on being number one, I must be number one in every domain. Sad to tell, if the constraints of culture and fear of the penal system restrain me from outright murder, they are unlikely to restrain me from the kind of hate that the Lord Jesus insists is of the same moral order as murder (Matt. 5:21-26). So while the motives for murder are superficially many, at heart they become one: I wish to be god. And that is the supreme idolatry. (2) In the Bible, the innocent are sometimes murdered. In this account, Abel is the righteous brother, yet he is the one who is murdered. From this fact we must reflect on two things. First, the Bible is utterly realistic about the horrible cruelty and unfairness of sin. Second, already by way of anticipation, we quietly recognize that if ultimate redress and justice are possible, God must intervene—and the books can only finally be squared after death.

D. L. Carson *For the Love of God Vol. 1*

I believe the most hard-hearted, most cross-grained and most unloving Christians in all the world — are those who have not had much trouble in their life. And those that are the most sympathizing, loving and Christlike are generally those who have the most affliction. The worse thing that can happen to any of us is to have a path made too smooth. One of the greatest blessings the Lord ever gave us was a cross.

-- Spurgeon