

Being a Christian is not an acquired skill or discipline like diving or ice skating. It is a living, vital relationship with the God of the universe, a relationship that begins when a person becomes a new creation in Him and receives Jesus as Lord by faith.

--R. C. Sproul

### BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 91. What does every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and in that which is to come. (Eph.5:6; Gal. 3:10; Prov. 3:33; Ps. 11:6; Rev. 21:8)

Q. 92. What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption. (Acts 20:21; Acts 16:30,31; 17:30)

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM— In Richwood

#### Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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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### THE MEANING OF MERCY

*But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matthew 9:13*

The call of Matthew occasioned a precious declaration concerning the terms of salvation and the necessity of mercy in both fact and in practice. Matthew, like many others, was an unlikely candidate for salvation in the eyes of the Pharisees and others of high religious thinking. Of course, this may be applied with certainly to all who have ever come to Christ. As we note throughout the New Testament, there is a qualification for those coming to Christ – the mercy of God is their only hope. This is a fact that becomes known to one being awakened, first to his sinful condition and so being driven to repentance and then to Christ Jesus our Lord as the only remedy for sin. It becomes evident that no amount of goodness in us (we have none) and no amount of works (we can offer none) could ever meet the demands of our Holy God for acceptance with Him. Here they were given a clear mandate and so it proceeds to all who read it. We are to “go and learn.”

He was bidding them to go as one would go on a journey and to learn as they went. By this, we should understand that such going, and learning is an ongoing process for all who know of the mercy of God. Wesley expressed just such concern in the lines of the hymn, “Depth of mercy! can there be Mercy still reserved for me?” Mercy is not only to be known; it is to be a matter experienced in the heart of one receiving it. The mercy of God will continue to be a wonder to all who receive it and we will see it more and more as we “...grow in the grace and

knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

The fact that Matthew was a publican was distressing to those who observed Christ eating with him and others of the same profession. It is certain that they could never, in their present state, understand the selective grace of Christ. How often do we see surprise registered on the face of unbelievers at the conversion of the unlikely. But we note that many “sinners” were attracted by the attention of Christ to Matthew. It seemed that Matthew brought many to meet the One who had just shown him mercy. This will always draw the attention of the righteous in that such action invalidates their claim to salvation by their perceived righteousness.

As we observe the many who flock to religion it is apparent that they have no concept of mercy and do not see themselves as sinners. They hear the words, but they are never pressed. They listen only for that which validates their pride and sense of self-accomplishment. Among so many today mercy is a strange word. Yet, God is merciful and that is cause for rejoicing among lowly sinners such as I. Our Lord quoted scripture, but it meant nothing to the Pharisees.

What is the meaning of mercy? From Webster’s 1828 we read that mercy is “That benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or treat an offender better than he deserves; the disposition that tempers justice, and induces an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries,

and to forbear punishment, or to inflict less than law or justice will warrant..." The definition continues and ends with the declaration that Mercy is a distinguishing attribute of the Supreme Being. All that is well and good but falls short of telling us the whole story. The suggestion is that justice is simply withheld. It is true that the love of God induced God to forgiveness, but not without justice being served and holiness being vindicated. Paul declares that "through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." It is evident that sacrifice was required, but not such as they could offer.

We would see mercy here in two ways. We would first remember that it is at the sovereign disposal of God and so He declares: *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Romans 9:18.* And so, we know ourselves to be the object of His love and the result of His mercy. The second way is seen in the practice of His people. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7.* We would see here that being the recipient of mercy makes one act in that way toward others. Mercy is not a onetime thing. As is evident from the Beatitude it continues to be manifested to its recipients. There was no such evidence among the Pharisees.

The Pharisees believed their sacrifice was

enough and was therefore rejected. None could be accepted but that which the Lord Himself provided. Christ received what we deserved in making the ultimate sacrifice and so we did not receive what we deserved. It is therein that God is glorified and will "bring many sons to glory."

God's mercy will be embraced by those who know their need. The implication is that a true realization of the awfulness of sin reveals the absolute need of mercy. This sense is not arrived at by a logical process worked out in the mind. It is a call from the Lord in which the Holy Spirit brings the experience that one is undone, and it is there we learn the meaning of mercy and not sacrifice. Paul never ceased to invoke that thought in saying "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God..."

All who hear that call have had their condition revealed to them and they come. And, they continue all their lifetime to learn the meaning of "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" knowing that the benefits will follow them throughout eternity in the presence of our Blessed Lord. It is certainly a mandate to the self-righteous Pharisee. But it is a mandate to all. Again, from Wesley, "Now incline me to repent, Let me now my sins lament, Now my foul revolt deplore, Weep believe and sin no more." The words are clear: "go forth and learn." *bhs*

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## DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. —2 Corinthians 6:17

The church's mightiest influence is felt when she is different from the world in which she lives. Her power lies in her being different, rises with the degree in which she differs and sinks as the difference diminishes.

This is so fully and clearly taught in the Scriptures and so well illustrated in Church history that it is hard to see how we can miss it. But miss it we do, for we hear constantly that the Church must try to be as much like the world as possible, excepting, of course, where the world is too, too sinful...

Let us plant ourselves on the hill of Zion and invite the world to come over to us, but

never under any circumstances will we go over to them. The cross is the symbol of Christianity, and the cross speaks of death and separation, never of compromise. No one ever compromised with a cross. The cross separated between the dead and the living. The timid and the fearful will cry “Extreme!” and they will be right. The cross is the essence of all that is extreme and final. The message of Christ is a call across a gulf from death to life, from sin to righteousness and from Satan to God.

*Lord, help me to be willing to be different. Forgive me for the sin of blending in. I pray that our neighbors would see something different in our church and our people and be drawn to the Savior. Amen.* –A. W. Tozer

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From *The Trellis and the Vine*

That all the disciples were speaking boldly in the name of Jesus shouldn't surprise us in Acts 4, because Acts 2 tells us to expect it. When the Holy Spirit descends so strikingly on the assembled disciples, he descends upon them all, and they all start declaring “the mighty works of God”, as verse 11 puts it. This, says Peter, is only what the prophet Joel said would happen. In the “last days”, says Joel, when God's Spirit was poured out on all flesh, everyone would prophesy—the young, the old, men and women, all the way down to the servants of the household—all would declare the word of the Lord (Acts 2:16-18). All would testify to Jesus, because the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10). This pattern continues throughout the New Testament. There are of course leaders, teachers, elders, overseers, pastors and evangelists—people who have leading roles and responsibilities in declaring God's word and shepherding his people—but alongside these, there is a constant stream of references to the ‘word ministry’ of each and every Christian. Speaking God's word for the growth of the vine is the work not of the few but of the many. –Colin Marshal and Tony Payne

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From: *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution* by R. Albert Mohler

If the petition “give us this day our daily bread” emphasizes our most urgent physical needs, the petition “forgive us our debts” emphasizes our most urgent spiritual need. Saying we owe a debt to God means that we have failed to give him the obedience he is rightly due. We owe God our obedience, and we have failed to pay up. Thus, as sinners, we stand before God condemned, rightly deserving his just wrath. Only God's forgiveness can clear our guilt and establish a meaningful relationship between God and us. This petition reminds us that the Lord's Prayer is not a casual prayer for the generically religious. This prayer is a gospel prayer. We can only say these words and ask these things of God when we stand on the finished, atoning work of Jesus Christ. Indeed, this petition demonstrates that the theological bedrock of the Lord's Prayer is nothing less than the gospel. We can only rightly pray the Lord's Prayer when we recognize that we are deeply sinful and only God's grace in Christ can remedy our souls.

**THERE IS NO DEATH OF SIN WITHOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST. –JOHN OWEN**