

Every believer is called to ministry. We're called to see that all of the tasks of the kingdom take place—that the poor are ministered to, the gospel is proclaimed, the Word of God is taught, and worship takes place. But that doesn't mean that everyone is called to be an evangelist, a preacher, or a teacher. The New Testament tells us that God gives every Christian a gift to be used for the service of Christ. If your gift is teaching, then you had better teach; if it's preaching, you should preach; if it's evangelism, you had better evangelize. If your role is to be a caregiver to shut-ins, then be a caregiver to shut-ins. But each one of us is called to do our part, thus ensuring that all the ministry is fulfilled. -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. 109. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies. (1 John 5:14; 1 John 1:9; Phil. 4:6; Ps. 10:17; 145:19; John 14:13,14)

Q. 110. What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that prayer, which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17)

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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 SUBSTANCE OF MERCY DESIRED

O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Psalms 90:14

Thoughts of mercy begin with the realization that we have sinned against God, against His holiness, and against His Son and that we deserve infinite and eternal punishment. The often-cited observation is that Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve. If mercy is not received nothing else matters. There could be no true gladness and our days would proceed along the path of destruction. But there is mercy with the Lord. Peter preciously acknowledges that fact and more: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3*. From this and other references such as this Psalm we know that mercy is more than the commutation of a sentence. It is of substance.

The reasoning of Moses in this Psalm is that all we receive, and the blessedness of grace made effective in us begins with sovereign mercy (Romans 9:16, 18). He would consider all that follows to be of mercy in that any participation in that wherein God is glorified and the joy that attends it could never have been otherwise. And so, he prays for the things that identify the Lord's people as redeemed and regenerated and that enables their participation in the life from above. Such a life is characterized by rejoicing and gladness. And, that gladness is the result of the things desired and that give substance to mercy received.

The actual prayer of Moses begins in v. 12 with the desire that we might be able to account

for our days in the interest of fruitfulness. In v. 13, the prayer is for forgiveness of past sins. The petition in our text looks to productivity and participation in the true worship of God. The fact of redemption accomplished is implied in that the view is toward the relationship of the Lord with His people. What follows in the Psalm is the desired outcome of mercy applied and so would embrace the thought of “abundant mercy” as Peter used it. The mercy requested is for gladness, revelation, and establishment. Such would be the prayer that would seek God's glory as the reason for the things desired.

And thus, he prays: *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Psalms 90:15*. Gladness is the objective. It is, however, with the understanding that such gladness could never exist apart from the knowledge of God. We need only read of the dealings of Moses with the Israelites to know of the evil of which he speaks. As a result of their rebellions they had known much tribulation and trial. There was no doubt as to who had afflicted them, and so Moses confesses. His desire is that in mercy they would be made to know gladness from the Lord. Such gladness would be realized as they were made to see the Lord's interest in them and the engagement of the Lord in their behalf. True gladness will prevail over the afflictions suffered in the flesh and at the hand of God. Grace enables us to see that even these things are because the Lord cares for His own. Moses would see it as abundant mercy that the Lord

should be the reason of gladness.

The prayer for mercy continues with the desire to see the works of the Lord in such a way as to reflect the glory of God. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. Psalms 90:16.* In reference to the works of the Lord many are given to think of the outward display of His power and so will confess His ability. The mystery of providence continues to be just that. It is important here to see that the desire to see His works entails much more. All could see the wonders of creation and even credit the Lord with it all. The thought of it being caused to “appear unto thy servants” suggests that they realize that there is design, purpose, and a connection to redemption. Furthermore, it is a means of displaying His glory.

Being able to see His glory in all that He has done and is doing is mercy indeed. The thought of glory brings to mind and heart such things as magnificence, splendor, comeliness, honor, and majesty. And so, the message to this and future generations is that God has gloriously created all things and that it is He who gloriously saves. Ultimately it is for the revelation of Christ and His glory. Such is that we behold in His person. We marvel at the mighty and glorious work of redemption by His blood. We delight to hear of

the conquest of the enemy. We behold His beauty in the perfect life of obedience that culminated in the cross and bringing of many sons unto glory.

The prayer ends by asking for such mercy as would manifest His work in us. *And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. Psalms 90:17.* The beauty of the Lord is, perhaps, a neglected thought. It relates to His suitability to receive glory and points to the fact that He delights in His own beauty. So, it would be His aim that His beauty would be upon us (we have none of our own) and that it would be seen in the character and countenance of His people. Here we are given liberty to act as we pray that the works of our hands have the stamp of divine identity upon them.

All these things point to the mercy of the Lord as the source of our gladness and all our substance is mercy. “The fruit of the Spirit is ...joy...” after all. It is such joy that finds its greatest motivator in looking to Him who has redeemed us. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. Psalms 23:6.*
bhs

Except Ye Repent –A. W. Pink

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

In view of these solemn words it is tremendously important that each of us should seek and obtain from God the repentance which He requires, not resting content with anything short of this. Hence, there needs to be the most diligent and prayerful examination as to the character of our repentance. Multitudes are deceived thereon. Many are perplexed by the conflicting teaching of men on this subject; but instead of that discouraging, it should stir up to a more earnest searching of the Scriptures. Before turning to the positive side of this branch of our theme, let us first point out some of the features of a nonsaving repentance.

Trembling beneath the preaching of God's Word is not repentance. True, there are thousands of people who have listened unmoved to the most awe-inspiring sermons, and even descriptions of the torments of the damned have struck no terror to their

hearts. Yet, on the other hand, many who were deeply stirred, filled with alarm, and moved to tears, are now in hell. I have seen the faces of strong men pale under a searching message, yet next day all its effects had left them. Felix “trembled” (Acts 24:25) under the preaching of Paul!

Being “almost persuaded” is not repentance. Agrippa (Acts 26:28) is a case in point. A person may give full assent to the messages of God's servant, admire the gospel, yea, receive the Word with joy, and after all, be only a stony-ground hearer (Matt. 13:20-21). Not only so, he may be conscious of his evildoing and acknowledge the same. Pharaoh owned, “I have sinned against the Lord your God” (Exod. 10:16). A man may realize that he ought to yield himself to the claims of God and become a Christian, yet never be more than “almost persuaded.”

Humbling ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God is not repentance. People may be deeply moved, weep, go home and determine to reform their lives, and yet return to their sins. A solemn example of this is found in Ahab. That wicked king of Israel coveted Naboth's vineyard, plotted to secure it, and gained his end by causing him to be murdered. Then the servant of God met him and said, “Hast thou killed and also taken possession?” And we are told that “he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted . . . and went softly” (I Kings 21:27-29). Yet in the very next chapter we find him again rebelling against God, and that he was cut off by divine judgment. Ah, my reader, you may have humbled yourself before God for a time, and yet remain the slave of your lusts. You may be afraid of hell, and yet not of sinning. If hell were extinguished, so would be the repentance of many church members. O mistake not fear of the wrath to come for a holy hatred and horror of sin.

Confessing sins is not repentance. Thousands have gone forward to the “altar” or “mourners' bench” and have told God what vile creatures they were, enumerating a long list of transgressions, but without any deep realization of the unspeakable awfulness of their sins, or a spark of holy hatred of them. The sequel has shown this, for they now ignore God's commandments as much as they did before. O my reader, if you do not, in the strength of God, resist sin, if you do not turn from it, then your fancied repentance is only whitewash—paint which decorates, but not the grace which transforms into gold.

All things are indebted for their existence to the continuous sustaining action of God exercised through His Son. Nothing exists of its own inherent power of being. Nothing in all creation stands or acts independently of the Lord's will. The so-called laws of nature are nothing more than the physical expression of the steady will of Christ. The law of gravity operates with unceasing certainty because Christ continuously wills it to operate. The chair I am sitting on while I write these words holds together because the atoms and molecules in the wood are held in place by His active will. The stars continue in their courses because He keeps them there. It is God “who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing” (Isaiah 40: 26). —Jerry Bridges

TAKE NOTICE NOT ONLY OF THE MERCIES OF GOD, BUT OF GOD IN THE MERCIES. MERCIES ARE NEVER SO SAVORY AS WHEN THEY SAVOR OF A SAVIOR. —RALPH VENNING