

I don't think there is any area of the Christian life in which people are more weighed down by guilt than in the area of their prayer lives. Most Christians will readily confess that their prayer lives are not what they should be. And one major reason for this problem is that Christians don't really know how to pray effectively.

--R. C. Sproul

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

III. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

Gen.1:27; Gen.1:31; Ecc.7:29; Acts 17:26-29; Gen.2:16-17; Gen.3:6-24; Rom. 5:12; Rom.5:15-19; Ps.51:5; Rom.8:7; Isa.53:6; Gen.6:12; Rom.3:9-18; Eph.2:1-3; Rom.1:18,32; Rom.2:1-16; Gal.3:10; Matt. 20:15; Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom.1:20; Rom.3:19; Gal. 3:22.

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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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BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? ³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts 16:29-31

Shallowness in contemporary Christianity has been a concern of many for quite some time. J. I. Packer wrote: “Christianity in North America is 3000 miles wide and one-half inch deep.” A similar statement was made by the twentieth century evangelist Vance Havner who also once said to a large gathering, “we are many, but we are not much.” These references are perhaps more justified today than when they were first uttered. This condition is somewhat owing to the concepts of the system of easy belief. Such a system reveals a minimum of scripture and requires a minimum of commitment. So, it is easy to “get saved” in that so little is required. It has been well said “salvation is free, but it will cost you everything.”

One of the favorite tactics of the deceivers is to excerpt portions of scripture and selectively fit it into their system. In that way it can be made to adapt to worldly thinking and be embraced with a minimum of disruption in the life of those being approached. Our text contains one such portion of scripture. In the absence of what led up to the statement, people are simply told that all they must do is “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” The merest of acknowledgments are accepted as sufficient to obligate the “God of all grace” to save them. They are then given assurance rather than being shown from the Word of God what constitutes true assurance – a believing life in Christ.

It is to be feared that the matter of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is a presumption with many professing Christians rather than an ongoing way of life in which they truly “know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3).” Paul’s answer to this jailor is a precious statement indeed and one that Gospel preachers often reference because precious insight is given about the believing experience. Sadly, many are being given this as an answer to a question they have never asked or even felt the need to ask.

We would focus first upon the jailor. It was said of Jesus that “He must needs go through Samaria.” The reason of that necessity was soon revealed at Jacob’s well. One of His elect would there meet Him both physically and in the way of salvation. Paul had, in a vision, seen a man of Macedonia who prayed “come over here and help us.” Paul would go by way of a beating and imprisonment in order to meet one such Macedonian man who would hear precious words from Paul. The story of the actions of Paul and Silas are well known and so we come to the situation that provoked this heart felt cry “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” At the first he had despaired of life in believing that his life would be taken because of the loss of the prisoners (they went nowhere). Men have been in far worse situations and cursed God desiring mountains to fall on them rather than face Him. That danger had passed and yet he fell down

before them trembling. John Gill wrote that it was the "...horror of his own conscience, and the dreadful sense he had of himself as a sinner, and of his lost state and condition by nature..." What did he know? How had he learned it? What had he observed, whether of other believers or the behavior of Paul and Silas in enduring persecution? The scriptures do not tell us, but we may observe that he sensed something that could only come by way of true Spiritual conviction.

What we do understand here is that he was not looking for something to say or some point action that would deliver him from his overwhelming sense of lostness. His concern was for his soul. Matthew Henry interprets his words as "Let others do as they please; tell me what I must do, what course I must take." There are the words of one who has abandoned all hope of self-deliverance and is seeking mercy and direction from without. Paul's answer is short and to the point. It would be in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ that he would find himself saved. It was not that if he believed he would "get saved." It was he would be saved in believing. The effect would be life changing thereby implying a new creation in Christ. It would entail full surrender to the Lordship and care of the One in whom he would believe. Paul would immediately follow these words with speaking to him and his house the Word of the Lord." Paul would further introduce him to the

One to whom he would direct this man's faith.

It is interesting that there is no record here of a recitation of a profession. What we do learn in the following verses is that the indicators were there that one had been born again of the Spirit of God. There was tenderness of heart as he attended to the wounds of Paul and Silas. He was baptized. He took them home with him without fear of his superiors. He rejoiced believing in God with all his house. He had not merely believed in a superficial manner; he was believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as a matter of life and living eternally with Christ.

Alexander Maclaren wrote: See how little it takes to secure salvation. But see how much it takes; for the hardest thing of all is to be content to accept it as a gift, 'without money and without price.' Many people have listened to sermons all their lives and still have no clear understanding of the way of salvation. Alas that so often the divine simplicity and brevity of Paul's answer are darkened by a multitude of irrelevant words and explanations which explain nothing." It is well that we note the use in this quote of the phrase "way of salvation." Bartimaeus "followed Jesus in the way!"

Looking again at the Jailor's experience, may we ever be in the way of believing, trusting, committing, and receiving at His hand eternal life and the joy in Him that attends such a life.
bhs

The knowledge of Christ is the centerpiece of the Christian faith. Its substance is the biblical doctrine of salvation from sin through Christ's person and work. All true Christians begin to attain the knowledge of Christ at conversion. They continue to attain it throughout the Christian life on earth, in the intermediate state in heaven, and in the eternal state of resurrection glory. The Christian life involves growth and development in experiential knowledge of Christ: "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). Christ's perfect life is the standard and example of Christian obedience. Personal communion with Christ is the spiritual life and joy of every Christian. Conformity to Christ's resurrection and perfection is the Christian hope. –Greg Nichols

The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

Every day you need it. You and I simply can't live without it. What is it? The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. I don't know where I was when the memo went out. I'm not sure why I missed the discussion. I can't explain why I had this miserable gap in my understanding of the gospel. I can't tell you why this item was missing in my theological outline, but it was, and the fact that it was missing made my Christian life pretty miserable. Here was my functional theology of my life as a child of God: I knew that by grace I had been granted God's forgiveness and I knew that I had been graced with an all-inclusive pass into eternity, but I thought that between now and then, my job was to just gut it out. It was my responsibility to identify sin, to cut it out of my life, and to give myself to living in a much better, more biblical way. I tried this, trust me; I tried it and found it didn't work. I messed up again and again. It seemed that I failed more times than I succeeded. I became more and more frustrated and discouraged. It felt as if I had been drafted into a game that I had no ability to play by someone who kept perfect score. I can remember the moment in college when it all came to a head. It was six o'clock in the morning, as I was having the devotions that I really didn't want to have, when I finally put my head down on my desk and cried, "I can't do what you're asking me to do!" Then I read the next chapter in my daily Bible reading, and by God's grace it was Romans 8. I read that chapter over and over, including these words: "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (v. 13). They were like fireworks going off in my head. God knew that my need as a sinner was so great that it was not enough for him to just forgive me; he had to come and live inside me or I would not be what I had been re-created to be or do what I had been reborn to do. I need the presence and power of the Holy Spirit living inside me because sin kidnaps the desires of my heart, blinds my eyes, and weakens my knees. My problem is not just the guilt of sin; it's the inability of sin as well. So God graces his children with the convicting, sight-giving, desire-producing, and strength-affording presence of the Spirit. It can't be said any better than Paul says it at the end of his discussion of the gift of the Spirit: "He gives life to your mortal bodies" (Rom. 8:11, my paraphrase). -Paul David Tripp *New Morning Mercies*

But Christian giving finds its starting point in how much it can give rather than in how little. It focuses upon God's generous giving, and it strives to express gratitude to God. When Mary 'took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume' and 'poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair' (John 12:3) she was expressing the gratitude every Christian feels and longs to express in tangible forms. Whenever we give to God's work we give in some way for the benefit of people. Not only does our giving itself express praise to God, but it calls forth praise to God too as many express their thanks to Him. In our giving to God we are tangibly expressing how much God means to us - which is nothing less than praise and worship. -Derek Prime *Created to Praise*

ETERNITY TO THE GODLY IS A DAY THAT HAS NO SUNSET; ETERNITY TO THE WICKED IS A NIGHT THAT HAS NO SUNRISE. -THOMAS WATSON