

"A true recognition of God's Sovereignty causes us to hold our every plan in abeyance to God's will." - A. W. Pink

"The secret things of God are not to be scrutinized, and...those which he has revealed are not to be overlooked." – John Calvin (Inst. 3.21.4)

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John 17:3

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

XVI. Of the Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society,, and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Rom. 13:1-7; Deu. 16:18; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:23; Jer. 30:21; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13; I Tim. 2:1-4; Acts 5:29; Matt.28; Dan. 3:15-18; Dan. 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Ps.72:11; Ps.2; Rom. 14:9-13

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

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 WEIGHTIER THINGS

²³ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. ²⁴ Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Matthew 23:23-24

The Apostle Paul wrote of his awakening to the nature of the Law that “...we know that the Law is spiritual...” It is certain that those addressed in this passage had no concept of spirituality and only superficial knowledge of the law they thought to honor. The scathing terms used to describe these blind leaders of the blind left no doubt as to how far they were removed from the righteousness of God. The religion of the Pharisees has well been described as the religion of the flesh. It codifies those things which assert the pride of man against the sovereignty, majesty, and grace of God. It rose to its zenith in the persecution of Christ our Lord.

In all these woes (griefs pronounced on them) Jesus identified the corruption of their outward displays of religion and so exposed the motives of an evil heart of unbelief. In this one, it is their attitude toward those that are without that is exposed. They were being ever so careful about those things that required only an outward discipline and were the kinds of things that any could do. The issues that required the laying aside of pride and the quest for personal gain were clearly of no consequence to them. If it can easily be done in the flesh it is of no value no matter how zealously and carefully it is practiced.

Even in the face of these things being called out, man tends to shy away from the harsh and absolute terms used by our Lord; rather they

want to accommodate error by defending what appears on the surface to be some degree of truth. Jesus acknowledged that their tithing of herbs ought to have been done but the qualifier here is the fact that their actions were void of redeeming virtue in the absence of the weightier things of the law. We are made to wonder how much of today’s religious activity is carried on in the absence of these things. It seems to many that such things as “common courtesy,” attending to outward displays of religion, and tolerance of the actions of others are sufficient to stand the scrutiny of the Word of God. Men may faithfully give attention to the details so that they appear to others and themselves as true devotion while they are fully at peace with this present world and the imitations of true faith that persist.

The idea of “weightier things” is simply defined. The word is defined variously as burdensome, grave, grievous and heavy. We might then ask which and easily answer, all of these. The things our Lord named are beyond the ability of the flesh to bear. They are anything but light. Thinking of the word we think of being difficult to carry in a literal sense and difficult to bear in a spiritual sense. They are things of deep meaning and effect on the person bearing them out. It is first to be noted that it is not the work of a hypocrite. It is rather the actions of one fully manifesting the nature of Christ.

While the words of Christ here are given in rebuke and condemnation of a group in which rampant fleshly evil is exposed, we would not lose sight of the importance to believers of the things identified as lacking. If the absence of these constitutes disqualification of those addressed do not the same things bear evidence to us whose trust is in Christ alone? We are exhorted to be often in the way of self-examination. This is not a looking to self-condemnation; rather it is that we may know confirmation as to being in the faith. The Lord, through the prophet provides both question and answer: *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8.* It would seem that the words of Jesus here parallel those of old. Furthermore, the Apostle addresses the thought in a similar fashion in writing: *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Colossians 3:12-13.*

There has always existed the danger of resting in the doctrines of grace rather than resting in Christ. Paul's words above describe the outcome of the grace of God in election in that the result is realized. Consider, *According as he hath chosen us in him before the*

foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Ephesians 1:4. We do not stop with the decree, we expect the outcome and such becomes a matter of both desire and action in those who know Christ. Elsewhere Jesus told the Pharisees that they did not believe because they were not His sheep. His sheep would have embraced the "weightier things." They know of judgment in the matters of justice and injustice which the Pharisees (then and now) do not. They would have been looking to obtain mercy and then to show mercy to those about them. And, they would have known, believed, and trusted the Only Begotten Son, the Lamb of God and walked humbly with Him. Faith and faithfulness are to be the order of the day with the Lord's people.

These people would filter out a gnat for fear of eating something unclean but had no issue with killing the Lord Jesus Christ. They would hire Judas to betray Jesus but refuse to accept the same money they had paid for the betrayal. Truly, they were gulping down camels without difficulty.

These "weightier things" are understood to be of great value in the sight of the Lord and these are those things to be found in those for whom Christ died. They are the result of the work of redemption in us and we should treasure them as such. They are of such weight as to require the blood of Christ to produce them in us. *bhs*

It hasn't been granted to us to understand fully the mysterious relationship between the eternal counsels of God, the promises of God, and the cries of His people, nor is it necessary that we understand. God is "over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:6), and His providence, power, and presence guarantee that His purposes will be accomplished. But in His grace, He has given us the privilege of prayer so that we might share in His great work of saving sinners and building His church. "We have not the remotest conception of what is done by our prayers," wrote Oswald Chambers, "nor have we the right to try and examine and understand it; all we know is that Jesus Christ laid all stress on prayer." Godly Robert Murray McCheyne wrote, "If the veil of the world's machinery were lifted off, how much we would find is done in answer to the

prayers of God's children." If you need a definition of prayer, here's one to consider: Prayer is the means God has ordained to glorify Himself by sharing His love with His children, meeting their needs, and accomplishing His purposes through their lives and the lives of others. This suggested definition covers some of the various aspects of prayer: worship—glorifying God, communion—loving God petition—asking God for what we need, intercession—asking God for what others need.

--Warren Wiersbe *Prayer 101*

It is important to understand that as God commands all men everywhere to repent of their sins, He likewise commands all men everywhere to believe in His Son.¹² In his first epistle, the apostle John wrote: "And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (3:23). When the multitudes asked Jesus what they must do to "work the works of God," He responded, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:28-29). It is also important to understand that people can obey the command to believe in Jesus Christ only to the exclusion of all other objects of faith. To believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world is to disbelieve all others who make a similar claim. This is possibly the most scandalous demand of the Christian faith. A person cannot make a claim of saving faith in Christ as Savior without the absolute rejection of any other means. Genuine faith does not trust in Jesus Christ as a Savior, but as the Savior. -Paul Washer

Heavenly Father, thank you for opening my spiritual ears to hear your Word, and the eyes of my heart to see ways in which I rebel against you passively, by neglecting to do as you have commanded. Forgive me for my carelessness, laziness, and willfulness. Make my heart soft and submissive, like pliable clay in the potter's hands. Lord Jesus, you taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers." I praise you for being my peacemaker, for reconciling me—a wayward sinner—back to my loving heavenly Father. Indeed, you are the Good Shepherd who has led me to the heavenly pasture; you are the guardian of my soul. Make me eternally grateful for your blood that was shed to purchase my redemption. Let me never forget the price you paid to make my forgiveness not only possible, but also real. Persistent Spirit, guard my heart from the slow-growing callous that leaves it dull to hearing, and feeling-less in regard to the biblical urgency to resolve my conflicts. Stand as an armed soldier at the door of my heart forbidding bitterness from taking up residence as the result of lingering anger or the stubborn refusal to forgive those who wrong me. Show me how I have grieved you and quenched your powerful work in my heart, and move my will to repent. Amen. -Paul Tautges

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight. C. S. Lewis