

The day of judgment is remote, thy day of judgment is at hand, and as thou goest out in particular, so shalt thou be found in the general. Thy passing-bell and the archangel's trumpet have both one sound to thee. In the same condition that thy soul leaves thy body, shall thy body be found of thy soul. Thou canst not pass from thy deathbed a sinner, and appear at the great assizes [place of judgment], a saint.

--An Unknown Puritan

GADSBY'S CATECHISM

By William Gadsby, about 1800

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

Question IX. Can God be frustrated in His purposes and designs?

Answer. No, for He works all things after the counsel of His own will, and will do all His pleasure. Job 23.13; Isa. 43.13 & 46.10; Matt. 28.18; Eph. 1.11-12.

Question X. What are the decrees of God?

Answer. The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Isa. 46.10; Rom. 8.28-30 & 9.6-24; Eph. 1.11-12; 2 Thess. 2.13-14.

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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 EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:19-20

This text is, of course, part of a prayer of Paul for the Ephesians. The expression of those things he desired for the Ephesians begins in verse 15 and continues to the end of the chapter. It speaks to us of the need of spiritual development in which we may better understand and serve our Lord. His prayer was, *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: Ephesians 1:17.* His prayer for understanding and enlightenment was first directed to the “hope of His calling” and to “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...” And then, that they/we should be made aware of the greatness of His power in salvation.

Many years ago, I read an essay written by a Baptist minister named Russell Conwell in 1869. It was called “Acres of Diamonds.” It told the story of a poor farmer in central Africa who had sold his farm and gone on a futile search for diamonds which ended with him taking his own life in frustration. The man who bought the farm discovered that it was located over what became one of the largest diamond mines in the land.

This and stories like it have often been used as motivation to the discovery of hidden talents and self-development. While the writer’s intent may have been spiritual, men are given to look to themselves and consider what they find as either wealth or the means to it. Paul would

direct our attention to that which is only to be discovered in Christ and so we are encouraged to look to him and to pray as did Paul.

We read many prayers of this nature in the Word of God. Paul expressed another in a similar manner in chapter three. Many of the Psalms are precious prayers inspired in the souls of those looking to the Lord for all their help and seeking to be employed in His service. No doubt, many of us have read these things and commented on their beauty and the nobility of their aims. They should become the very topics of our own prayers. The emphasis upon these things is unmistakable in that the Apostle desired them for us – should we not desire them for ourselves?

The greatest display of power and might occurred when Christ was raised from the dead. It is with the same power that the merits of His death and resurrection are applied to believers in bringing them to Christ. This is the basis for our living now and for all future hope. Christ is our Blessed Hope. What a precious resource we have in the power of Christ. Why then do we seem to operate from a position of weakness and that which is less than true faith. Our confidence is in Him and Paul wanted that to be known.

This infinite and mighty power of God, His ability to do and to act, is directed to us who believe. So, we have experienced the quickening power of the Spirit. Indeed, “Ye must be born

again.” If we have been brought along the way of true repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ it is because we have been born again and enabled of the Spirit to see our need. Even so, the tendency is to fail to see the full extent of what was required to act in this way. It is the power of God expressed in the leadership of the Spirit that delivers up our souls to Him and delivers us from this present evil world. It is not because of any innate bravery in us that we stand where we did not think we could – It is rather the undergirding and empowering of the Spirit that enables us to stand. Such things do not come about by the mere maneuverings of providence. This is the power of God in operation within us. The discovery of this is of infinitely more value than an “Acre of Diamonds.”

It is to be feared that many fail to see the connection of the power to serve with that by which Christ was raised from the dead. The text could not be clearer. It is the power “Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead...” Men measure power in many ways. But there is no measure for the power of God; it is as infinite as He is. We do well, however, to think in terms of the holiness of God, His hatred for sin, and the greatness of the judgment that fell on Christ. Just as His holiness is infinite, the distance He was moved away from God is

infinite, and the power needed to raise Him from the dead is infinite. And that He has been elevated from the lowest extremes of hell (because of my sin) to the right hand of God (the position of equality) is no less than the mighty display of that power. It is the same power that saved us, that is saving us, and will forever save us from our sin and unto Himself.

So, it is that Christ exercises that same power in continuance as He mightily executes the will and purpose of God. And He applies the same privilege to us in salvation in that we were raised up with Him in fact and application. Men experience power outages; we never shall. How then shall we not continue in the power that was wrought in Christ.

We are pilgrims and strangers in this world but are under no threat from it. The opposition of principalities and powers and all that seek to defeat the testimony of Christ in this world is no match for the power of God in us. When we see Jesus, seated on high, we must be reminded of the successful journey He made in getting there and so be encouraged to move on with confidence in Him and His mighty power.

May we pray as Paul prayed and discover that which he desired for us and act, not in ourselves, but with all the resources provided in Christ. Lay hold on eternal life. *bhs*

Faith Expels Guilt, Greed, and Fear

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5)

Paul is aiming at love. And one of the essential sources of this great effect is sincere faith. The reason faith is such a sure source of love is that faith in God's grace expels from the heart the sinful powers that hinder love.

If we feel guilty, we tend to wallow in self-centered depression and self-pity, unable to see, let alone care about, anyone else's need. Or we play the hypocrite to cover our guilt, and so destroy all sincerity in relationships, which makes real love impossible. Or we talk about other people's faults to minimize the guilt of our own, which love does not do. So, if we are going to love, the destructive effects of guilt must be overcome.

It's the same with fear. If we feel fearful, we tend not to approach a stranger at church who might need a word of welcome and encouragement. Or we may reject frontier missions as a vocation, because it sounds too dangerous. Or we may waste money on excessive insurance, or get swallowed up in all manner of little phobias that make us preoccupied with ourselves and blind us to the needs of others. All of which are the opposite of love.

It's the same with greed. If we are greedy, we may spend money on luxuries — money that ought to go to the spread of the gospel. We don't undertake anything risky, lest our precious possessions and our financial future be jeopardized. We focus on things instead of people, or see people as resources for our material advantage. So love is ruined.

But faith in future grace produces love by pushing guilt and fear and greed out of the heart.

It pushes out guilt because it holds fast to the hope that the death of Christ is sufficient to secure acquittal and righteousness now and forever (Hebrews 10:14).

It pushes out fear because it banks on the promise, "Fear not, for I am with you. . . . I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

And it pushes out greed because it is confident that Christ is greater wealth than all the world can offer (Matthew 13:44).

So when Paul says, "The aim of our charge is love that issues from . . . sincere faith," he is speaking of the tremendous power of faith to overcome all the obstacles to love. When we fight the fight of faith — the fight to believe the promises of God that kill guilt and fear and greed — we are fighting for love.

--John Piper *From Future Grace*, pages 282–283

The Gospel, as it is proclaimed in Scripture, is Trinitarian. Remove the Father and you have no Gospel. Remove the Son, and the Gospel ceases to exist. Remove the Spirit, and the Gospel has no existence. There is no separating the work of the triune God in salvation from the truth of the Trinity itself.

--James White

To meditate is to think quietly of the Name of God – of His self-revelation in creation, the Scriptures, and supremely in His Son our Lord Jesus Christ – until our minds and hearts are lifted above earthly preoccupations to be totally preoccupied for a while with God Himself, causing worship, both silent and spoken, to well up within our souls, so that we fulfil part of our chief end as we find ourselves praising God.

--Derek Prime

IF A MAN WOULD LEAD A HAPPY LIFE, LET HIM SEEK A SURE OBJECT FOR HIS TRUST, AND HE SHALL BE SAFE: "HE SHALL NOT BE AFRAID OF EVIL TIDINGS: HIS HEART IS FIXED, TRUSTING IN THE LORD." HE HATH LAID UP HIS CONFIDENCE IN GOD, THEREFORE HIS HEART IS KEPT IN AN EQUAL POISE. –THOMAS MANTON.