

If my standing before a holy God depended (even partly) on me, and my own righteousness, there would NOT be the least hope for me. Friends, if you're a sinner like me, trust in Christ, the spotless lamb of God, who alone can present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy (Jude 24) –Monergism

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 XLII. What blessings do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

Answer. They that are effectually called do, in this life, partake of justification, adoption, sanctification and the several blessings which do in this life accompany them.

Psa. 68.18; Rom. 5.1-2 & 8.30-32; 1 Cor. 1.30; Gal. 4.6; Eph. 1.5.

Question XLIII. What is justification?

Answer. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein the elect are accepted as righteous in God's sight alone, for the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and they receive it by faith.

Rom. 4.3-5,24-25 & 5.18-19; 2 Cor. 5.21; Gal. 3.5-11; Phil. 3.9; Tit. 3.7.

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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 GOSPEL ASSURANCE OF PAUL

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1:19-21

The Philippian Epistle is among the most comforting of scriptures and is read often and with great delight by those who would be assured. The aim of Paul was to assure the Philippians as to his own wellbeing and to assure them of their own state and standing before God. Thus, he presents himself to them not as a suffering prisoner but as a victorious servant of the Lord. None of them had yet suffered so much as he had (they had been witnesses to his suffering). Along with assurances about their salvation he would express thanksgiving for their faithfulness to him and the Gospel. In all of this he would endeavor to remove suffering from being an issue. He would involve them in obtaining the victory.

It is often the case that we derive comfort from the one we would seek to comfort. I have, on more than one occasion left the bedside of the suffering and dying with the thought that I had certainly received more from them than I gave. The testimony to victory assured is precious. The testimony to victory assured by those who seem to be in the throes of defeat is marvelous grace. They had shown great generosity to him, but what he wanted more for them was their identity with him in the Gospel. He would have them to know that there is no greater comfort and assurance than to know that their life was inseparable from Christ. What

assures us?

The life of a true believer is coexistent and coextensive with the life of Christ. Christ is declared to be our life and it is eternal life. Thus, our assurance is not derived by mere words or even the promises. It is us in Him and He in us – *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Colossians 1:27.* The greatest comfort Paul could extend to them was that Christ continueth ever and so would they. He would further encourage them by his own example of faith.

Paul pointed to the assurance he received from them. In the preceding verse he had declared that “Christ is preached, and I rejoice ...” This he wrote despite the opposition that surrounded him and had met him in every place. The statement that “this shall turn to my salvation” has been subject to differing interpretations. Some think Paul was anticipating release from prison. Others have suggested that he may have been referring to the salvation of others that would come through him. But the verse that follows brings it to a personal level and we would conclude that his own salvation was in view. To many the assurance of salvation is attributed to a one-time experience. Paul saw salvation as upward and forward moving. He desired to be maintained in the way of salvation and ministry

to the end.

Paul used the phrase “I know” as leverage with them. Their prayers were integral to what was going to happen and in so praying they would be further assured themselves. Of course, the supply of the Holy Spirit would be the means for both their prayers and Paul’s salvation.

Here the Holy Spirit is referred to as “The Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Christ was his earnest expectation and his hope. He had every reason to be bold in preaching the Gospel and standing firm in his confidence in the victorious outcome. He would not be confounded. This is not the boasting that we hear of many who have never been tested. It is the assurance that comes with such a relationship with Christ as he had. The terms of the Gospel had been prophesied and had been carried out in the redeeming work of Christ. We “Behold the Lamb of God!” And so, did Paul. He had received a direct commission with the assurance of success. He had seen the promise realized in the lives of many. The future of the ministry of the Gospel, whether he lived or died had been confirmed. His Holy Spirit assured commitment was that Christ would be magnified in his body.

This assurance gave rise to one of the best-known statements by the Apostle. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1:21.* Would it be safe to assume that Paul repeated this often as a matter of both assurance and confidence in His calling?

Three things are to be understood. First is that he would have us to know that Christ was the reason he was alive spiritually. He had been quickened and made responsive to Christ and the life of the redeemed on the road to Damascus. The life he manifested was Christ in him. The second thing was that Paul welcomed his role as one purchased by the blood of Christ. Christ was the very object of his life – “Whose I am and Whom I serve (Acts 27:23). And a third thing was that Christ was his goal. Later in this epistle he would express the desire “that I may win Christ.” His life was Christ, not as a matter of interest; rather as a matter of existence. May we ask carefully, what is our life?

Paul would follow this thought with an expression of longing to depart and be with Christ but bowing to the will of God in the interest of the Gospel. But he knew full well that to die would be the better choice. To die would be infinite gain. Death held no terror for Paul; rather it would be a release from this life and an entrance into glory. In either circumstance the glory of God was assured.

It is to be feared that much of professed Christianity is lacking this identity with Christ and their assurances are in accordance with the definitions of men. Paul saw Christ as the mark to which he aspired and the prize that was to be claimed. This was confirmation that his assurance was not unfounded – he was caught up in the aim of redemption. *bhs*

ELISHA’S BONES AND HIS GOD

And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet. (2 Kings 13:20f)

In the year that Elisha died and was buried, the Moabite marauders came for their yearly plunder when they robbed, killed and took what they wanted. Their merciless marauding interrupted a funeral procession, and the pallbearers, in fear for their life, sought to quickly dispose of the body. As Elisha’s tomb was nearest to them, they rolled

the stone away from the tomb and cast the body on the bones of Elisha. When the dead body touched the bones of the prophet, he was resurrected from the dead and stood up on his feet.

There is no record of the reaction of the pallbearers, or even of the man that was revived, because this record is not about any of them. It is about Elisha's God and his sovereign power over life and death. The last miracle of Elisha proved, once and for all, that the power did not belong to him. It was not personal power – power belongeth to the Lord. That is why we read that Paul's shadow healed many as did the cloth with which he wiped his brow. Miracles are the sole property of the Lord, and he uses human instruments by which His Spirit does the impossible. Dead men can do nothing. Lifeless bones possess neither life nor power, but nothing is too hard for God.

It would do us all well to remember that those dry bones are a description of the power of human nature and even the power of the blood bought sinner. We are dead, so sayeth the Lord, and our life is hid with Christ in God. Faith is not power, it is rather the confession that we have none. But the God of all glory is not restricted, restrained or frustrated to any degree. So, if what we do or have done seems to have positive effect, remember that it was just God causing some soul to bump into our dead bones.

– Tim James, Cherokee, North Carolina, USA (Cited by Daniel Parks).

A GLIMPSE OF THE PRAYER LIFE OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

In his "Personal Narrative," a kind of diary of Edwards's spiritual experiences, he wrote: Once . . . [about] 1737 . . . [in] divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. . . . The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception . . . which continued as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity.

--Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*

A PERSONAL WORD ON PRAYER

In the summer after I was treated successfully for thyroid cancer, I made four practical changes to my life of private devotion. First, I took several months to go through the Psalms, summarizing each one. That enabled me to begin praying through the Psalms regularly, getting through all of them several times a year. The second thing I did was always to put in a time of meditation as a transitional discipline between my Bible reading and my time of prayer. Third, I did all I could to pray morning and evening rather than only in the morning. Fourth, I began praying with greater expectation.

--Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*