

Lack of conviction will show up in your public teaching, blunting its impact. Instead of proclaiming, warning, and inviting, you will be sharing, musing, and conjecturing.
—Tim Keller

I have been benefited by praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them I have gotten something for myself. – Samuel Rutherford

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 LXI. Is man, in a state of nature, bound to obey this law?

Answer. Yes; and every act of disobedience deserves God's righteous wrath and indignation; for the law is holy, just and good.

Ezek. 18.4, 20; Matt. 5.19 & 22.37-40; Rom. 6.23 & 7.12; Heb. 2.2.

Question LXII. Wherein does disobedience to God's law consist?

Answer. Disobedience to God's law consists in sinful thoughts, words and works.

Deut. 27.26; Prov. 24. 9; Jer. 17.9; Matt. 12.36 & 15.18-20; Rom. 6.23; Gal. 3.10; I Jn. 3.4.

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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

Volume 13, No. 3

January 19, 2020

PAUL’S PERSONAL PRAYER REQUEST

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:18-20

As believers, we often have requests for prayer brought to us. Many of these even come from those who have shown little or no interest in the Gospel. Perhaps, in their desperation they turn to anything they think will help. Often the requests of those professing faith in Christ seem to lack conviction and are made from a sense of duty rather than hope. Typically, requests are made in the behalf of someone else and involves physical or material needs. Rarely do any request prayer for themselves and even then, their objectives in asking are like those mentioned above.

Such was not the case with Paul as he encouraged the Ephesians in the matter of Christian warfare. They were to “stand” and to put on “the whole armor of God.” The last weapon mentioned was prayer (v. 18). It was recognized as essentially of the Spirit. It would be needed as one became watchful as to the dangers that surely would confront. They were to continue “instant in prayer” along with other aspects of perseverance. They were to engage in supplications and that with the needs of others before them. But then Paul, who gave of himself so selflessly in pursuit of the interests of others, adds “and for me.” It is certain that preachers might find an identity with Paul in this request, but in that a Gospel objective is stated all would do well to follow the pattern.

A new creature in Christ is what a child of

God is; serving the Lord is what a child of God does. We are drawn out of ourselves and our self-serving attitudes to delightful submission to the Lord and to the work of advancing His kingdom. There is therefore a concern regarding our service when anything would seem to hinder or limit our ability to serve. It is obvious that physical pain is distracting. When one is experiencing pain, they want it to stop; they want to feel good. Apart from faith the reason of this is our sense of wellbeing. With faith the objective is that we might accomplish the will and purpose of our worthy Lord and so delight to glorify Him.

Paul was in prison at this writing. We know little of what actual conditions may have been his lot because he says so little about it. In verse 20 he calls himself “an ambassador in bonds.” He might have requested prayer for his health, for creature comforts, or even release from jail. But he would rather be borne by their prayers to an effectual presentation of the Gospel. While other things might occur that would enhance that ability, he would draw our attention to the main objective – to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

Paul had an acute sense of the function of prayer in the operations of the grace of God. He had no illusions about personal ability. So, it was not beneath him to ask for interceding prayer. Paul had made his argument to Philemon as to

receiving Onesimus in gracious favor. But then he informed him that he was coming for a visit and would expect to be graciously received as well by his brother and that he would be brought by the prayers of Philemon. *But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. Philemon 1:22.* Thus, he did not make the request to the Ephesians with the fatalistic thought that God would do all His will and purpose with him; rather he believed that God would move sovereignly and providentially through their prayers. He would integrally involve them in what he desired.

The fact of his being in prison notwithstanding, Paul wanted to express the pure Word of God with ability from on high. He wanted something to say (logos). Specifically, he would preach the Word of Truth, the word of faith, and the word of reconciliation. He was desirous of opportunity. It would be of no value to know what to say and then not say it. He wanted elocution so that he would be clearly understood. And he wanted the attendance of the Holy Spirit that the words would be of God and advance the Gospel.

Furthermore, he wanted boldness. Paul and the Gospel were opposed wherever he went and the effort to intimidate him was exerted by many. He had been bold in the face of much, but he wanted more. He wanted above all else the power and presence of the Lord and the ability to sense it. He was not ignorant of Satan's devices and wanted to articulate a rebuttal of them all. What Paul faced would require

courage not found in the natural man – it takes grace and conviction to confront men and their sins.

The mystery of the Gospel declared was Paul's objective. He would honor God in the Trinity of His persons. He would clearly set forth the dual nature of Christ our Lord. He would preach and teach the glorious mystery of justification by the blood of Christ and His righteousness. And he would expound the glorious resurrection of Christ from the dead and the resurrection of the saints.

The argument will surely arise, even if unspoken, that this was all well and good for an apostle but not for ordinary believers. I would answer that God's redeemed people are not ordinary. They are exceptional creatures. There is no routine manner of addressing the matter of salvation in any – there is a consciousness of new life in Christ. Therefore, our prayer requests regarding the trials of this present world (from which we have been delivered) should be made with a view to the world to come and to the glory of Him who has translated. In prayer, as in all else, as we first seek the kingdom of God all the other things are given.

Paul saw the praying of the Ephesians as a Gospel resource and was not hesitant to solicit their help. Such should be the case with all who minister the Word. Such should be the case of all who are seeking unto the glory of God and would serve Him with "reverence and Godly fear." *bhs*

Prayer does not change God or His decrees for three reasons: first, God is immutable; second, God's good pleasure governs everything; and third, God is in control of everything, including our prayers. If prayer could change God or His decrees, the human will would usurp from God at least part of His control of history, which would deny God's all-controlling grace and would destroy our faith.[25] Rather, "prayer is something we do with God's help on the basis of what God has done for us in eternal election." [26] Nevertheless, prayer is still effective, for these two truths must never be

forgotten: “first, that in His divine wisdom God anticipates our prayers; and second, that in His divine love God responds to them.”[27] It is against God’s nature not to hear and answer the prayers of His people. God feels drawn to help us and not to disappoint us in His grace.[28] Bruce Ware summarizes Calvin’s view of effective prayer as follows: “While prayer never coerces God to act other than his infinite wisdom has willed, it nevertheless is one important and necessary condition which must be present for certain aspects of God’s work to be carried out. Prayer, then, is not contrary to divine sovereignty but is a divinely ordained instrument functioning within the sphere of God’s sovereign wisdom and power in carrying out his will.”[29] Ultimately, God’s response to prayer is a “divine response to a divine initiative in the elect.”[30] Prayer is effective because it is grounded in God and flows out of His sovereign, loving grace at work in us.
--Joel Beeke and Brian Najafour

Fear of God--or man? -- (John Flavel)

The ungodly person fears man--not God.

"An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:

There is no fear of God before his eyes." Psalm 36:1

The strong Christian fears God--not man.

"Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him;

he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." Job 2:3

The weak Christian fears man too much--and God too little.

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Ec. 12:13

“To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.”—Ps. lxxiii. 2

My soul! knowest thou what it is, at times, to be sensible of a barrenness of spiritual enjoyments? If at the house of God, to be cold and lifeless there? If at home, or unable to attend the place where God’s honour dwelleth, yet there also to be without the Bethel-visits of thy Lord? Behold one of old, in a wilderness state, feeling the same. But do not fail to remark also, in the very breathings of the soul after Christ, how plainly his soul was under the sweet influences of Christ: David did not so much long for the temple service, as for the presence of the God of the temple. Remark also the peculiarity of expression: he longed to see the Lord’s power and glory, so as-he had seen him in times past. God in Christ is Jehovah’s power and glory; and the sanctuary without him, would be no better than the wilderness. What a beautiful devout frame of mind was this sacred writer in, when thus going forth in earnest longing after the divine power and glory, as manifested in the person of God in Christ! Now, my soul, canst thou make use of the same language, even when thou art mourning in retirement over the absence of the Lord Jesus? Is Jesus still the one object of desire? And are the power and glory of Jehovah, as manifested in the person of Jesus, the longing of thy heart to enjoy? Be comforted, in still having before thee the great object of faith, and the actings of faith, even when the waters of the sanctuary run low. God is still honoured, still loved, still trusted in, and depended upon, by this humble, though sorrowful frame; and ere long, he whom thou desirest to see in his power and glory will manifest himself in both; and thou shalt yet give him praise,” who is the health of thy countenance and thy God.” Robert Hawker