

Hope is not a situation. Hope is not a location. Hope is not a possession. Hope is not an experience. Hope is more than an insight or a truism. Hope is a person, and his name is Jesus! — Paul David Tripp

## THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH

By J. Newton Brown -- 1833

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

### V. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

John 1:16, Eph.3:8, Acts 13:39, Isa. 53:11-12, Rom5:1-2, Rom. 5:9, Zech. 13:1, Matt. 9:6, Acts 10:43, Rom. 5:17, Titus 3:5-7, I Peter 3:7, I John 2:25, Rom. 5:21, Rom. 4:4-5, Rom. 6:23, Phil. 3:7-9, Rom. 5:19, Rom. 3:24-26, Rom.4:23-25, I John 2:12, Rom. 5:3, Rom. 5:11, I Cor. 1:30-31, Matt. 6:33, I Tim. 4:8

### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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### MERCY OBTAINED

*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (1 Timothy 1:12-13)*

What is here declared by the Apostle Paul might well be incorporated into the confession of all true believers. All who have been brought into the way of knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent are well aware that they have made no contribution whatsoever to their salvation. Furthermore, such are aware of their past sin and sinfulness and as such were guilty and deserving of eternal punishment. To consider human merit as having any role in salvation is unthinkable and betrays a lack of true repentance toward God. Paul had no illusions as to the value of his past life and was always ready to acknowledge what he confessed in verse 15 of this chapter: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (1 Timothy 1:15)*. It is in this text that Paul gives substance to calling himself the chief of sinners. Many have made the statement, but it is doubtful that all become as specific as Paul as to what led him to such a declaration.

Paul was very quick to call out sin for what it is. In simple terms he, along with John and James, would call it the transgression of the Law. But in Romans 1, and Romans 3, he would go further and call it out as that which abides in the deepest recesses of the hearts of fallen men. It is the manifestation of human depravity and gives abundant evidence of the wreckage brought on in the fall. With David, he would see it as against God and so it is of all sin and

sinfulness. Man, in his very nature is constituted the enemy of God. In all this, Paul did not hesitate to see these same things in himself and to see mercy as his only hope. And he did not hesitate to fully analyze his sinful estate before being arrested on the road to Damascus.

That nothing short of a miracle had occurred in his life never left the thoughts of Paul. The fact that Christ Jesus had both enabled him and deemed him faithful is set in contrast to the condition in which mercy found him. As to enablement, he was conscious of the transformation that had been brought about by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. And that did not stop with his initial deliverance. It continued to a glorious Apostolic ministry. Neither was it a foreseen qualification or anything in him that would make him faithful. This was the sovereign determination that he would be faithful in that he would be a partaker of the divine nature. In fact, Paul stated abundant reason as to why he should have never been considered.

Paul was aware of the grace of God whereby the most unworthy of men may be elevated to the highest of callings. He saw himself as just such a one. He was indeed a blasphemer. What could be worse than to blaspheme the name of Christ. Before King Agrippa he confessed that he had thought that he should do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. What pain this must have brought on in remembering such actions. Martin Lloyd-Jones tells of a

particularly rough man that had been converted under his ministry. After some time, the man became dreadfully depressed. He recalled having called Jesus Christ a foul name. He felt he could not be forgiven such a heinous deed and required much counselling and encouragement to regain assurance of his salvation. How lightly do most consider the awfulness of the life from which we have been delivered. Paul, even at this late stage in his life had not forgotten.

Not being satisfied with speaking evil of Christ, he persecuted the Lord's people. In Acts 9:1 we read of him "breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" and went to the High Priest for authority. He was ruthless in his pursuit of all who named the name of Jesus our Lord. His intent was even unto death.

He confirmed that he had been injurious. Not using mere words but using force and violence against them and their property and even committing them to prison. It is to be remembered that, although he did not participate in the stoning of Stephen, he was complicit in the act.

Paul did not plead ignorance as an excuse for the things he did. It is certain that at the time of such acts he was ignorant of who Jesus is and of the salvation that is in Him alone. We might think that his ignorance might have been a consideration if he had not preceded it with declaring his own horrible actions. His ignorance was not a cause for mercy. He had heard the message of Stephen and the testimony of

others. His was willful ignorance and thus added to his sinfulness. Far from being a cause for mercy, his ignorance made mercy his only hope. Kenneth Wuest wrote: "... St. Paul has in his mind what he has expressed elsewhere as the issue of having received mercy, namely, to have been granted an opportunity of serving Him whom he injured." On the words "in unbelief," the same authority says, "'In unbelief' does not so much qualify 'ignorantly,' as correct a possible notion that all ignorance must be excusable. St. Paul declares, on the contrary, that his was a positive act of sinful disbelief; but 'where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.'"

As to our need of mercy, we have the testimony of the forgiven thief who declared to the other thief that he deserved the punishment he was receiving and acknowledged that Christ was his only hope. Christ was indeed dying for him and for all who see their hopeless estate and fall on His mercy. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. (Romans 9:18)*. It is not good to dwell on past sins, but we need to acknowledge them as a horrible offense before a Holy God and see ourselves as Paul – the chief of sinners.

May we be delivered from ever presuming upon the grace of God and rather have such a sense of mercy and grace as to cause us to "Thank Christ Jesus our Lord" for such mercy and grace as to bring about the miracle of this so great salvation. *bhs*

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## A Repentance Not To Be Repented Of

Do you weep over your sin? There must be some things in life that bring you to tears, but is your sin one of them? We would all do well to consider these powerful words from Thomas Watson's *The Godly Man's Picture* for he warns "how far are they from being godly who scarce ever shed a tear for sin" and goes on to explain the beauty and necessity of repentance.

How far are they from being godly who scarce ever shed a tear for sin; if they lose a near relation, they weep, but though they are in danger of losing God and their souls, they weep not. How few know what it is to be in an agony for sin, or what a broken heart means; their eyes are not like the fish-pools of Heshbon, full of water; but rather like the mountains of Gilboa, which had no dew upon them. It was a greater plague for Pharaoh to have his heart turned into stone than to have his rivers turned into blood. Others, if they do sometimes shed a tear, yet they are never the better, they go on in wickedness and do not drown their sins in their tears.

Let us labour for this divine character, be weepers. This is a repentance not to be repented of. It is reported of Mr. Bradford the martyr, that he was of so melting a spirit, that he seldom sat down to his meat but some tears trickled down his cheeks.

There are two lavers to wash away sin, blood and tears; the blood of Christ washeth away the guilt of sin, tears wash away the filth; repenting tears are precious, God puts them in his bottle. They are beautifying; a tear in the eye doth more adorn than a ring on the finger; oil makes the face to shine, tears make the heart to shine; tears are comforting; a sinner's mirth turns to melancholy, a saint's mourning turns to music. Repentance may be compared to myrrh, which though it be bitter to the taste, it is comforting to the spirits; repentance may be bitter to the fleshly part, but it is most refreshing to the spiritual. Wax that melts is fit for the seal: a melting soul is fit to take the stamp of all heavenly blessings; let us give Christ the water of our tears, and he will give us the wine of his blood. –Tim Challies, *Blog from August 9, 2020*

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### CONVERSION CONVERTS

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, better known as Paul the apostle, wondrously illustrates the drastic change that occurs when one is converted to Jesus Christ:\*

1. One hating and injuring people became one loving and aiding them.
2. One persecuting the Way became one walking in it.
3. One opposing Christ became one serving Christ.
4. One forcing others to suffer for Christ's sake became one willing to suffer for Christ's sake.
5. One kicking against Christ's goads became one not needing those goads.
6. One blaspheming Christ became one exalting Christ.
7. One who was proud and cocky became one who was meek and lowly.
8. One boasting of what he had made himself to be became one surrendering it all for Christ.
9. One boasting of his righteousness became one glorying in Christ's righteousness.
10. One considering himself as the chief of the righteous became one acknowledging himself as the chief of sinners.

Professors of Christ may be now what they formerly were – except for being more religious. But converts to Christ are drastically different from what they were. For conversion converts! – Daniel E. Parks

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*Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. (Daniel 2:20-22)*