

To know that nothing hurts the godly, is a matter of comfort; but to be assured that all things which fall out shall cooperate for their good, that their crosses shall be turned into blessings, that showers of affliction water the withering root of their grace and make it flourish more; this may fill their hearts with joy till they run over.
—Thomas Watson



KEACH'S CATECHISM – Benjamin Keach 1640 - 1704

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

Q. 8. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

(John 4:24; Ps. 147:5; Ps. 90:2; James 1:17; Rev. 4:8; Ps. 89:14; Exod. 34:6-7; 1 Tim. 1:17)

Q. 9. Are there more gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

(Deut. 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10)

Q. 10. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.

(1 Cor. 8:6; John 10:30; John 14:9; Acts 5:3-4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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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TO WHOM THE LORD IS NEAR

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalms 34:18

There was never a promise that trials, discouragement and heartaches would not come. It would seem that these are part of the design of the Lord for bringing us close to Him or giving Him the reason to come near to us. The nature of fallen man is to deal with these things on their own terms. They are not willing to come to God in the condition described in this verse. They would presume to tell God what is needed and how to bring it about much like one might go to a physician and tell him what medicine to prescribe. The things that cause these conditions and the grief they often bring are well known to many. But, these addressed here are spiritual in nature and are experienced by those that know the Lord and are known of Him.

“The foundation of the Lord standeth sure having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are His...” (2 Timothy 2:19). This does not speak of mere acquaintance; rather that He knows them and all about them. Especially does He note the conditions described in our text. One writer expressed it thus: “The LORD knows how to resist the proud, but He cannot resist a broken and contrite heart. He keeps Himself accessible to the brokenhearted, and is always on hand to rescue the crushed in spirit.” BBC. This does not speak of an obligation that men may place on God. Rather it expresses the delight in God to show mercy and reminds us that “...His compassions fail not.” (Lamentations 3:22). We are reminded that our Savior was a “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Shall we

then be immune from the same? Our Lord could not be delivered from His grief and so He endured the cross. But, by virtue of what He accomplished on the cross we are repeatedly delivered. The verse before tells us of deliverance and relief: *The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. Psalms 34:17.*

Brokenness and contriteness are more than just regret and worldly sorrow. They are descriptive of deep spiritual conditions. Both words involved being literally crushed. “The broken in heart’ are those in whom the egotistical, i.e., self-loving life, which encircles its own personality, is broken at the very root; ‘the crushed or contrite in spirit’ are those whom grievous experiences, leading to penitence, of the false eminence to which their proud self-consciousness has raised them, have subdued and thoroughly humbled.” Keil&Delitzsch. These Hebrew commentators have expressed it well. The most difficult thing for man is to see all his self-affection and things he treasures become ruined and of no value. Not only that, but the experiences of life break the “spirit” and bring us to having a “contrite” spirit. That is, they are brought to a sense of utter helplessness and inability. God does not come to help, He comes to do.

How are we ever come to such a state as this? It starts at the beginning of our experience with God. The first realizations of an awakened soul are of his sin and unworthiness of God. These are accurate observations. Because of sin

we despaired of ever being able to please God and be accepted with Him. Thus, every vestige of pride is crushed when one realizes that the best he has to offer before God is as “filthy rags” in God’s sight. (Isaiah 64:6). They are left crushed under a load of guilt and sorrow for sin and are as those with no help. To these God comes. Not in the sense that He is everywhere present but with the healing virtue of the cross and the gifts of “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Not only that, but at every recurrence of such brokenness of heart we are reminded that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” To such as appear in this condition our Lord comes along side and He comes “with healing in His wings.” (Malachi 4:2).

Likewise, when all our efforts are met with frustration we are moved to simply give up. We are brought to confess “I can’t do anything right.” We move from a sense of unworthiness because of sin to a sense of uselessness and resignation to failure. Again, the assessment is accurate at such a time. It is then we are taken to the cross and shown that all that is required has been done. When our Lord declared “it is

finished,” He meant it. And now we find Him near to those of a “contrite spirit” to give assurances of salvation and life in Him. But, what of us and all the things set before us to do. The answer, *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13.* The writer of Hebrews declared, *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6.* We learn from this that with faith God is pleased because faith always references His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ.

So then as the trials and tragedies of the world come to bear (from whatever source) and we are brought to brokenness of heart and contriteness of spirit two things should be seen. One is that these things are in accordance with the providential purpose of God. They are not there to merely make us feel bad. It is rather that we may see the things of this world as they are so that we do not become too attached to them. The second is that we might treasure true closeness with God. It is because of these things that He is indeed brought near. *bhs*

THINK ABOUT IT!

Let us increase our praying as we increase our doing. I like that of Martin Luther, when he says, “I have so much business to do today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three hours’ prayer.” Now most people would say, “I have so much business to do today that I must only have three minutes’ prayer—I cannot afford the time.” But Luther thought that the more he had to do, the more he must pray, or else he could not get through it! That is a blessed kind of logic—may we understand it! “Praying and provender hinder no man’s journey.” If you have to stop and pray, it is no more an hindrance than when the rider has to stop at the farrier’s to have his horse’s shoe fastened, for if he went on without attending to that, it may be that before long he would come to a stop of a far more serious kind!—C.H. Spurgeon (quoted by Emmett O’Donnell)

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-21

“I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.”

Gal_2:20

The Lord Jesus Christ acted in what he did as a great public representative person, and his dying upon the cross was the virtual dying of all his people. Then all his saints rendered unto justice what was due, and made an expiation to divine vengeance for all their sins. The apostle of the Gentiles delighted to think that as one of Christ's chosen people, he died upon the cross in Christ. He did more than believe this doctrinally, he accepted it confidently, resting his hope upon it. He believed that by virtue of Christ's death, he had satisfied divine justice, and found reconciliation with God. Beloved, what a blessed thing it is when the soul can, as it were, stretch itself upon the cross of Christ, and feel, “I am dead; the law has slain me, and I am therefore free from its power, because in my Surety I have borne the curse, and in the person of my Substitute the whole that the law could do, by way of condemnation, has been executed upon me, for I am crucified with Christ.”

But Paul meant even more than this. He not only believed in Christ's death, and trusted in it, but he actually felt its power in himself in causing the crucifixion of his old corrupt nature. When he saw the pleasures of sin, he said, “I cannot enjoy these: I am dead to them.” Such is the experience of every true Christian. Having received Christ, he is to this world as one who is utterly dead. Yet, while conscious of death to the world, he can, at the same time, exclaim with the apostle, “Nevertheless I live.” He is fully alive unto God. The Christian's life is a matchless riddle. No worldling can comprehend it; even the believer himself cannot understand it. Dead, yet alive! crucified with Christ, and yet at the same time risen with Christ in newness of life! Union with the suffering, bleeding Saviour, and death to the world and sin, are soul-cheering things. O for more enjoyment of them! C. H. Spurgeon *Morning and Evening*

Though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will, towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet everyone that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things, with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them: for every true disciple of Christ "loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands: yea, than his own life." —Jonathan Edwards

Whatsoever we have over-loved, idolized, and leaned upon, God has from time to time broken it, and made us to see the vanity of it; so that we find the readiest course to be rid of our comforts is to set our hearts inordinately upon them. —John Flavel