

Faith is the means of our receiving the knowledge and comfort of our justification. Therefore, when Christ, by His Spirit and Word of truth, declares and reveals to a soul that all his sins are forgiven and washed away in the blood of Christ, it is a certain truth, and it is “the Holy Spirit Who bears witnesses because the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6). Therefore, seeing we are justified by Christ before we believed it, may we not believe that faith in us was either a cause or a means, or any instrument of it, but only a means of our receiving the knowledge of it, and of our enjoying the comfort of it?
– Samuel Richardson, 17th century English pastor (Quoted by Daniel Parks)



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. 25. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever.

(Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9)

Q. 26. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her, yet without sin.

(Heb. 2:14; Matt. 26:38; Luke 2:52; John 12:27; Luke 1:31-35; Heb. 4:15; 7:26)

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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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ARE ANY THIRSTING?

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. John 7:37

The crucial issue of true Christianity is resolved with one's response to this invitation. These words do not portray Christ as begging for responses to his words; rather they in effect set forth a commandment. These words were spoken by our Lord at the Temple as the Feast of the Tabernacles came to a close. Those who listened to him as He taught were of mixed opinions. Some marveled at his wisdom while others simply said He has a devil. While many take these words to be a general invitation, it is restricted by the words "if any man thirst." Only those meeting that qualification would have understood. The issue here is quite simply how intense is the desire for Christ and the righteousness of God. It is this thirst for God or the lack thereof that defines a true identity with Christ.

Thirst has been defined as a painful and vehement desire for water. However, the term can be applied to an unquenchable desire for earthly things. It is evident that a quest for worldly pleasure was not what our Lord had in mind. David while in the wilderness described himself as thirsting, and in a dry and thirsty land. That might actually define the condition of the nation of Israel in our Lord's Day. Alfred Edersheim, a renowned Jewish scholar, said that Israel was at its lowest ebb when Christ came into the world. He expressly applied that thought to their spiritual condition. The Pharisees enforced a strict orthodoxy that was totally lacking in Spirit and in faith. Many were

found with a form of legalism while others were morally bankrupt. The appeal was only to self-righteousness and compliance. It was a graceless and faithless society. Our Lord's call was directed to any who had come to experience a true need of God. This he characterized as thirst.

Our land today bears many of the marks found by our Lord in the first century. Religion is abundant, while faith is rare. Men are encouraged to adopt or develop religious philosophies that are contrary to Scripture. Christ has become a mere figurehead and the things of God something to debate. Some openly oppose God while many others stand idly by. There is no comfort or relief to be found in the ways of men. No doubt, there are many true believers who sit in religious services time after time and walk away still thirsting. Ours is like David's wilderness, "a dry and thirsty land." The answer, however, is not to be found in church services whether good or bad. His directive was "Come unto me." The true preaching of the gospel will always point to Christ.

David's cry is most touching and very instructive: *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? Psalms 42:1-2.* In the Beatitudes our Lord spoke of those hungering and thirsting after righteousness and making the promise that they would be filled. The Old Testament Scripture

prophesied that He would be called "The Lord Our Righteousness." David did not seek for superficial and temporary relief. His quest was for "The Living God." David did not think of programs or strategies; his was a burning thirst that could only be satisfied in the presence of God.

Why did Christ die, and for whom did He die? It is delightful to note the promised experience of those who would indeed come unto Him. When true faith in Christ was in place, rivers of living water would spring up from within. Of course, He went on to explain that this would be the work of the Holy Spirit. But, the Holy Spirit has come in the fullness of his office. It is He that regenerates and always has been the reason of spiritual activity that was acceptable unto God. "You must be born again." To many, the death of Christ was merely to keep them out of hell. The desire of Christ was for a people that would dwell with him and would desire to do so. He would be the life of these people. They would desire him above all else. They would ever be aware of the fact that He died for them. They would experience a continual thirst for him and a continual satisfying of that thirst.

We are reminded of His words to the woman

at the well. While she would continue to drink, she would never thirst again. We are reminded of the words of the songwriter, "I am drinking at the fountain/Where I ever would abide/For I have tasted life's pure River/And my soul is satisfied." While we may dwell in a "dry and thirsty land" in coming to Christ we are ever having our thirst relieved. As we look at the vast wasteland of modern religion might we properly asked the question, are any thirsting? When Christ set forth this proposition He did not follow with a promise of what He would do. He is always to be the objective in coming. The true believer can never be satisfied with the sugary water offered by modern religion. Many may be entertained, cause to feel good, be given a false hope, and live in delusion of a religion that cannot save. Until there is an intense thirst that can only be satisfied in coming to Christ and in continually coming to Christ there can be no legitimate claim to salvation.

May we join with David in this thought, *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. Psalms 27:4.* True believers can only be satisfied with pure water. Are any thirsting? *bhs*

Am I like Jesus--or not?

"Jesus got up from supper, laid aside His robe, took a towel, and tied it around Himself. Next, He poured water into a basin and began to *wash His disciples' feet* and to dry them with the towel tied around Him." John 13:4-5

Serving is not an easy lesson to learn. But it is a lesson which we must learn--if ever we would become like our Master. Jesus did not come to *be served*--but to *serve*. He *served* to the uttermost, just as He *loved* to the uttermost. Any service that needed to be done for another--He did as naturally and as simply as He breathed! He loved people, and was interested in them and was ready always to be *helpful* to them. It never mattered *what* the service was, whether it was the saving of a soul, the curing of a grievous sickness, or washing feet--He did the *least* service--as graciously and as divinely as the *greatest!*

The washing of feet was the lowliest service any man could do for another. It was

the work of the *lowliest slave*. Yet Jesus without hesitation, did this service for His own disciples. Thus He taught them that nothing anyone may ever need to have done by another--is unfit for the holiest hands. We begin to be like Christ--only when we begin to *love* others enough to *serve* them, regardless of the *lowliness* of the particular service.

One day a stranger entered an artist's studio in Milan. The artist was working on a painting of the *head of Christ* and appeared to take no notice of the stranger. At last he broke the silence, looked at the man and asked, "*Sir, does it look like Jesus--or not?*"

There is no surer test of the genuineness of Christian life--than in this matter of *servng others*. In serving others, we should inquire, "Am I like Jesus--or not?" We are too careful of *our dignity*. *When we see the Son of God washing His disciples' feet*--we should be ashamed ever to ask whether anything another may need to have done--is too *menial* for us to do. A *king* may do the lowliest kindness to the poorest peasant in his realm--and his honor will only be *enhanced* by it.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet--you also should wash one another's feet. For I have given you an *example* that you also should do, just as I have done for you." John 13:14, 15 – J. R. Miller



Through A Dry And Weary Land

The Lord's weary ones include all those who feel the burden of their body of sin, and are cast down and weary by reason of the difficulties and the hardness of the way. The Lord's people are emphatically a weary people. It is a "weary land" through which they are passing- it is no marvel that they should be faint, even though pursuing. Here is the cause of the greatest weariness. Not more truly does the "whole creation groan and travail in pain," than does he who "bears about with him the body of sin and of death, day by day."

It is indeed to him a continual and unrelievable pressure. "Who will deliver me from the body of sin and of death?" is his constant and mournful cry. It is the union of the opposites in him that creates his burden. Life and death- holiness and sin- grace and nature- are in perpetual, and often fierce combat. In this lies the inward conflict. This is the fight of faith. Until life was breathed, and holiness was created, and grace was given, there were no oppressions, and no warfare, and no weariness. Think of this, you burdened and oppressed saints of God! Let this thought fall like a sunbeam upon your gloomy and saddened spirit. Let it cheer you in your cloudy and dark day. Were you dead, or were you still in unrenewed nature, you would be an utter stranger to this weariness; and could never understand the meaning of the apostle, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." – Octavius Winslow.

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; Psalms 63:1