

I must frankly confess that of all my expectations of Heaven, I will cheerfully renounce ten thousand things if I can but know that I shall have perfect holiness, for if I may become like Jesus Christ as to His Character—pure and perfect—I cannot understand how any other joy can be denied me! If we shall have that, surely we shall have everything! This, then, is our hope—that ‘we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.’

C.H. Spurgeon



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. 106. What is the invisible church?

A. The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.

(Eph. 1:10; 1:22-23; John 10:16; 11:52)

Q. 107. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a holy ordinance, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

(1 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:16)

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

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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### OUR LORD WAS HEARD

*Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. John 11:41-42*

What a remarkable prayer of thanksgiving. What a message is conveyed to the expectant heart. What a precious result is referred to in this passage. We know that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16). Our Lord had declared that He and the Father were One. How could it be otherwise than that the Father would hear Him? But, here before the open tomb of Lazarus our Lord acknowledged that He had prayed with regard to what was about to occur and prayed with thanksgiving in the hearing of those that stood by.

The raising of Lazarus is arguably the most notable of all the miracles. He raised a man who was four days dead. This was unheard of and unbelievable. But, He did it with all the visible proof laid out before a significant number of witnesses. The objections of Martha were overcome and the stone was rolled away. No stench of death came forth as had been expected. Rather, at the call of Jesus a resurrected man appeared at the door of the tomb waiting to be loosed from the tokens of death. What a picture we have here of the message of the Gospel. Men dead in trespasses and sins are raised to life in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and at the command of Jesus. They respond not to an invitation but to a command as did Lazarus. We could as well imagine Lazarus preferring to remain dead as to imagine a regenerated sinner refusing to come to Christ. The grave clothes told Lazarus that he

had been dead and our Lord commanded the disciples to loose him just as we are set free from the bondage of sin which was the cause of our death. Furthermore we note that this was not done at the request of Lazarus and even his sisters had despaired of hope. This was the sovereign grace of God through Christ to bring life in accordance with His own will and purpose. How can we not stand amazed at such a record as this being brought to life before the eyes of our faith?

Notwithstanding the magnitude of the miracle, we are amazed at the revelation of things not seen here. The fellowship of the Father with the Son and the nature of true prayer are brought to the attention of the true believer. We are told of instances in which Christ went aside to pray and often for long periods of time. His disciples knew that this was something special and asked that He teach them to pray. (This should be an often uttered prayer by all who would approach God.) Elsewhere we are told that we do not know how to pray as we ought. Endeavoring to expand that thought many propose methodologies for prayer. While many of these things have a solid basis in Scripture, the greatest lesson is seen in the perfect model for prayer – that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In stating further in this prayer that “I knew that thou hearest me always,” we learn that there was no failure in the praying of Christ. The

question is, did He mean that He knew that the Father heard Him every time He prayed? Or did He mean that He was continually being heard? If He could say “I and my Father are One” and “I do always those things which please the Father,” we must believe that there was constant and intimate contact. The importance of this line of thought is realized when we are reminded that He was “The Man Christ Jesus.” We know that He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He is the second member of the Holy Trinity and as such there could never be division. But, these people did not hear the voice of God praying here – they heard the voice of a man. Many times in Scripture we are told that God would not hear the prayers of men. But, this Man He always heard. This is deep water to say the least, but Christ did all that He did in His earthly ministry as a substitute for His people and with the sole purpose of honoring His Father.

The thanksgiving offered here was with respect to what He knew was going to happen. He states the reason for it in that He wanted those about Him to hear and to know that the raising of Lazarus was by the power of God. Was

there ever anything that Jesus asked or for that matter continues to ask that is not heard and granted? None would dare suggest that He could ask amiss as we do. The process of raising Lazarus began from the time He heard of the illness. Yet, He went through the experience of the death of a beloved friend, bearing the grief of his family and even suffering His own grief. But, all the while, He and the Father were One and He was praying with regard to the ultimate victory that would be known through it all.

If, indeed, we are the children of God, it is because He prayed and was heard. No prayer of Christ was unheard and unanswered. That which gave merit to His being heard was His own resurrection. And, we know that He endured the death of the cross that He might claim life from the dead. Lazarus lived and believed in Christ and therefore he never died nor shall any who so believe.

The only consistently successful method for prayer is that we walk with Him and reckon ourselves to be one with Him even as He and the Father are one. O that we might know that He always hears us in Christ. *bhs*

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There are three things for which the Christian needs a regular time alone during the day: meditation on the Scripture, prayer, and intercession...

In our meditation we read the text given to us on the strength of the promise that it has something quite personal to say to us for this day and for our standing as Christians. It is not only God's Word for the community of faith, but also God's Word for me personally.... We are reading the Word of God as God's Word for us. Therefore, we do not ask what this text has to say to other people. For those of us who are preachers that means we will not ask how we would preach or teach on this text, but what it has to say to us personally.

*Biblical Wisdom: Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

Questions to Ponder: Why are meditation on scripture, prayer, and intercession so important to the life of faith? What obstacles might stand in the way of taking time alone daily for meditation on scripture, prayer, and intercession? How might they be overcome? How might “reading the Word of God as God's Word for us,” rather than as God's word for someone else, lead to spiritual transformation?

*From the Wisdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

## What Does it Mean to Study the Bible?

Ask any pastor or minister what you should do to grow spiritually, and one thing will invariably make the list: Bible study.

Why study the Bible? 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.

I can attest to the importance of Bible study to spiritual growth. When I've dedicated time each day to Bible study, my faith has felt vibrant and challenging. But Bible study is difficult—to do it well means doing more than just poking your nose in the Good Book every now and then. It's a practice that pays off the more you do it, and it requires a sort of plodding lifelong dedication in order to really see the fruit of it.

So what does it really mean to study the Bible?

I think Bible study has to start with basic familiarity with the Bible. It's not enough to just have heard some Bible stories here and there growing up; you really need to read the Bible through with a willingness to learn and remember. When you start reading the Bible, you don't need to start out by plumbing each passage for deep meaning; on your first few passes through a Bible passage, it's enough to simply familiarize yourself with the author's writing style, the main characters of the story (if applicable), and the general message of the passage. Depending on the passage, you might try asking yourself as you read: who is here in the story? Where are they? What are they doing, why are they doing it, and how are they doing it?

You might find—as I continually do—that simply getting the basics down is enough to vastly change your understanding of a Bible story. You might realize that you've projected your own experiences, misconceptions, or faulty memories of the story into the text—maybe details you're sure were there aren't actually there.

I find it helpful to go through this exercise—asking questions about the basics—with increasingly smaller chunks of the Bible. Start by asking these questions about the section of the Bible you're reading—the Old Testament, New Testament, or sections thereof—and then about a particular Bible book. Then drill down and examine individual chapters and stories within that book. Keeping in mind this broader context will keep you from approaching every Bible verse as an entity unto itself. If you single individual verses or stories out from their context within the grander story, you risk cherry-picking points out of the narrative and distorting their meaning.

It's important to keep in mind that studying is a different exercise from reading. When you study something, you deeply invest your time and attention in what you're reading. A text like the Bible will deeply reward that investment: you'll learn more about ancient history and cultures, you'll be exposed to challenging moral and philosophical concepts, and most significantly, you'll come to understand more and more about the character of your Creator and His love for you. In that respect, you can expect to be changed by your study of the Bible.

So make the choice to stop merely reading the Bible, and start studying it! A good first step is to contact your pastor or minister and tell them you'd like to start studying the Bible; they'll likely have specific advice and direction based on their pastoral role in your life.

Chris at [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com)