

“You are the salt”, not “You should be the salt”! The disciples are given no choice whether they want to be salt or not. No appeal is made to them to become the salt of the earth. Rather they just are salt whether they want to be or not, by the power of the call which has reached them. You are the salt, not “you have the salt.” It would diminish the meaning to equate the disciples’ message with salt, as the reformers did. What is meant is their whole existence, to the extent that it is newly grounded in Christ’s call to discipleship, that existence of which the Beatitudes speak. All those who follow Jesus’ call to discipleship are made by that call to be the salt of the earth in their whole existence. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*



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. 108. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily (that is, suitably) partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body; of their faith to feed upon Him; of their repentance, love, and new obedience: lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

(1 Cor. 11:27-31; 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 13:5)

Q. 109. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.

(1 John 5:14; 1 John 1:9; Phil. 4:6; Ps. 10:17; 145:19; John 14:13-14)

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

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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PRAYER FOR PRESERVATION

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. Psalms 16:1

A true element of the Gospel message is the promise of Christ with regard to the preservation of His Saints. Preservation is a necessary consequence of a work of grace. Man comes into this world ruined from the fall and by the fall. He is not fit for cohabitation with God and cannot be accepted of God apart from a work of redemption. Left to himself, He neither can be saved nor does he desire to be saved. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. Romans 3:11.* The good news is that God has from all eternity willed the salvation of many through means by which men are benefited and God is glorified. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 2 Thessalonians 2:13.* This is the efficacious work of the Holy Spirit that brings salvation. This work is based entirely on the merit of the blood of Christ. Christ did not suffer apart from divine design nor did He die at a venture. His work was both particular in its aim and definite in its accomplishment. Salvation is of the Lord!

How then could any think that some bought with such a price and made effectual by such divine power could ever be lost? Thus, we have the assurance of being preserved unto the ultimate purpose of God. If salvation had depended in any way upon man and his righteousness, all would be lost. John MacArthur wrote correctly that “If we could lose our

salvation we would.” The pride of many leads them to believe that they can attain to the righteousness of God on their own. In that sense they rightly conclude that what they have might be lost. *For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. Luke 19:26.* It has been well said that “you cannot come back from where you haven’t been and you cannot lose what you never had.” But, thanks be unto God, it is Jesus that saves (preserves). *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. Psalms 34:20.*

The words of this Psalm came from the pen of David and, no doubt, he wrote of his own experiences. But, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit David was made to write the words of Christ. Peter clearly confirms this as he, on the Day of Pentecost, uses them to illustrate and confirm the resurrection of our Lord. We dare not look away from that which pertains to our Lord.

It is the man Christ Jesus that utters this prayer for preservation. It was necessary that the manhood of Christ be preserved. He is eternal in His Godhood and is the Eternal Son of God. But, He came as a man to represent His people and is truly both God and the Son of Man. We often reflect on and rejoice in the Sovereignty of God. We look to these things as fixed and give no thought to the process endured by our Lord. But, the assault of Satan began with the curse after the fall and continued until Christ registered His victory. For

this reason those in the Christ-line were often assaulted as was David and it was necessary that David be preserved. Yet, David once confessed that there was but a step between him and death. But, in the purpose of God He was preserved to know of the promise to his family through Solomon. Herod sought to kill Jesus in His infancy and it was the desire of many to kill Him in the course of His ministry. They would have stoned Him in His own home town. His prayer for preservation was not out of concern for Himself. He must come to the place where He could say "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4.

While He prayed for preservation, it was not apart from His purpose that He preserve His people. He must survive to complete the work of redemption. Thus, He was determined to go to the cross. He must gain acceptance for the sacrifice of Himself. He must be raised from the dead and He must ever live to make intercession for His people. The divine design was that He would have them to be with Him where He is and that in an inseparable identity. The designs of God must never be frustrated and they never will, but it was necessary that He be preserved. One might object that He was God and could

not fail regardless of circumstance. But, we are reminded that He was man and the representative of men and therefore all had to be experienced. He spoke the worlds into existence. He brings His people to salvation and preservation through a process.

The prayer for His preservation is just as surely a prayer for our preservation. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. John 17:11.* Should we then pray for our preservation? We should pray for whatever He prays. He will realize the aim of His love and that of the Father. Furthermore, we must persevere unto righteousness in the same manner. Is it preservation or perseverance? We are preserved because Christ is preserved and perseverance is the evidence that we are preserved in Him. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude 1:24-25. bhs*

Grace to you . . . Grace be with you. (Paul's letters)

Without exception the apostle Paul begins and ends each of his thirteen New Testament letters by blessing his Christian readers with future grace.

What he usually says at the beginning of his letters is, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." At the end he usually says something like, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you."

Nothing else in Paul's letters comes close to this kind of unbroken focus on future grace at the beginning and ending of every letter.

What is Paul doing when he begins and ends his letters with words like these? He is blessing his readers, including us!

Blessings are peculiar. They focus on the persons spoken to ("Grace to you"). But they also appeal to God to do something ("Grace to you from God our Father"). The person who blesses takes a position between God and others, and makes his words a conduit of blessing between the two.

There is another remarkable thing about these blessings of future grace. Without

exception the blessings at the beginning of Paul's letters say "Grace [be] to you," while the blessings at the end of the letters say "Grace [be] with you."

The meaning I would suggest is this: At the beginning of his letters, Paul has in mind that the letter itself is a channel of God's grace to the readers. Grace is about to flow "from God" through Paul's writing to the Christians.

But as the end of the letter approaches, Paul realizes that the reading is almost finished and the question rises, "What becomes of the grace that has been flowing to the readers through the reading of the inspired letter?" He answers with a blessing...: "Grace [be] with you." With you as you put the letter away and leave the church. What then do we learn from Paul's unbroken pattern of beginning and ending his letters in this way?

We learn that grace is an unmistakable priority in the Christian life. We learn that it is from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, but that it can come through people. We learn that grace is ready to flow to us every time we take up the inspired Scriptures to read them. And we learn that grace will abide with us when we lay the Bible down and go about our daily living.

In other words, we learn that grace is not merely a past reality but a future one. This is what I mean by future grace. John Piper



"Bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." - 1 Timothy 4:8

Godliness should be the believer's priority in life.

I'm amazed at how devoted people can be to what they believe is important. There are many people outside Christianity who live in rigid conformity to a lot of meaningless rules. People in totalitarian countries, for example, live in rigid conformity to rules predicated on a denial of biblical truth. They walk circumspectly and toe the mark.

Some cultists are so rigid and walk so circumspectly according to the principles dictated to them that if they're told they can't get married or can't be with their spouses, they conform. They're made to live in abstinence from physical relationships, follow strict diets, fast, and so on. Some attempt to attain spirituality through such self-disciplined acts as lying on a bed of nails or walking through hot coals.

Others, such as athletes, go through tremendous self-discipline through dieting, running, weight training, and other means that involve great sacrifice. People disciplined in things that are ultimately meaningless may be lax in things that count. I know people who run three miles every day but will not bother to read the Bible regularly. I know other people who cannot discipline themselves to feed on the Word of God but stick rigorously to a diet. Many Christians worship physical fitness and health and are so conformed to the world's system that they're careless and lazy about conforming to Christ. If you are a wise Christian, you'll be sure to discipline yourself for godliness. You'll know what pleases God, watch for Satan's traps, resist the Devil, defeat temptation, and be selective about your behavior. In other words, you'll not walk as a fool; you'll walk in wisdom—living by God's standards. John MacArthur