

"Father sat down on the edge of the narrow bed. "Corrie," he began gently, "when you and I go to Amsterdam-when do I give you your ticket?"

I sniffed a few times, considering this.

"Why, just before we get on the train."

"Exactly. And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run out ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need-just in time."

Corrie Ten Boom, The Hiding Place



KEACH'S CATECHISM – Benjamin Keach 1640 - 1704

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Q. 110. What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that prayer, which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

(Matt. 6:9-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Q. 111. What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "Our Father, which art in heaven," teaches us to draw near to God, with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us, and that we should pray with and for others.

(Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:13; Rom. 8:15; Acts 12:5; 1 Tim. 2:1-3)

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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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WINNING CHRIST

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, Philipians 3:8

There are many who count their Christianity as a very important part of their lives. There are less who think that Christ is all to the exclusion of all other aspects of life in this present world. Many are like the young man who came to Christ seeking eternal life. He would have gladly fallen in with Christ if he could have clung to his worldly possessions. But, he rejected eternal life for the love of his wealth. Are the requirements of salvation so exacting that there cannot be room for both? Paul's personal testimony here and elsewhere was that he would be and was gladly separated from it all. Our Lord's teaching was that man cannot serve two masters because he will hate one and love the other. So the love of God and mammon could not coexist in the heart of a true believer.

At first glance this passage might depict uncertainty with Paul and his present standing with God. The words "...that I may win Christ..." certainly suggests something he desired but did not have to his own satisfaction. Did he not already have Christ in the saving of his soul? Surely, at this point in his ministry, he would have thought himself to be secure in Christ. He had travelled extensively, preached the Gospel to thousands and seen many come to know Christ. He had known great deliverances from impossible situations and was even as he wrote these words in prison for the preaching of the Gospel. Yet, he was not satisfied. He knew he was going to Heaven. Was it really necessary that he become so extreme in his pursuit of the

things of Christ? Apparently it was so. The great Apostle was even then in search of a greater level of relationship with Christ. He was not content to drift with the tide of life and simply wait for the end result. Compare: *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philipians 3:14.*

If it was not salvation from hell and assurance of Heaven that he was seeking, what was it? The passage between verse 8 and verse 14 of this chapter affords us a look into the Apostles heart. In the early part of the chapter he had described something of his pedigree. He had been in the position of human advantage. But these he saw as loss for Christ. He reputed his life before Christ as nothing and loss. Furthermore, he saw all else as pertaining to this life as potential obstacle to a full enjoyment of Christ. We note here that his quest is not for reputation or fame. His sole objective is a person. His desire is that he "win Christ." In what way could he have more than he now possessed. He knew of his justification by the blood of Christ. He knew of his sanctification by the Spirit of God. He had the evidence of the hand of God upon in every part of his ministry and work. He was arguably the most influential man in the known world of Christianity. But, he wanted more of Christ.

What Paul wanted was unhindered access to all of Christ. He would not be Christ, but he would be like Him. He wanted the sense of the righteousness of Christ in him and for him. He

would know more fully the power of Christ's resurrection. That is he wanted the power and presence of Christ with him and in him and never separate from Christ. He wanted to know Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul did not seek pain so that he might brag of his suffering. His testimony to suffering was in fellowship with Christ. He would indeed bear in his body the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul fully understood that Christ had saved Him for Christ's own sake and so that He might enjoy perfect fellowship with him through all eternity. Paul wanted what Christ wanted and the quest for it was begun in this life.

How does the Christianity of Paul compare with that we typically see or perhaps even experience today? To what degree are professing Christians separated from the things of this world? What are the objectives before them? Is it merely religion tossed into the mix there to compete with the love of the things of this world? It is certain that we must live in this world and that we must attend to such things as pertain to life and the necessities of living in this world. The question is can we, as Paul, count that as dung in order that we may "win Christ?"

Men tend to rationalize with regard to earthly duty. Such things are certainly there. But, they are not in competition with the ultimate objective which is a greater portion of Christ, the sense of belonging to Him and of Him belonging to us. It is not likely that Paul, as he went about making tents to support himself and his ministry, would ever lay aside his devotion to the One he would describe as "whom I am and whom I serve."

We suffer many frustrations and disappointments in this life. Often we feel completely overcome by them. How might these things appear if we did not value them above the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord?" Will they go away? Probably not, but their sorrow will be overshadowed by the joy that we know in Christ. The example of Paul is inspiring indeed. Everything else in his life took a back seat to his pursuit of Christ. Paul would teach us that a Christianity that comes in anywhere but first place in our lives is no Christianity at all. Where there is salvation there is also the desire of the heart "that I may win Christ." *bhs*

Proverb 15:29 *The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.*

The LORD is far from the wicked, – God is near to all with regard to His omnipresent essence (Jeremiah 23:24), but far from the wicked with regard to His holiness. Their iniquities have separated them from Him (Isaiah 59:2). Unless and until the wicked repent and return to Him, He closes His eyes and shuts His ears when they spread to Him their arms in prayer (Isaiah 51:14), and refuses their sacrifices (Proverb 21:27).

But He hears the prayer of the righteous. – Regardless of how wicked you are or how far you are from God, He will hear your prayer the very moment you forsake your wickedness and draw near to Him in righteousness. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (James 4:8-10). "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18). "For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil" (1 Peter 3:12). – Daniel E. Parks

Evidence of Grace – from *The Divine Meditations of Richard Sibbes*

It is an evidence that we are partakers of God's grace, if we can look upon the lives of others much better than ours, and love and esteem them glorious. A man may see grace in others with a malignant eye, for natural men are so vainglorious that when they see the lives of other men outshine theirs, instead of imitation, they darken them; that grace they will not imitate, they will defame; therefore when persons can see grace in others and honor it in them, it is a sign they have grace themselves. Men can endure good in books and to hear good of men that are dead, but they cannot endure good in the lives of others to be in their eyes, especially when they come to compare themselves with them, they love not to be out-shined.

Spiritual conviction is not total in this life, but always leaves in the heart some dregs of doubting, though the soul be safe. As a ship that rides at anchor is tossed and troubled, but the anchor holds it, so it is with the soul that is somewhat convinced of its good state, it is sure of the main, yet is tossed with many doubts and fears, but the anchor is in heaven.

In true conversion the soul is changed to be of the same mind with Christ. As He is affected, so the soul of such an one is affected; and as He loathes all evil, so upon this ground there must also be in us a loathing of whatsoever is evil. But a carnal man is like a wolf driven from the sheep that yet retains his ravenous nature; so those men that are driven from their sins only by terrors of conscience, they are affrighted with sin's desert but do not hate it; therefore a loathing of evil is required; as well as our leaving it.

To discern our state in grace, let us chiefly look to our affections for they are intrinsic and not subject to hypocrisy. Men of great parts know much and so does the devil, but he lacks love. In fire all things may be painted by the heat; so all good actions may be done by a hypocrite but there is a heat of love which he has not. We should therefore chiefly examine the truth and sincerity of our affections towards God.



“How long I was, myself, dictating to God instead of trusting Him! I thought I must have a certain amount of conviction of sin before I could be saved. I really had it all the while, though I did not know that I had it. I thought I must feel a certain weight of guilt. I was feeling it and, for that very reason, I thought I was not. I might have been spared much needless suffering if I had only believed what the Lord had taught me in His Word—that I had nothing to do with feeling burdens or anything else by way of preparation for coming to Christ, but that I had to come to Him just as I was... So, poor blind ones, come to my Master, blind as you are—but do not lay down any rules or regulations as to how He is to save you, for He will do it in His own way, which is, after all, the best possible way”— C. H. Spurgeon Volume 50, Sermon #2892

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Proverbs 29:25