

"The nature of Christ's salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day evangelist. He announces a Savior from hell rather than a Savior from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of Fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness."

- A.W. Pink



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. 112. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is "Hallowed be thy name," we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He makes Himself known, and that He would dispose all things to His own glory.

(Matt. 6:9; Ps. 67:1-3; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11)

Q. 113. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is "Thy kingdom come," we pray that satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced; ourselves and others brought into it,

and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

(Matt. 6:10; Ps. 68:1-18; Rom. 10:1; 2 Thess. 3:1; Matt. 9:37-38; Rev. 22:20)

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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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WHAT SIMEON SAW

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luke 2:29-30

There is no Gospel without the incarnation of Christ. If He is not the Son of God and God manifest in the flesh there can be no hope of salvation. The Apostle declared: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.* Rather than look to Him and acknowledge that which the Scripture declares concerning Him men go about seeking ways of their own making to offer unto God. Cain was rejected and so will be all that offer the works of men hands rather than to reverence the Son of God who is God the Son.

There is no mandate in Scripture for designating a day to celebrate the birth of Christ. A date has been arbitrarily chosen to accommodate the desires of men. As we observe the trappings that have accumulated down through the centuries it is evident that these things are of men and not of God. There is no tradition of men that acknowledges what an old man in the Temple confessed so many years ago. The terms used by Old Simeon reflect the fact that the incarnation of Christ and thus Christ Himself is salvation and is therefore to be a reason of continual celebration by true believers. It is a blessing indeed to read over and over again the Biblical accounts of the Birth of Christ. By faith we share in the declarations of the Heavenly Host, the wonder of the shepherds and all the other significant things that occurred that night. But, a most profound thing also happened eight days later as they went to the

Temple with the Baby Jesus.

We are again made to marvel at the providence of God that brought an old faithful Saint into the Temple at the time our Lord was brought in according to custom. He had had it revealed to him by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. When he saw the Baby there it was further revealed to him that this was He who had been promised. Outwardly, he saw a peasant couple bringing a baby to the priest and to offer the acceptable sacrifice. But, he saw more. The words could not have been more profound. “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” He did not say I have seen man’s salvation, although the salvation of men was in view. He did not say that he had seen God’s attempt to save men. He could not have been more absolute. Many would perhaps surmise that Simeon had somehow seen what men refer to as the “plan of salvation” which almost invariably incorporates the necessity of men’s conditional compliance and makes God dependent on man. No! Jesus Christ appeared to Simeon as salvation. Thus the fact and the substance of God being glorified were realized. It was not in any way dependent on men. Simeon knew that in spite of all that would rise up to oppose Him and the ultimate death burial and resurrection He would emerge victorious and confirmed as Salvation.

David understood this idea. In Psalm 51, he prayed “restore unto me the Joy of thy

salvation." We are reminded of the words of the prophet: *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Isaiah 45:22.* When Simeon looked at this Baby the fullness of the meaning of these words was brought to bear. God had come into the world and assumed human flesh. He was the man Christ Jesus. He was God with us. He was Jesus Who would save His people from their sins. There was no procedure laid out for salvation. He was salvation then and would be to all who would truly look to Him. To see him as salvation was the culmination of a long life of service. He had been the hope of Simeon all along. He had believed the promise, had spiritual confirmation (would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ) and now had visual confirmation. John the Baptist would say "Behold the Lamb of God," and with many other words the Bible directs us to look to Him Who is Salvation. He is many things to His people. He is Lord, He is King, He is Savior and He is coming. But first, He is salvation.

No doubt these words seem contrary to the concepts of men. They think in terms of the sentiment often associated with newborn babies. Little children are a delight and a joy and

they should be. But, as we behold this Baby we must see so much more. Simeon lays before us the true object of faith. The prophecy continues here as to what would occur with regard to His earthly ministry. Space prohibits a full examination. Mary had praised the Lord at the announcement that she would bear the Christ-child. She witnessed the confirming testimony of John the Baptist while still in his mother's womb. Now she heard the testimony of Simeon and she marveled at the words that were spoken of Him.

The message of Simeon is not only an integral part of the story of our Lord's birth; it is also a testimony for all who would look to Christ and believe the Gospel. Christ asked the crowd concerning John the Baptist "what went you out for to see?" We might also ask of all concerning Christ; "what do you see?" Do we see a God-man trying to save men who will allow Him to do so? Or do we see Salvation? The focus is all too often turned to some act of man that originates from himself. True faith is invariably turned to Christ and in Him and Him alone do we comprehend Salvation. True believers, by faith, confess with Simeon that "mine eyes have seen thy Salvation." *bhs*

Thanksgiving and Grace

It is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:15)

Gratitude flourishes in the sphere of grace. And that is why the play on words in 2 Corinthians 4:15 is significant. Grace is charis and gratitude is eucharistian because gratitude is a response to grace. Gratitude is the feeling of happiness you feel toward somebody who has shown you some undeserved kindness, that is, who has been gracious to you.

This close relationship between grace and gratitude can be illustrated even in situations where it looks like we contradict it. For example, kind people often say, "Thank you," even where it is unnecessary. Even in places where goods are being fairly traded, value for value, we often say, "Thank you." Why? One reason is that there are often little things people do beyond the demands of the bare transactions which benefit us—like a smile or an encouraging word or a gentle and caring demeanor. These we sense as unpaid for grace and so we feel gratitude in our heart for them.

But there is another reason we often say thanks when people are merely doing for us what we've paid for. Since gratitude is universally known as a feeling that comes in response to grace, expressions of gratitude have come to be used as expressions of humility and encouragement. When we say, "Thank you," to someone, we humble ourselves as a person who has needs, and we exalt them as one who can meet those needs. For example, in a restaurant why do I say, "Thank you," to the waitress for bringing my meal? I will pay for it, and I will tip her. She is doing nothing beyond her duty and may not even be cheerful. The reason is that "thank you" is a gesture of humility that says to her: I am not eager to exalt myself as one to whom you owe service. I do not wish to presume upon your work as my due. I am happy to put myself in the position of one who receives grace. I am happy to honor you as one who can meet my need. The reason a simple, unnecessary "thank you" can say all this is because of its close association with grace. Since the feeling of gratitude usually rises in our hearts when someone does us an undeserved or uncalled-for favor, the expression of thanks will at any time communicate humility (I am a mere beneficiary of grace) and encouragement (you are my needed and helpful benefactor).

Now with this insight into the meaning of gratitude and its relation to grace we can understand our text more fully. Paul says that his ministry "is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase gratitude to the glory of God." The reason the spreading of grace increases gratitude is because gratitude is the happy feeling directed toward a person who does us some undeserved favor. The person our gratitude is directed to in verse 15 is Jesus Christ and God the Father through him. In verse 5 Paul said, "What we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord." Therefore, the grace that spreads as Paul pursues his ministry is the grace given by Jesus. Chapter 8, verse 9, defines this for us pretty clearly: "For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."

Grace begins when one person is full and another is empty. One person is a have and the other a have-not. One is rich; the other is poor. Then grace comes into action as the emptiness of one is filled up by the fullness of the other. What we do not have is supplied by what he has. Our poverty is replaced by his wealth. And all that not because we deserve it, but because Jesus is gracious. His riches are free. Therefore, gratitude wells up in the hearts of those who "receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17). This gratitude to Christ, which marks all true believers (Romans 1:21), is more than saying, "Thank you," or trying to return some service; it is more than being glad you are free from condemnation; it is being glad toward Jesus for the riches of salvation and the way he made it ours. When the grace of Jesus penetrates the human heart, it rebounds back to God as gratitude. Christian gratitude is grace reflected back to God in the happiness we feel toward Jesus.

John Piper *Grace, Gratitude, and the Glory of God*



"The saving power [of the cross] does not depend on faith being added to it; its saving power is such that faith flows from it." - J. I. Packer

Lord, draw me to your living Word and let it be for me food for the journey. *Bonhoeffer*