

Election! O! That blessed truth has been and still is dearer to me than life; and the way and manner of its revelation and application to my soul in deep bondage and distress, has been marvelous indeed. I trust I can say that He has chosen me; for when I was under the law crying to the dear Lord for mercy, He spoke these words to my soul: "I have redeemed thee; thou art mine."

(William Gadsby)



GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question XIII. How did God create man?

Answer. God created man, male and female; in the image of God created He them, with dominion over the creatures.

Gen. 1.26-31 & 2.7, 18-23; Psa. 8.3-8 & 119.73; Matt. 19.4-6; Mark 10.6-9.

Question XIV. What are God's works of providence?

Answer. God's works of providence are His most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing of all His creatures and all their actions.

1 Sam. 3. 18; Job 23.13-14; Psa. 31.15 & 103.19 & 145.15-16; Prov. 5.21 & 16.9, 33 & 20.24; Matt 10.29; Heb. 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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THE GOOD GROUND HEARER

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:15

The Parable of the Sower is perhaps the best known of the parables. We must believe that this was the divine intent since the parable is explained in such detail by our Blessed Lord. While we consider all the Word of God to be important, there are those passages that emphasize essential aspects of salvation and the result of it. We may conclude that this is just such a case here in that conditions for salvation are described and fruitfulness is seen as a result.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the parable and the explanation. The wording in each is slightly different but the message is the same. Matthew is called by some the Gospel of the King. Mark is called the Gospel of the Servant. And in Luke the emphasis is on Christ as the Son of man. It was not the design of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the writing of these men that their accounts be identical. They may have written to different kinds of people with different objectives. But, the only conflicts are found in the minds of men and not in the Word of God.

Four scenarios are given as to individual reaction to the Word of God. Three of them are doomed to failure from the start. Only one results in an acceptable outcome. The byway, the stony ground and the thorns need little explanation as to why they did not produce an acceptable way. But there is much to be said as to why the fourth one was good. Common sense tells us that we are to sow literal seed in ground that is prepared to receive it. With regard to the

Word (seed) here we are constrained to ask how the “good ground” came to be good.

The three writers give descriptions of what is good. Matthew writes of hearing, understanding and fruitfulness. Mark writes of hearing, receiving and fruitfulness. Luke takes a slightly different form in referring to the possession of an honest and good heart and keeping the Word and fruitfulness with patience. Again, we note no conflict rather we see the accounts as complementing each other. Thus, we would explore this from the perspective of the heart. In Jeremiah we read: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9.* Man, in his depraved state is found with a heart that would be anything but receptive to the Word of God. We compare the thoughts expressed by Jesus when He said: *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: Matthew 15:19.* It only follows that hearing, receiving and understanding are not the characteristics of a “bad heart.” Such a heart is not capable of true honesty in assessing needs and the true ground of acceptance with God.

The answer is found in the Old Testament promise. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26.* But even then we think of such conditioning that would be effective only in a “new heart” as

provided by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. It is He that breathes new life where death in trespasses and sins once was. But then comes the preparation of the ground. We read of such preparation in: *For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Jeremiah 4:3.* And also, in: *Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Hosea 10:12.* Of course we understand that the urging here is to repentance and restoration in Israel. But the message is not lost on us.

We must be brought to fruitfulness by way of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." In referring to Hosea 10:12 and old Baptist preacher observed that "if the ground could it would cry out at the insertion of the plow." So it is in being broken in repentance and the experience that God would have us to know. It is of the goodness of God that we are brought to repentance and such brings a tenderness of heart that joyfully responds to the word of God. We are sweetly reminded of David's words: *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalms*

34:18. Likewise through Isaiah the Lord declares: *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isaiah 57:15.* See also, Isaiah 66:2.

The good heart is one given us by the Lord. It is not a reformation of an old heart nor is it the creation of man's futile and faulty efforts. It is the result of a divine work of life-giving grace merited by Christ Jesus in His life, death, burial and resurrection. We are brought to experience it in the plowing of conviction and the Godly sorrow that works repentance. Without such provision and divine preparation there can be no fruitfulness. Where there is salvation, the fruit of the Spirit is in evidence.

At no time did he indicate that we could make the ground good. He simply and profoundly described the ground. We are thus constrained to preach that "Ye must be born again," and "repent ye and believe the Gospel" even as did our Lord. The heart in which the Word is truly sown is responsive to and delights in the Lord and all that pertains to Him. *bhs*

Some day I shall be like that! (J.R. Miller)

*"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son!"
Romans 8:29*

No sooner do we begin to behold the beautiful face which looks out at us from the gospel chapters, than a great hope springs up in our hearts--we can become like Jesus! Indeed, if we are God's children, we shall become like Him. We are predestined to be conformed to His image!

It matters not how faintly the Divine beauty glimmers now in our soiled and imperfect lives--some day we shall be like Him! As we struggle here with imperfections and infirmities, with scarcely a trace of Christlikeness yet apparent in our life, we still may say, when we catch glimpses of the glorious loveliness of Christ, "Some day I shall be like that!"

*"We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!"
1 John 3:2*

RECIPIENTS OF GRACE ARE GRACIOUS GIVERS

Have you noticed in the Holy Scriptures how generous the recipients of God's grace were toward His cause?

When God abundantly blessed our father Abraham with earthly gain "he gave a tithe [or tenth] of all" to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20), who was God's priest and king, and a type of Christ (see Hebrews 7:1-4, 15-17).

When God saved the patriarch Jacob he promised "I will surely give a tenth [or tithe] to You" (Genesis 28:22).

(Note that both these patriarchs lived prior to the Law of Moses, which stringently required tithing. These patriarchs tithed not because it was required, but voluntarily because they loved God and were grateful to Him.)

When God saved the tax collector Zacchaeus he responded by saying "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

Paul the apostle testifies "we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God" (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

We could cite other examples. But surely these should suffice to evidence that recipients of God's grace freely and voluntarily give themselves to their Lord and Savior and then give of their earthly goods to His cause.

They determine to follow the example of their Master – "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

They ascertain that the earthly needs of their ministers are met (1 Corinthians 9:1-14; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17f). They ascertain that the earthly needs of Christ's evangelists are met (Philippians 4:10, 16). They ascertain that the needy among them are relieved (Acts 11:28-30; Romans 15:25f; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

They are not legalistic tithers dutifully fulfilling a lawful obligation and hoping thereby to obtain favor from God.

Rather, they are much more. They are living proof that recipients of divine grace are gracious givers.

– Daniel E. Parks

"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

C. S. Lewis ~ The Weight of Glory