

RELIGIOUS GIANTS MAY BE SPIRITUAL DWARVES

I remember from back in my Pentecostalist days watching people run up and down the aisles shouting during worship services. Even Pentecostalists knew that some folks should not do so. This was evident when I heard one of them say of one such shouter: "He is so unspiritual that he could run underneath the pews and never bump his head!"
Religious giants may be spiritual dwarves! – Daniel E. Parks

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 LXXIV. What is the gospel?

Answer. The gospel may be taken in a limited or in a more extensive sense.

Mark 1. 14-15; Jn. 1.17; Rom. 1.16; Eph. 3.6; 1 Tim. 1.11,14-15.

Question LXXV. What is meant by the gospel in a limited sense?

Answer. Glad tidings of great joy, or a free proclamation of rich mercy, without money and without price, to poor, sin-burdened sinners; with the glorious invitations, doctrines and promises of God's everlasting love, and the blessings these truths contain.

Isa. 55.1-3,6-7; Matt. 11.28-30; Luke 2.10-11,14 & 11.9-10; Jn. 1.16-17 & 3.14-17 & 7.37; Rom. 1.16 & 10.13; Tit. 3.4-7; Rev. 21.6 & 22.17.

Question LXXVI. What is meant by the gospel in a more extensive sense?

Answer. The above things, together with the precepts and ordinances enjoined on the church by Christ and His apostles, and the things connected therewith.

Matt. 28.18-20; Jn. 13.34 & 14.15; 1 Cor. 11.23-26; Eph. 2.8-10; Col. 2.6-7; Tit. 3.8-9; 1 Jn. 2.6; 2 Jn. 6.

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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 SONG OF PAUL AND SILAS

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. Acts 16:25

The account of the beating of Paul and Silas at Philippi has, no doubt, been an inspiration to many sufferers in the cause of Christ. History records horrendous persecutions against the Lord's people. Such are the descriptions of atrocities committed against innocent people that many do not want to think about them. We read of many, even in our day, who suffer and pray for their tormentors as they are being beaten. Thus they truly follow our Lord who prayed, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." It is to be noted that the faith of people who are subjected to such persecution or even the threat of it is of a nobler sort than that which we witness where we are allowed to worship in peace. After all, this same Apostle Paul wrote: *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12.*

It was on their way to prayer that they were first met by a demon-possessed damsel. She was a soothsayer who brought great profit to her masters. But, when she persisted in obstructing the preaching of the Gospel, Paul cast the demon out. The highly offended masters took them to the magistrates where they were subsequently beaten with many stripes and turned over to a jailer. He then placed them in stocks in the deepest part of the prison. They were no doubt reminded of the fact that Christ had been scourged prior to his crucifixion and they considered their stripes an honor.

True faith will always triumph over suffering

and sometimes in a most glorious way. Peter reminded sufferers to whom he wrote that it was the trial of their faith that was most precious. The validity of faith shines forth in times of great suffering. At a time when their tormentors would have expected Paul and Silas to be moaning and crying, a celebration was taking place. The rejoicing sufferers kept the whole prison awake. It is to be noted that a careful addition at the end of this text is the fact that the prisoners heard them. They were no doubt true criminals. But, they had become, at least for a time, the prisoners of Paul and Silas and the Gospel. None left when the earthquake that could've set them free took place.

At first reading it seems that they prayed and then sung. However, a closer consideration, according to many commentators, reveals that as they prayed the praising came as a result. It could literally read: "that praying they were singing praises. What a precious and blessed thought this is. Perhaps, we should likewise expect that outcome when we pray. Our tendency is to become so self-involved as to devote much of our prayer time lamenting our condition whatever that may be. We are bidden to cast our cares upon Him. But, sweet indeed, would be such prayers as begin and end with praise with our cares left between.

It would seem certain that they prayed for deliverance from their captivity so that they might continue to pursue their missionary endeavors. It would seem that they likewise followed the example of Christ by praying for

their captors and their fellow prisoners. There was a great earthquake that followed their celebration or perhaps occurred during their celebration which would have resulted in their liberty. But, there was more. And we know of the conversion of the jailer in a glorious fashion. Of greater importance is the fact that both prayer and praise were unto God. It was not their intent to show great bravado before the other prisoners. Theirs was truly an act of selfless worship. Men witnessing the true worship of God cannot be unaffected. Some will scoff because they fear what they see. Others have their attentions arrested and such seems to be the case of the prisoners here. We should so direct our prayers and the resultant praise unto God in such a way that men cannot help but take notice.

As we have noted their prayers and praises arrested the attention of the prison. But, we ask, what of the song? Perhaps they sang from Moses: *The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. Exodus 15:2.* The substance of the songs of the faithful will always be the Lord. And, such songs will be unto Him. The time was consistent with that which we read elsewhere in Scripture. *At midnight I will rise to*

give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. Psalms 119:62. How often we come to grips with the deepest of our sorrows in the middle of the night. The song that the Lord gave them was to them a precious companion. *Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. Psalms 42:8.* They knew the answer to the question asked in the book of Job: *But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night; Job 35:10.* And, they knew it to be fitting that they as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven should so sing: *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed. Psalms 65:1.*

It should be inspiring to us who are not suffering as these men. Will it take such persecution as these men suffered to bring us to the quality of prayer and praise exhibited by them? Should we not rather be in pursuit of such closeness with the Lord that we likewise pray with praise and that their song should be our song? I am certain that their pain disappeared in the midst of the glorious experience of praising God freely in the most abject of circumstances in the middle of the night. Our risen Lord is worthy of such praise and more. *bhs*

A Beautiful Balance by Charles R. Swindoll

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour. Proverbs 21:21

We've been programmed to think that fatigue is next to godliness. That the more exhausted we are (and look!), the more committed we are to spiritual things and the more we earn God's smile of approval. . . . As a result, we have become a generation of people who worship our work . . . who work at our play . . . and who play at our worship.

Hold it! Who wrote that rule? Why have we bought that philosophy? Whatever possessed someone to make such a statement? How did we ever get caught in that maddening undertow?

I challenge you to support it from the Scriptures.

Start with the life (and lifestyle) of Jesus Christ. . . . His was a life of beautiful balance. He accomplished everything the Father sent Him to do. Everything. And He did it without ignoring those essential times of restful leisure.

If that is the way Jesus lived, then it makes good sense that that is the way we, too, must learn to live.

Cory Byrne was showing off his pet. Draped over his neck and shoulders was his nine-foot-long, twenty-five-pound boa constrictor. To the horror of a watching friend, the reptile's large, lumbering coils began to tighten around its owner like a noose. Slowly, irresistibly, the great snake squeezed Cory's life away. His air supply was cut off. His face turned red and he passed out. Unable to remove the snake by herself, Cory's friend called for emergency help. But several hours later Cory died in a local hospital. Some animals cannot be tamed. You may call a snake your pet and give it a cute name, but that doesn't take the wild out of it. No matter how long you've housed, cared for, and fed a boa constrictor, it may still turn on you. After all, it is still a snake. It is much the same with sin. You may cuddle sin like a pet, but that doesn't take the wild out of it or make it less dangerous. Evil cannot be domesticated. Sin is poised to attack your faith at any moment. Sometimes it bares its fangs and strikes in a surprise attack. Sometimes it is cunning enough to play dead and subtle enough to pose as something good. But either way, sin is wired to kill. Slowly, cleverly, when you're not paying attention, sin will squeeze the faith, love, and holiness right out of you. This is the nature of sin. Left unchecked, it always destroys. Sin's hostility is both unchanging and fatal. Sin defiles the human conscience, hijacks human relationships, and weighs down the world with brutality and injustice. Worst of all, sin creates a gulf between us and God. Our intention towards sin must therefore mirror its hostile intentions towards us: death and destruction. This was precisely Paul's point when he wrote, "if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13). Or in the words of seventeenth-century pastor John Owen, "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." Brian Hedges, *License to Kill*



STARVING AT THE FATHER'S TABLE – A. W. Tozer

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. —John 21:15 There is today no lack of Bible teachers to set forth correctly the principles of the doctrines of Christ, but too many of these seem satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their personal lives. They minister constantly to believers who feel within their breasts a longing which their teaching simply does not satisfy. I trust I speak in charity, but the lack in our pulpits is real. Milton's terrible sentence applies to our day as accurately as it did to his: "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed." It is a solemn thing, and no small scandal in the kingdom, to see God's children starving while actually seated at the Father's table.

Lord, send the refreshing of Your Spirit into our midst, that none of those who listen to our teaching may starve at the Father's table. Amen.

Eternity is coming down the path. It is tapping at the door. It is breathing down our neck. It is always so much closer than we dare believe. Paul Washer