

Oh, how merciful, how gracious, how wise, how good our God is to his people! How gracious he has been to our souls in hedging up our way, bringing into our lives disappointments, pains, afflictions, and sorrows, by which he has sweetly and irresistibly forced us to return to him, seeking his mercy and grace in Christ!

Don Fortner

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

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

1. Q. What is the chief end of man?

I. A. Man's chief end is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31), and to enjoy him for ever (Ps. 73:25-26).

2. Q. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify him?

II. A. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Eph. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:16) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy him (1 Jn. 1:3).

3. Q. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

III. A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man (2 Tim. 1:13; Eccl. 12:13).

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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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A REASON TO BOAST

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 9:24

True believers are brought to faith with the realization that they have absolutely no claim to merit in their salvation. The thought of glorying is repulsive and they will typically exercise caution that all glory is given to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. True humility demands that it be so. However, this text and others leave open the fact that men may have a cause to glory or boast. We are warned about boasting in the wrong things, but we are encouraged to acknowledge the wonderful position and status we enjoy in Christ. Paul would admit to glorying in the Cross of Christ our Lord. Many would engage in bragging about or gloating over things so as to exalt themselves. But, the glory claimed here is such that the one so exercised directs attention to Him who alone is worthy.

The preceding verse warns of the things about which men tend to boast. *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: Jeremiah 9:23.* Two things quickly come to mind. One is the people that we know or have known that fit into one or more of these categories. The fact is that God has set things up so that the wisdom of man can never bring him to know God. See 1 Corinthians 1:21. Yet, men have produced untold volumes claiming to explain both God and His creation. Goliath was certainly stronger than David, but we know the outcome of that. And, building “better barns” as a matter of security never ends well. All of these things

seems to bring security to the possessors but ultimately cannot be trusted. The second thing is that many, including believers, are often impressed by those who promote their fame in this way. There is the temptation to emulate them with the hope of the same apparent success.

Any glorying by sinful depraved men must be an abomination to God. But, religious pride must be some of the worst kind. Those who know the Lord know that salvation is completely a work of Grace and that they are the recipients of mercy. Spurgeon and others have said that anything short of hell is mercy. It is then inconsistent that they should glory in their knowledge of the doctrines of salvation. There are those who would boast of understanding the doctrine of election and treat someone who does not with contempt. Such a person may be very accurate in his definition and lack the graciousness that identifies the faith of God’s elect. *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Colossians 3:12.* So it is that many feel secure in their mastery of doctrine and theology and yet, that is but a high form of glorying in wisdom. In the end result we must possess that wisdom that is Christ. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 1 Corinthians 1:30.*

The believer’s glorying is in the Lord alone.

He does not even glory in the fact that he understands and knows. Even that claim can come to sound as an empty boast. To know the Lord is precious above all else. It was the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" that Paul esteemed above all else. Our Lord prayed thusly, *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John 17:3.* The knowledge or knowing of God is salvation! So it is that our boasting is not in what we know, but in who we know. Many years ago I was introduced to preach with the admonition from the Pastor, "come up here and brag on Jesus." Our glorying is to be about the accomplishments of the Lord and not the mere fact that we know about them.

What is it that we understand and who is it we know? It is the Most High God whose holiness is offended by the sin and sinfulness of His creatures that believers come to know by His lovingkindness. They have no other explanation as to why He should deal with them in mercy and grace. They have experienced such love and kindness as to forgive them and to sweetly draw them to Himself through the sovereign work of regeneration. As they are brought to embrace

Jesus Christ they learn of the judgment and justice that God has executed. He poured out the wrath His children deserved on the suffering substitute Who was His only begotten Son. It was by this that justice was satisfied and God was vindicated in every way. And this same One who demanded perfect righteousness in them He would fellowship imputed to their account and imparted to their very nature the righteousness of Christ Jesus our Lord.

With such understanding of what He has done and such knowledge of Him who has done it how shall we think of glory going to sinful man? We are compelled to glory in Him who we have been brought to love and adore. We marvel at the work of grace that has wrought such change in the lives of His people, but our boasting is of Him. Thus, we declare His majesty, His holiness, and His great beauty. We rejoice in the knowledge that He is God indeed and there is none else. And, we delight to declare that we are the recipients not of reward, but of mercy and grace. In the words of Fanny Crosby, "To God be the glory, great things He hath done. In these things the Lord delights because these things are the issuing forth of a sweet savor of Christ our Lord. *bhs*

Should the average Christian care about theology?

A fair question! - but there is, I think, a convincing answer to it. The questioner clearly assumes that a study of the nature and character of God will be unpractical and irrelevant for life. In fact, however, it is the most practical project anyone can engage in. Knowing about God is crucially important for the living of our lives.

As it would be cruel to an Amazonian tribesman to fly him to London, put him down without explanation in Trafalgar Square and leave him, as one who knew nothing of English or England, to fend for himself, so we are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it.

The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfold, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul.

J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p.17

LOVINGKINDNESS

"I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us." — Isa 63:7

And canst thou not do this? Are there no mercies which thou hast experienced? What though thou art gloomy now, canst thou forget that blessed hour when Jesus met thee, and said, "Come unto me"? Canst thou not remember that rapturous moment when he snapped thy fetters, dashed thy chains to the earth, and said, "I came to break thy bonds and set thee free"? Or if the love of thine espousals be forgotten, there must surely be some precious milestone along the road of life not quite grown over with moss, on which thou canst read a happy memorial of his mercy towards thee? What, didst thou never have a sickness like that which thou art suffering now, and did he not restore thee? Wert thou never poor before, and did he not supply thy wants? Wast thou never in straits before, and did he not deliver thee? Arise, go to the river of thine experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and plait them into an ark, wherein thine infant-faith may float safely on the stream. Forget not what thy God has done for thee; turn over the book of thy remembrance, and consider the days of old. Canst thou not remember the hill Mizar? Did the Lord never meet with thee at Hermon? Hast thou never climbed the Delectable Mountains? Hast thou never been helped in time of need? Nay, I know thou hast. Go back, then, a little way to the choice mercies of yesterday, and though all may be dark now, light up the lamps of the past, they shall glitter through the darkness, and thou shalt trust in the Lord till the day break and the shadows flee away. "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been ever of old." Spurgeon from *Morning and Evening*



Stupefying, damning, intoxicating!

Imagine the self-revenges, the self-torments, which the damned suffer for their folly; and what a value they would set upon one offer of salvation.

It is astonishing, that you should despise a mercy in which your own souls are so dearly, so deeply, so everlastingly concerned, as they are in this gift of God.

Oh, what a monster are you, to cast your soul away thus! What! will you slight your own souls? Don't you care whether they are saved, or whether they are damned? Have you imagined a tolerable hell? Is it easy to perish? Have you not only turned God's enemies, but your own too? Oh see what monsters, sin can turn people into!

Oh the stupefying, damning, intoxicating power of sin! -- John Flavel



"IT'S THE HIT BIRD THAT FLUTTERS!"

Thelma Farnham was a congregant in the church I previously pastored in Louisville, Kentucky. Her father was a preacher. After a message to a church he was visiting, he was approached by a woman who expressed her strong displeasure at a point he had made in his message. His response was classic: "It's the hit bird that flutters!" – Daniel E. Parks