

“Fight for us, O God, that we not drift numb and blind and foolish into vain and empty excitements. Life is too short, too precious, too painful to waste on worldly bubbles that burst. Heaven is too great, hell is too horrible, eternity is too long that we should putter around on the porch of eternity.”

— John Piper

#### SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

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

4. Q. What is God?

IV. A. God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24), infinite (Job 11:7), eternal (Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17), and unchangeable (Jas. 1:17) in his being (Exod. 3:14), wisdom, power (Ps. 147:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), justice, goodness and truth (Exod. 34:6-7

5. Q. Are there more Gods than one?

V. A. There is but one only (Deut. 6:4), the living and true God (Jer. 10:10).

6. Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

VI. A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory (1 Jn. 5:7; Matt. 28:19).

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#### Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

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 TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 2 Corinthians 4:7*

Men tend to resent and perhaps even hate that which seems to them different. This gives rise to such things as racism, class warfare and other divisive issues among men. And, the pendulum swings both ways. When one is born again of the Spirit of God and is made a new creation in Christ, the difference is noted by fallen men. It is at that point that they are often shunned, resented and in extreme cases persecuted. In writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul posed an important question. *For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? 1 Corinthians 4:7.* It was not that they were not different. Rather, it was the issue of who had made them to differ and had given them all that they had. Now in this epistle Paul is strongly defending his ministry against charges arising from a declining faith and the resultant resentment of Paul's ministry and authority. Again, he was not saying that he wasn't different. He was emphasizing the reason of the difference. They were looking to human explanations where the only reasonable explanation was that of a divine distinction and display of power. So it is with all true believers and the witness of their lives. The explanation: we have this Treasure in earthen vessels.

The treasure of which Paul spoke was described in the preceding verse and is indeed the Gospel. *For God, who commanded the light*

*to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6.* Several things are to be noted. It was God who placed this treasure in the hearts of men. Certainly Paul was speaking of the Gospel with which he had been entrusted. See 1 Thessalonians 2:4. He reminded Timothy of the “good thing which was committed to thee.” And, he had reminded the Corinthians before that he “was determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” A most important consideration is that of the “glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The glory of God is to be the objective of all true believers. It is not that Christians do not indulge themselves in joy and personal satisfaction; it is rather that they do so in the glory of God. It is that their true joy is expressed through knowing God in Christ.

We often think of treasures as prized possessions to be guarded. It is to be feared however that the real treasure is overlooked in considering the things that flow from it. We cling to the fact and defend the doctrines of God's sovereign grace. We love that we are justified, sanctified and glorified with Him. But, we are not to exult in these things merely. We are to exult in the knowledge (literally acquaintance) of God and His glory. It was for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord that Paul counted all else loss. Our treasures are not things. Our treasure is a

person and our delight is in Him and all that we enjoy is to be in conjunction with Him.

The earthen vessel to which Paul referred was the human body. The illustration was plain. A priceless treasure was stored in a pottery jar. Such was often the case then that men stored valuable objects in vessels that were fragile, lacking any particular beauty and subject to decay. The Corinthians would have clearly understood the reference. Such is the case of our bodies. In spite of all the efforts to preserve life, men die. Often the body is racked with disease and is subject injury. Age brings on decay even while we live. Paul was living proof of the many things that could happen along the way. Consider: *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 2 Corinthians 4:11.* He saw strength in weakness: *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Corinthians 12:10.*

It is obvious that Paul would lay the axe to any form of pride and would not be accused of the same himself. We are inundated with the

devices of men set forth in the name of Christ. Yet, the power of God and the display of it never has and never will be subject to the methodologies of men. It seems there is no end to the programs and plans of men to propagate religion. We are often subjected to the boastings of those whose programs have brought great success and they have the numbers to prove it. Yet, it is in their methods that they glory and not in Christ Jesus our Lord. They are often grandiose in their presentations as if they would disguise the fact that they are but earthen vessels and that there is no glory apart from beholding the "face of Jesus Christ." Where the power of God is truly on display it has no competition from the pride of man. The Corinthians thought Paul to be a mere man and no different from them. He agreed that he was but an "earthen vessel," an unlikely container. But, that was the design of God that the excellency of the power be seen to be of God and not of men.

O that our lives were such that those things and that devotion witnessed in us may leave no doubt that they are not of us but from the treasure within – "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." *bhs*

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## THE GARMET OF OBEDIENCE

Saving faith is ever accompanied by an obedient walk. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3, 4). Ma...ke no mistake upon this point: infinite as are the merits of Christ's sacrifice, mighty as is the potency of His priestly intercession, yet they avail not for any who continue in the path of disobedience. He acknowledges none to be His disciples save them who do homage to Him as their Lord. "Too many professors pacify themselves with the idea that they possess imputed righteousness, while they are indifferent to the sanctifying work of the Spirit. They refuse to put on the garment of obedience, they reject the white linen which is the righteousness of the saints. They thus reveal their self-will, their enmity to God, and their non-submission to His Son. Such men may talk what they will about justification by faith, and salvation by grace, but they are rebels at heart; they have not on the wedding-dress any more than the self-righteous, whom they so eagerly condemn. The fact is, if we wish for the blessings of grace, we must in our hearts submit to the rules of grace without picking and choosing" (C. H. Spurgeon on "The Wedding Garment")

"Your eyes will see the King in His beauty! They will behold a far-distant land!" Isaiah 33:17

If God is mine, then I shall dwell on high with Him forever. I am traveling to a world where I shall be fully satisfied.

My intellect will have her blessing then. Just now I am learning many glorious lessons in the school of Jesus; but there are questions of the mind which remain unanswered, and problems which are still unsolved. But by and by I shall know even as also I am known--clearly, unerringly, perfectly.

My conscience will have her blessing then. Since Christ became mine, her troublesome accusations have been stilled, and her governing power has been restored. But she has her fears even yet, and her difficulties and uncertainties. It is not quite the full noon in the realm of conscience. But, when she walks with the Lamb in white, all the shadows will be gone.

My will, too, will have her blessing then. By the grace of God, I have an obedient will now, whose delight is to run the way of the Master's commandments. Yes--but traces of the old rebelliousness linger within me, to my own sorrow and shame. When I see the King, I shall gladly serve Him day and night!

And my heart will have her blessing then. Jesus has met her craving for love; and yet she is crying out for more of His presence and Himself--more and more! But, in the far-distant land, my heart's most daring requests will find their fullest response, and she is content and at rest.

What stores of happiness, what rivers of pleasures, are at His right hand!

"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore!" Psalm 16:11. (Alexander Smellie, "The Hour of Silence" 1899)



## HONORING THE TRUE GOD

New emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty, the foundation of all Biblical theology, is a necessity. God is sovereign in the realms of creation, providence, and salvation. He not only created, but controls, everything He has brought into existence. Since God will be all or nothing, there can be no other god. A rediscovery of God's sovereignty cannot occur apart from the Biblical revelation of God.

The god of human religion resembles the supreme Sovereign of Scripture no more than the dim flickering of a candle compares with the radiant light of the noonday sun. Scripture proves that the false gods manufactured by religionists within professing Christendom do not differ from the gods of wood and stone worshipped by the heathen outside of professing Christendom.

A common expression, "Let God be God," is frequently repeated in the religious community. How can man, who is without the power of God, let God be God? Christ said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). How can man who lives and moves in God let God be God? Acts 17:28 states, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." How can the effect let the cause be the cause of the effect? The Creator alone is worthy of glory, honor, and power: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). W. E. Best