

On happiness

What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could “be like gods”—could set up on their own as if they had created themselves—be their own masters—invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history—money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing. C. S. Lewis

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

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

22.Q. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

XXII. A. Christ as our Redeemer executes the offices of a prophet (Acts 3:22), of a priest (Heb. 5:6), and of a king (Ps. 2:6), both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

23.Q. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

XXIII. A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us (Jn. 1:18), by his Word (Jn. 20:31), and Spirit (Jn. 14:26), the will of God for our salvation.

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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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VIRTUE AND GLORY

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 2 Peter 1:3

Albert Barnes wrote that all gospel effects may be traced to the power of God. Certainly the scriptures everywhere confirm this to be true. There certainly are those “those things that pertain to life and Godliness” and many perceive these as essentials of the Christian life. The problem arises with the means whereby these things are attained. Failing to recognize the power of God as the true source of these things or claiming to be able to produce these things as a product of the will of man leads to gross error. In such cases we may be assured of two things. One is that God will be honored on the terms He requires and that true believers desire. The other is that those things under human definition will be of such inferior quality as to be unacceptable before God and ineffective toward men.

The intent of Peter was to make those to whom he wrote aware of the absolute necessity of both life and Godliness in order to salvation. Anything else would not be salvation. But, he would also have them to know that they could not produce this of themselves. In this way he would assure them of the quality of that which was manifest in them and would lead them on to consciousness of entrance into the Kingdom. See v. 11. Both the terms of acceptance with God and the means of producing them are a necessary component of the ministry of assurance.

Peter is careful to set forth the power or energizing of God in the accomplishment of the

divine purpose. The concept of many is that God’s aim is to rescue as many from hell as will allow Him to do so. The ultimate purpose of God is to save a people unto Himself, in full identity with Him, and given over wholly to His honor and glory. This occurs to the mutual delight of each. But, it is evident that such requires a radical change of nature and an essential makeup of the life given. God is just in requiring full compliance with what He requires. Man is by nature diametrically opposed to what God requires. God requires a pure life while man is found dead in trespasses and sins. God requires Godliness while man seeks after and is imprisoned by the corruption that is in the world through lust. See v. 4. So it is a must that we must be affected from a source outside of us working in us that which is required. Paul referred to it as “...the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power...” Eph. 1:19.

Men do many things as the result of a decision. They are often seen to change course in their lives after having seen evidence that there is a more desirable way. They often make choices that affect their lives in either positive or negative ways. Many come to embrace religion as the result of a decision. A noted atheist once commented that the world would be a better place if all men followed the example of Christ and the principles of the Bible. Yet, no man has ever been made alive because of a decision. The very thought betrays a

disconnect with reality. Our Lord raised the dead such as Lazarus so that we would realize the hopelessness of the estate from which we are raised to walk in the newness of life. So it is that Peter would have us to know that the life we have in Christ came through Him and not us.

We carefully note that it is His divine power that has given or imparted to us life. In that it comes from Him it is a pure life, fitted to embrace and enjoy those things which the world despises. It is a life that is not subject to change or corruption as was that of our parents in the Garden of Eden. Peter will go on to relate that we are to be made partakers of the divine nature. Thus, this life is not any more subject to failure than is that of Christ Himself. But, there is more.

Having been given life we are likewise given what is needed to practice “the presence of God.” Thus, the power of God extends to His love, His grace and His mercy. In referencing His love here we would think of the manifestations of His lovingkindness to us. He is called by Peter the “God of all grace” whereby we understand that the graces required for the believing life are

given us. And we are certainly conscious that we deserve all that is opposite to these things. He is merciful and shows it to be so. Here is where the quality of manmade religion falls infinitely short. That which is produced in a life by the power of God has the manifest stamp of divine favor on it.

We then note that it is through divine acquaintance that we are brought to respond to these things. Many vehemently oppose the idea of an “effectual call.” Yet, the call of God is effectual in two ways. First the working of His mighty power will not be frustrated. Secondly, when we note that we are called by (not “to” as in the KJV margin) His glory and virtue we are consciously and effectively drawn to Him. The word glory is self-explanatory. The word virtue speaks of the valor and strength manifested in Christ that moved Him to go to the cross and so we are irreversibly drawn to Him who was lifted up and so draws to Himself. It is not a call to be saved. It is the call to Christ and to all that pertains to Him. O that we would experience that life and Godliness given us by His power as we are drawn to Him. *bhs*

The Books at the Judgment

John Piper

All who dwell on earth will worship [the beast], everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. (Revelation 13:8)

Salvation is secured for all who are written in the book of life.

The reason that being written in the book of life secures our salvation is that the book is called “the book of life of the Lamb who was slain” (Revelation 13:8). The names in this book are not saved on the basis of their deeds. They are saved on the basis of Christ’s being slain.

So how then does the record of our lives contained in “the books” have a part in our judgment? The answer is that the books contain enough evidence of our belonging to Christ that they function as a public confirmation of our faith and our union with him.

Consider Revelation 21:27: “Nothing unclean will ever enter [the New Jerusalem], nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” Here the result of “being written in the book of life” is not

only not perishing, but not practicing detestable, sinful behaviors.

For example, consider the thief on the cross. Jesus said that he would enter paradise (Luke 23:43). But what will judgment be like for him when the books are opened? More than 99.9% of his life will be sin. His salvation will be secured by the blood of Christ.

Then God will open the books and will use the record of sin to glorify his Son's supreme sacrifice, and he use the last page to show the change that was wrought in the thief's attitudes and words. That last page — the last hours on the cross — will be the public confirmation of the thief's faith and union with Christ.

Therefore, when I say that what is written in the books is a public confirmation of our faith and of union with Christ, I do not mean that the record will contain more good works than bad works.

I mean that there will be recorded there the kind of change that shows the reality of faith — the reality of regeneration and union with Christ. That is how I enter the day, confident that my condemnation is past (Romans 8:3), and that my name is in the book of life, and that the one who began a good work in me will bring it to completion at the day of Christ.



!!!! Jesus said to him, ' . . . what is that to you? You follow Me' —John 21:21-22

One of the hardest lessons to learn comes from our stubborn refusal to refrain from interfering in other people's lives. It takes a long time to realize the danger of being an amateur providence, that is, interfering with God's plan for others. You see someone suffering and say, "He will not suffer, and I will make sure that he doesn't." You put your hand right in front of God's permissive will to stop it, and then God says, "What is that to you?" Is there stagnation in your spiritual life? Don't allow it to continue, but get into God's presence and find out the reason for it. You will possibly find it is because you have been interfering in the life of another— proposing things you had no right to propose, or advising when you had no right to advise. When you do have to give advice to another person, God will advise through you with the direct understanding of His Spirit. Your part is to maintain the right relationship with God so that His discernment can come through you continually for the purpose of blessing someone else.

Most of us live only within the level of consciousness— consciously serving and consciously devoted to God. This shows immaturity and the fact that we're not yet living the real Christian life. Maturity is produced in the life of a child of God on the unconscious level, until we become so totally surrendered to God that we are not even aware of being used by Him. When we are consciously aware of being used as broken bread and poured-out wine, we have yet another level to reach— a level where all awareness of ourselves and of what God is doing through us is completely eliminated. A saint is never consciously a saint— a saint is consciously dependent on God. Oswald Chambers

Heaven is the highest link of the saint's happiness. As there is no intermission in the joys of Heaven--so there shall be no expiration of them. When God has once planted His saints in paradise, He will never transplant them, "they shall be forever with the Lord!" Thomas Watson