

On forgiveness

I find that when I think I am asking God to forgive me I am often in reality (unless I watch myself very carefully) asking Him to do something quite different. I am asking Him not to forgive me but to excuse me. But there is all the difference in the world between forgiving and excusing. Forgiveness says "Yes, you have done this thing, but I accept your apology, I will never hold it against you and everything between us two will be exactly as it was before." But excusing says "I see that you couldn't help it or didn't mean it, you weren't really to blame." . . .

Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the sin, the sin that is left over without any excuse, after all allowances have been made, and seeing it in all its horror, dirt, meanness and malice, and nevertheless being wholly reconciled to the man who has done it. C. S. Lewis

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

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

24.Q. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

XXIV. A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (Heb. 9:28), and to reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17), and in making continual intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

25.Q. How does Christ execute the office of a king?

XXV. A. Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to himself, (Ps. 110:3) in ruling and defending us (Matt. 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:25), and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

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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 GREAT ESCAPE

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1:4

The change that takes place in salvation is often greatly misunderstood. If this is misunderstood then salvation itself is misunderstood or even worse, missed altogether. To many, the idea of being saved rests in mental assent as to need and verbal commitment to some biblical mandates. All of this can be done while completely missing what Peter is talking about here. If we (believers) have been made partakers of the divine nature, then a new nature must be a non-negotiable requirement for salvation.

What should be obvious is easily passed over by those who believe that salvation comes as a result of some human endeavor or self-imposed change. Paul declared that we are made “new creatures.” Our Lord discoursed at length with Nicodemus as to the absolute necessity of being born again or regenerated without which neither vision of nor entrance into the Kingdom could be attained. He often spoke of dwelling in His people and even that He and the Father would dwell with them and in them. With God there is always an issue of compatibility. He demands sameness. For that reason the command would go forth to “be ye holy for I am holy.” The scripture declares that “God is love.” So our Lord would instruct that we should “love one another as I have loved you.” Men may make professions; but without a true participation with God in the life that is found in Christ alone such professions are meaningless. If, indeed, we are not holy as He is holy and

loving as He is loving then truly how “can two walk together except they be agreed.”

As we read of the manifestation of that divine nature in Christ our Lord we are amazed indeed. That we should be possessed of it is a marvel indeed. The positive thoughts that go along with being accepted of God evoke praise from all true believers. They find themselves in pursuit of Christ “in the way.” Strength is discovered in weakness. Joy is discovered in the midst of sorrow. Hopes are directed away from this present world to a world to come wherein dwellest righteousness and unending fellowship with our Lord. We marvel at the design of God that it should be so. We are amazed at the determination of God to bring such a relationship with His people into reality. Such was the desire and the strength of His love that He sent His Son into the world to die that they might live. This does not mean merely to be alive, but to be alive with the same nature. Such is the delightful way of those who truly walk by faith and whose eye is ever upon Jesus our Lord.

But, why then is this change such a matter of necessity and why is it so drastic? In that we have been given these “great and precious promises” which result in participation in the divine nature with God a great escape has occurred. Men love to think in terms of freedom and we are reminded of the refrain “let freedom ring.” This is all fine as long as we think in terms of governments and oppressions and the political things of this world. But, men have not

been free since the fall in the Garden of Eden. It is here that the great misconception is manifest. They feel free. They think themselves capable of independent decisions. But, they do not realize that these are bound by a fallen nature. It is this nature that is unacceptable with God. No amount of good deeds (relatively speaking) can avail to please God. Only through faith can that happen. (Hebrews 11:6). This change of nature is drastic. It involves a "new heart" and a "right spirit," neither of which one can produce of himself. The change is quite drastic because this old nature is described as corrupt and that is a harsh term to many. It is thus we understand the insidious character of the old nature and the bondage it enforces upon the will.

A person may see a bit of mold on a slice of bread and throw the whole slice away. They do this for two reasons. One is they are not sure how far the corruption has progressed beyond what they see. The second reason is that they know that if that piece of bread were left to itself it would eventually be completely permeated with that mold. Human nature does not always display the degree of corruption possible. Yet, the ruin is such that it can never be acceptable with God who is infinitely pure

and holy. He will tolerate no amount of corruption in them with whom He has to do. That corruption left to itself will progress to the utmost in its opposition to God and think itself to be free. The bondage of this old nature is such that those subject to it have no thought of being chained to it. The old nature is hopelessly attracted to the corrupt things in this present world and so were we all subject to it. *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Ephesians 2:3.*

The hope and desire of all true believers is to be free from this old nature completely. Paul cried for deliverance from the "body of this death." But, we who truly believe have escaped by virtue of having been made "partakers of the divine nature" which is committed only to the will of God in Christ. In contrast we need only look to the cross to see what free will did to Christ. We further see the total contempt that God has for the corruption of this world in what He did to Christ on account of our sins. It is He that brought about our great escape. *bhs*

WHAT WAS A CRUCIFIXION? Let us try to realize it, and understand its misery. The person crucified was laid on his back on a piece of timber, with a cross-piece nailed to it near one end – or on the trunk of a tree with branching arms, which answered the same purpose. His hands were spread out on the cross-piece, and nails driven through each of them, fastening them to the wood. His feet in like manner were nailed to the upright part of the cross. And then, the body having been securely fastened, the cross was raised up, and fixed firmly in the ground. And there hung the unhappy sufferer until pain and exhaustion brought him to his end – not dying suddenly, for no vital part of him was injured – but enduring the most excruciating agony from his hands and feet, and unable to move.

Such was the death of the cross. Such was the death that Jesus died for us! For six long hours He hung there before a gazing crowd, naked, and bleeding from head to foot – His head pierced with thorns – His back lacerated with scourging – His hands and feet torn with nails – and mocked and reviled by His cruel enemies to the very last.

Let us meditate frequently on these things. Let us often read over the story of Christ's cross and passion. Let us remember, not least, that all these horrible sufferings were born without a murmur. No word of impatience crossed our Lord's lips. In His death, no less than in His life, He was perfect. To the very last, Satan found nothing in Him. (John 14:30.) ~ J.C. Ryle

“The Man Christ Jesus”

1 Timothy 2:5

This Man is no ordinary man. This Man is himself God. He is the God-man. He became a man that he might redeem men. He lived in this world as the Representative Man, the Representative of God's elect. He lived the full age of a man in perfect obedience to the will and law of God to establish righteousness for men, even the righteousness of God, by magnifying the law and making it honorable. Then, when his hour had fully come, this Man, the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ, died upon the cursed tree as our Substitute, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” Now, this Man, who as a man put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is seated upon the very throne of God in glory, accepted as a man, with God. Hear the good news of that fact. — Since there is a Man in glory, accepted of God, there may be another, and another, and another! Because this Man, the God-man, is in glory, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him!”

Who is he?

This man, the Lord Jesus Christ, is “the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person.” Christ is both God himself and the singular revelation and expression of the glory of God. The Father and the Son are the same as the sun and its rays. One is not before the other; and they cannot be divided or separated. He is the perfect revelation and the exact image and character of the Father (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-3; 10:30; 14:8-10; Matthew 1:21-23).

What has he done?

Much needs to be said in answer to this question; but allow me to simply declare that which is the essence of all our Savior did as the God-man, our Mediator. The Lord Jesus Christ has “by himself purged our sins!” The Lord Jesus, of himself, by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for all the sins of God's elect. He took our sins upon himself, bore them, and died under the penalty of them, thereby abolishing them completely and forever (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26; Colossians 1:19-22; Isaiah 53:4-6).

Where is he now?

He is yonder in glory, where more than two thousand years ago “he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.” The “Majesty on High” is God the Father to whom majesty belongs and who is clothed with majesty. His right hand is the place of power, greatness, acceptance, and glory. There sits the Man, Christ Jesus, and all his elect in him. We have been made to sit down with him in heavenly places!

“There, like a man, the Saviour sits; the God, how bright he shines;
And scatters infinite delight on all the happy minds.”

Do you see him?

“The head that once was crowned with thorns, is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns that mighty Victor's brow.
No more the bloody crown, the cross and nails no more:
For hell itself shakes at His frown, and all the heavens adore.”

Don Fortner