

"The 'tree of life' is God Himself, for God is life. He is the highest form of life, and he is also the source and goal of life. And the fruit: what is that? It is our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot eat the tree but you can eat the fruit. No one is able to receive God as God, but we can receive the Lord Jesus. The fruit is the edible part, the receivable part of the tree. So-may I say it reverently?-the Lord Jesus is really God in a receivable form. God in Christ we can receive." (from the Normal Christian Life by Watchman Nee)

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM

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

34. Q. What is sanctification?

XXXIV. A. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit (2 Thess. 2:13), whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God (Eph. 4:24), and are enabled more and more to die to sin, and live to righteousness (Rom. 6:11).

35. Q. What are the benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

XXXV. A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification (Rom. 5:1-2, 5), are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17), increase of grace, perseverance in it to the end (Prov. 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Pet. 1:5).

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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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DEMAS

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 2 Timothy 4:9-10

There are many names in scripture that are but briefly mentioned. Some, such as Ananias are mentioned with respect to some specific task. Others, such as Epaphroditus, because of extended and sacrificial service. Still others were sent greetings by the Apostle Paul without comment on their relationship to him. Even in those cases we may conclude that Paul valued them as fellow laborers in the Gospel. We would do well to meditate on these people and to thank God for them. We should even learn to correctly pronounce their names. After all, they are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is sad, however, that some are mentioned in a less than favorable way. Of such were Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. No doubt, some of these were on Paul's mind as he tearfully declared that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ. These were clearly antagonists against the Gospel and the person and work of our Blessed Lord. We are warned that many such are in the world and we grieve over the despite they propagate against God and His wonderful grace.

It is not indicated that the man in this text is one of these. There is no report of blasphemy against the truth or a personal attack against Paul. He was, however, a source of great sorrow with Paul. We tend to think of Paul as being impervious to the attacks of men, both spiritually and physically. He rose up from being stoned and continued to preach the Gospel. He did not hesitate to confront Peter because of

untoward behavior. He boldly corrected the Corinthians. Yet, here we read of the actions of one man leaving him with a broken heart.

There were many who attended to Paul and were especially dear to him. These were faithful to him and greatly treasured. These would have been first of all the servants of Jesus Christ. They would have recognized the gifts and calling of the great Apostle. They would have shared his burden for the lost and would have, with Paul, seen themselves as debtors to all. Paul would have believed all of this to be true of Demas. Then, at a time when the consolation of true fellowship was especially precious, a trusted servant and friend forsook him.

We sense that Paul felt a special closeness to this man. Paul pleads with Timothy “to come shortly” to him. The reason of his urgency is expressly because of the departure of three of those ministering to him. Two of them (Crescens and Titus) appear to have departed to minister in other areas and were thus going where Paul could not. But, of Demas it said that his motives were without honor. We might have expected Paul to place him in the same category as enemies previously mentioned. But, this one is personal. He did not say that he had forsaken the Gospel or the ministry. It was rather that he, “hath forsaken me.”

Demas might have been remembered as one of those sending greetings to the Colossians: *Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Colossians 4:14.* Or he might have been

noted as one lovingly commended to Philemon: *There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers. Philemon 1:23-24.* All of this is rendered meaningless as this final recorded act is left for us to ponder and Demas is remembered as the man who forsook Paul for the love of the world. It is obvious that here was one Paul trusted. He was one whose ministering had been very valuable to Paul. But, it is perhaps the loss of the friendship and fellowship that was most painful to Paul. We are reminded of the lament of David over the betrayal of Ahithophel: *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. Psalms 41:9.*

Two proverbs come to mind and stand in stark contrast. The first is: *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. Proverbs 25:19.* The second is most precious: *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24.* Paul ultimately found his consolation in Christ and we are assured that the Lord attended him to the end. Perhaps it is here that Paul was drawn even closer to the Lord. Many of us have experienced friendships that we believed were truly of the Lord. We

have bared our souls to them; we have shared our joys and our grief and delighted to call them brother. To see them leave all appearances of the love of Christ is heartbreaking to say the least. *As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. Proverbs 26:11.*

Paul mentioned two other men in this passage. Dear faithful Luke was still with him as he anticipated his departure. Still Paul desired to see his beloved Timothy. But, he tells him to bring Mark. This is the same one who had left Paul in the midst of a missionary endeavor and was judged unfit for a subsequent trip. But, now he is deemed profitable to the ministry. Paul highly esteemed the friends and co-laborers the Lord had given him. He knew of human weakness and faltering. But, of Demas it was said that he loved this present world. There is no room for the love of the world and the love of Christ within us. We serve one or the other. It would seem that Demas esteemed the treasures of this world more than the "reproaches of Christ."

Are there those who treasure us as friends? Are we of service to them in the service of Christ? Our ultimate accountability is to Christ alone and His service. But, we bear one another's burdens and are accountable to the trust placed in us as well. *bhs*

"HE KNOWS THE SHEPHERD!"

Some years ago at a social function in England, a great actor was asked to recite something for the pleasure of his fellow guests. He consented. He asked if there was anything special which his audience would like to hear. An aged minister who was present arose and said, "Could you, sir, recite the twenty-third psalm?"

The great actor replied, "I can, and I will if you, my friend, after I have finished, will do the same."

The minister reluctantly consented.

Impressively, the great actor recited the psalm. His voice was perfect. His intonation was flawless. The audience was spellbound. As he finished, the guests applauded.

Then, the aged minister arose and began to recite the psalm. His voice was not remarkable. His intonation was not faultless. When he finished, there was no applause. There was silence. There was not a dry eye in the room. Many heads were bowed in reverence.

The great actor again arose to his feet and, with great emotion, he said. "My friends, I have reached your eyes and ears. But the minister has reached your hearts. The difference is this: I know the psalm, but he knows the Shepherd!"
– Anon (cited by Daniel Parks)

Spurgeon, IS CONVERSION NECESSARY?

The Spirit calls men to Jesus in diverse ways- Some are drawn so gently that they scarcely know when the drawing began, and others are so suddenly affected, that their conversion stands out with noonday clearness.

Perhaps no two conversions are precisely alike in detail-the means, the modes, the manifestations, all vary greatly. As our minds are not all cast in the same mold, it may so happen that the truth which affects one is powerless upon another; the style of address which influences your friend may be offensive to yourself. "The wind blows where it will."

Yet in all true conversions there are points of essential agreement- there must be in all a penitent confession of sin, and a looking to Jesus for the forgiveness of it, and there must also be a real change of heart such as shall affect the entire life thereafter.

Where these essential points are not found, there is no genuine conversion.

Where there is true faith, there is the new birth, and that implies a change beyond measure, complete, and radical.

Any man who is united to Christ has experienced a great change. This change is a thorough and sweeping one, and operates upon the nature, heart, and life of the convert.

There must be a divine work, making us new creatures, and causing all things to become new with us, or we shall die in our sins.

Our condition before God, our moral tone, our nature, our state of mind, are made by conversion totally different from what they were before. In a word, if we are in Christ Jesus we are new creatures; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

In conversion, infidels become believers, Roman Catholics forsake their priests, harlots become chaste, drunkards leave their cups, and, what is equally remarkable, Pharisees leave their self-righteous pride, and come as 'sinners' to Jesus.

Conversion may be known by the fact that it changes the whole man. It changes the 'principle' upon which he lives-he once lived for self, now he lives for God. He once did right because he was afraid of punishment if he did wrong, but now he shuns evil because he hates it. He once did right because he hoped to merit heaven, but now no such selfish motive sways him- he knows that he is saved, and he now does right out of gratitude to God.

His 'objects in life' are changed-he once lived for gain, or worldly honor; now he lives for the glory of God. His 'comforts' are changed-the pleasures of the world and sin are nothing to him now, he finds comfort in the love of God shed abroad in his heart.

His 'desires' are changed-that which he once panted and pined for, he is now content to do without. And that which he once despised, he now longs after as the deer pants after the water brooks.

His 'fears' are different-he fears man no more, but fears his God.

His 'hopes' are also altered-his expectations fly beyond the stars.

The man has begun a new life. A convert once said- "Either the world is altered or else I am." Everything seems new.

Beloved hearers, may we all meet in heaven. But to meet in heaven we must all be converted, for inside yonder gates of pearl none can enter but those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus our Lord. God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.



God's Word is the judge of controversies--and the rock of infallibility!
All truth must be brought to the touchstone of Scripture.

This blessed Book will fill the head with knowledge--and the heart with grace!
--Thomas Watson