

if we fasten ourselves to Christ when life is a sinking ship, then we learn to treasure him as our anchor. We discover that our faithfulness is tethered to his, especially during the troubling seasons of life. —Glenna Marshall

The Baptist Catechism (Keach's Catechism)

1677

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

Q. 116. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

(Matt. 6:12; Ps. 51:1-3, 7; Mark 11:25; Matt. 18:35)

Q. 117. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we

are tempted.

(Matt. 6:13; 26:41; Ps. 19:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; John 17:15)

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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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HEARTS ON TRIAL

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. (Proverbs 17:3)

Many of the proverbs seem to express standalone thoughts. Those in this chapter appear to be more disconnected than those in previous chapters. Yet, in this proverb much is implied and born out in other places in Scripture. The imagery here is relatively easy to follow but perhaps difficult to realize and often hard to apply. The immediate reaction of many might be that such knowledge is used against us. I have heard some threaten that God is going to get them if they don't mend their ways. But in that the Lord is so involved, it is for the good of His people. We would look here and at a few other places in the Word as the heart, and the divine knowledge of it are brought into view. It is a fact that the Lord does try the hearts of His people so that His grace may be proven and that He might be glorified thereby. We do well to desire having the Lord's knowledge of our hearts exposed in such a way as to fit us the more for fellowship with Him. We should rejoice that the Lord can and does search the hearts of His people and so remedy the defects He finds there and adapt our hearts to be receptive to His will with "Joy unspeakable and full of glory."

We would first consider the imagery employed here. The things mentioned here were well-known in earlier times but not so much now. Men have since developed more mechanized ways of refining precious metals out of the sight of ordinary people. It was once carried out by the hands of experienced artisans

and craftsmen. The aim of their work was to remove impurities and to attain absolute purity. Such processes involved some form of stress to the impure metal. Here it was by fire. There was the fining pot and the furnace. In any event it required great skill to heat without destruction and to know when the process was completed. It was always the aim to create a thing of both beauty and utility. It would seem certain that the writer's aim was to see these illustrations, and more, communicated to the reader. We would be reminded that some of the fixtures in the Tabernacle were made of beaten gold. I have read of a case in which the refiner judged it ready when he could see his own image in the liquid metal.

John Gill points to other versions which make this a similitude, "as the fining pot is for silver," &c. as silver is refined in the pot, and gold in the furnace, so are the hearts of God's people, and their graces tried and purified by Him in the furnace of affliction; the variety of troubles they are exercised with are made useful for the purging away of the dross of sin and corruption, and for the brightening of their graces. The fact that the Lord tries the hearts moved Gill to quote another in this way: "there is no vessel in which they can be put and tried by creatures; a man does not know, nor can he thoroughly search and try his own heart, and much less the hearts of others."

The Lord is infinitely qualified to search the heart in that He alone knows the heart. The words of Jeremiah the prophet come immediately to mind: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:9-10)*. Several things are revealed in this passage. First, that which is declared here is universally denied by men. Men become very defensive regarding their supposed integrity and their thoughts of self-determination. The problem is revealed here in that they are incapable of knowing the depth of their own wickedness. Secondly, if the Lord searches, nothing will be hidden. The evidence is incontrovertible and damning to say the least. We recall the case of Achan who took the forbidden articles at Jericho. Not only was he constrained to confess, but they also went to his tent and brought the forbidden items out. He, his family, and the stolen items were all destroyed. There is a judgmental aspect of Jeremiah 17:10 to be considered. But it points us to the necessity that it be known and cleansed, and believers welcome such an examination when mercy is in attendance.

And so, we would note the aim of suffering through the comforting words of Peter: *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of*

Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:6-7). The reference to “gold that perishes is not lost on us in the application of our text. The sufferings of the Lord’s people are real and yet, not to be compared to that suffered by our Lord. We are reminded that it is by “His stripes we are healed.” And we are further reminded that, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)*.

We note that there is a present value to be realized in the trials we are called upon to endure. It brings out an experienced confirmation of His presence with us. We consider the acknowledgement of the Psalmist, *Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. (Psalms 66:9-10)*. Perhaps this was in the heart of David as he wrote, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I may learn thy statutes.”

We are provoked to pray for the accomplishment of this wondrous work of grace in our hearts. Consider this prayer of David: *Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. (Psalms 26:2)*. How attached are we to this present world and the remnants of it in our hearts? Have we even attempted to search our own hearts, or do we fear that we might even discover things that we are reluctant to surrender? Can we pray with David in the classic manner: *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalms 139:23-24)? bhs*

Since Satan can’t destroy the gospel, he has too often neutralized its usefulness by addition, subtraction, or substitution. —J.C. Ryle

What should surprise us is not that God would judge sinners (that actually makes sense) but that he would save any of them. Heaven, not hell, is the real mystery of Scripture. —Michael Kruger

Tim Challies Blog February 26, 2021

We can have little expectation that God will answer our prayers for daily bread when we intend to spend our days in lazy profligacy rather than active labor. Rather, we must pray fervently and work diligently—pray and then labor to see the prayer answered. God is unlikely to hear our prayers for deliverance from pornography when we do not intend to take the least action to change the habits and patterns that lead us down that ugly path night by night. Rather, we must pray for deliverance and then take hold of the means of deliverance that God provides to us—pray and then labor to see the prayer answered.

The rule pertains not just to prayers for our own concerns, but also the concerns of others. The Apostle James warns us of the futility of saying to another person, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without a willingness to be the one to actually do the warming and the filling. And in much the same way, we should not pray, “Let him go in peace and let him be warmed and filled” if we are unwilling to help him be warm and be full. We must not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in our power to do it—especially if we have prayed about it.

If we pray that God will save the souls of friends and neighbors, we ourselves should be willing to form plans and take steps to tell them the good news of the gospel. Pray and then labor to see the prayer answered not only through others, but through ourselves. If we pray that God will comfort those who have endured a great loss, we ourselves should be eager and willing to be used as the means of comfort, to be the ones God uses to weep with those who weep, to bear another’s burden and so fulfill the law of Christ. Pray and then act to see the prayer answered.

Prayer is a serious business for in prayer we come before the King—we speak to God, commune with God, rely upon God. We submit our wills to God and entreat him for what he can grant, what he can provide, what he can accomplish. And though we come freely and confidently, we dare not approach disrespectfully. To guard against disrespect we should be willing and eager to be the means God uses to answer the prayers we have made, whenever that is possible. We should always be willing to labor not just in prayer, but to see our prayers answered, for there are few greater blessings than to see God use us as his answer.

Any valid hope of a state of blessedness beyond the incident of death must lie in the goodness of God and the work of atonement accomplished for us by Jesus Christ on the cross. The deep, deep love of God is the fountain out of which flows our future beatitude, and the grace of God in Christ is the channel by which it reaches us. The cross of Christ creates a moral situation where every attribute of God is on the side of the returning sinner. Even justice is on our side, for it is written, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

—A. W. Tozer, *Born After Midnight*