

It is very wise to talk about our death. The shroud, the grave, the shovel may teach us more of true wisdom than all the learned heads that ever-pondered vain philosophy, or all the lips that ever uttered earth-born science! "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning--but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure." Ecclesiastes 7:4 -- C. H. Spurgeon

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. 47. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.

(Deut. 10:4; Matt. 19:17)

Q. 48. What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

A. The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

(Matt. 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-33)

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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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PAUL’S PERSONAL DOXOLOGY

*Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.
Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)*

The old Webster’s give this definition of doxology: “In Christian worship, a hymn in praise of the Almighty; a particular form of giving glory to God.” We have often been moved to praise as we sing the words of the well-known “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” We encounter many doxologies throughout the Word of God and the effect is the same with true believers. They are directed to consider the excellent Majesty of our God and so they are given to the worship of the one true God and Jesus Christ who He has sent. “All praise to God who reigns above, the God of our salvation.” We would see special connection in this one.

It is special in that it is the personal expression of Paul, given at the end of his personal testimonies. It has been my privilege over the years to recount my own salvation experience. I have been asked to do so at times. In preaching the Word, one’s experience over a lifetime with Christ often surfaces in connection with something being preached. It has also been my delight to listen and be thrilled as others have recounted the operations of grace upon themselves. I have found myself hanging on every detail as I witness their expression of love to God as they marvel at His hand in bringing them to the full knowledge of themselves. We are all unique individuals before God and as such have differing experiences. We discover enriching things in those differences as well as

affirmation of the Gospel ends that are common to all.

Paul often recounted the events of his own salvation experience. We know of the ones that are recorded in Scripture; we can only imagine how many times he shared it with others over the years of his Gospel ministry. Here, after having declared that the Gospel had been committed to his trust (see v. 11), he again shares his personal testimony with Timothy. The outward accounts we know, but here he sounds the depths of what transpired in the plan of God for him and the Gospel. This erupts in the praise of our text.

Paul began by marveling at the fact that the Lord had found him faithful. In vv. 12 and 13 we read, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” The faithfulness of which he speaks is not that which developed over time. The whole tone is that it was ordained of God in eternity past. We recall the case of Jeremiah who was ordained to his appointed task while yet in his mother’s womb. Such divine accounting assured the fitness of Paul for the ministry. Without hesitation, Paul disqualified himself completely from any consideration of personal worth or merit. And so, he characterizes himself as unfit. He rather defers

to the mercy of God. That he did it ignorantly in unbelief is not to be taken as “I just didn’t know,” or “I couldn’t help it.” It was rather that he was in that state of resisting the wisdom of God. He had heard the message of Stephen: *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. (Acts 6:10)*. It is by these things that mercy is magnified. Since all in the life of Paul before was antagonistic to God and His Son, only mercy could obtain the purpose of God.

He moves on in his testimony to marvel at the Grace of our Lord as being exceeding abundant with faith and love which was in Christ Jesus. The circumstances of Paul’s conversion are remarkable to say the least. And Paul attributes it to love. It was in the heat of the chase that Paul was arrested. He had authority, he had purpose, and he was determined. Robert Hawker remarked that “The Lord met him in the field of battle and unhorsed him in a moment.” No doubt, with such abundant revelations Paul was astounded at many things. Being made aware of his awful estate before God he would wonder that he had not been immediately struck down to hell. That he now had the ability to exercise saving faith and to experience the love of Christ to him was amazing grace indeed. Only then could he accurately view the awfulness of his past sin and become conscious of the absolute need of mercy. Are we all aware that the abundance of faith and love in us is an act of mercy.

It is at this point in his testimony that he embraces the eternal purpose of God in Christ. We often quote, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am*

chief. (1 Timothy 1:15), as a standalone passage. It is well that we do. But its origin is part of the personal testimony of Paul. Paul sees himself as fully vested in that which is here declared. It was Christ who came. He came into the world to save Paul (the chief of sinners). But just as assuredly He came into the world (God manifest in the flesh) to save me and to save all who come to see themselves as the sinner as did Paul. There was no other who could do so. There was no hope besides. A faithful saying indeed. This was no “fishing expedition;” He knew those for whom He came. And Paul marveled that he and his testimony might serve as a pattern to those coming.

And so, Paul erupts into this precious doxology. How could he do else but praise Him, the Eternal King. Paul would assure that all would see that God is glorified in his salvation and in the salvation of all. Honor and glory are due Him alone. He, the invisible God who is revealed to us in the person of His Son. It seems that as Paul began to recount his experience from the depths of depravity to the heights of privilege, he could not contain himself, and so these words of praise spew forth from a heart of love to the Lord and devotion to His purpose.

Perhaps he began this Epistle here with the aim of drawing Timothy into the same frame of mind. He would have Timothy to see the glory lingering near as he embarked on the tasks before him. As we think back over our own lives and the ministry given us are we given to the same desire to acknowledge the grace of God in every aspect of our experience from conviction to faith? May we ever end our thoughts with the desire that unto Him “be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” *bhs*

"Our sins are debts that none can pay but Christ. It is not our tears but his blood, it is not our sighs but his sufferings—which can satisfy justice for our sins. Christ must pay all—or we are prisoners forever." - Thomas Brooks

From Banner of Truth

Jesus was not sullen or morose. He rejoiced in the Spirit. He celebrated at weddings. He feasted in people's homes. He was excellent company. Still, his life on earth was marked more by sorrow than by laughter, more by grief than by mirth. For, as one whose senses were untainted by sin, he felt most acutely the constant ache of living in a fallen world. And such holy grief was most keenly felt by Jesus when he died on the cross. Bearing the awful load of our sin and enduring the hell of divine wrath, at Calvary our Lord experienced ultimate rejection and sorrow. And he did so for you. Jesus could have stayed in highest heaven, basking in the love of his Father. But he chose to hide his essential glory behind the veil of very ordinary-looking flesh. He chose to experience the grief of living in a fallen world amid the painful rejection of men. He chose to make himself of no esteem. Why? In order to save you from the root cause of all of your grief and sorrow—your sin.

Conclusion

I have no doubt that you know what it is like to sorrow and grieve. I am sure you have experienced rejection because of your faith in Christ. Perhaps men often hide their faces from you and despise you. Jesus, your Saviour and Priest, knows what that is like. Be comforted by his sympathy. And be comforted by the thought that he does not despise or reject you. He loves you enough to have become, for you, the Man of Sorrows. And so, in response to the questions of verse one, you say: 'Yes, I do believe! I do see! By God's grace, I see that the man of sorrows, the man acquainted with so much grief, the man despised and rejected and esteemed of no value, is in fact the most wonderful and beautiful person in the whole world!'

--Douglas McCallum

Life's great lessons are very long, and cannot be learned in a day; nor can they be learned easily. But at whatever cost, they are worth while. It is worthwhile for the gold to pass through the fire, to be made pure and clean. It is worthwhile for the gem to endure the hard processes necessary to prepare it for shining in its dazzling splendor. It is worthwhile for a Christian to submit to whatever severe discipline may be required--to bring out in him the likeness of the Master, and to fit him for noble living and serving. --J. R. Miller

Something to ponder:

"My mind being now more open and enlarged, I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books and praying over, if possible, every line and word. This proved food indeed and drink indeed to my soul. I daily received fresh life, light, and power from above. I got more true knowledge from reading the Book of God in one month, than I could ever have acquired from all the writings of men!" --George Whitefield, 1714-1770