

"Use the hammer of diligence, and let the knee of prayer be exercised--and there is not a stony doctrine in Scripture which is useful for you to understand, which will not fly into shivers under the exercise of prayer and faith. Prayer is the sacred lever which forces open the iron chest of divine mystery, that we may get the treasure hidden within!" – C. H. Spurgeon

"Seasons vary, circumstances change, feelings fluctuate, friendships cool, friends die—but Christ is ever the same!" – Octavius Winslow

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith

By J. Newton Brown 1833

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

XV. Of the Christian Sabbath

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath; and it is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Acts 20:7; Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; I Cor. 16:1-2; Ex. 20:8; Rev. 1:10; Ps. 118:15, 24; Isa. 58:13-14; Isa. 56:2-8; Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 11:26; Acts 13:44; Lev. 19:30; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2-3; Ps. 26:8; Ps. 87:3; Heb. 4:3-11

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM—In Richwood

Services:

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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THE GIFT OF SLEEP

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. (Psalms 127:1-2).

The following remarks were suggested to me as I read a chapter in David Mathis' book *Rich Wounds*. The chapter was in the section on the life of our Lord as He dwelt among us. Among those things addressed was the fact that Jesus slept. Using a play on the words from John 1:14, "...the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us..." Mathis suggested that "the Word was made flesh and slept among us." The point throughout was to point us to the literal manhood of Christ in all ways.

I was stirred to remember the simple bedtime prayer I was taught as a child. "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake. I pray the Lord my soul to take." Perhaps, somewhere along the way we may have lost our simple childlike confidence that allows us to fully rest in Him at all times. I was comforted then. It may be that I should lay my head on the pillow again with the same prayer as my last of the day.

It is interesting to pursue the ways the Lord has applied sleep to His people. Adam was cast into a deep sleep and awoke to find that the Lord had formed Eve. Abram experienced a horror of great darkness as he slept. Jacob laid down exhausted with a stone for a pillow and then awoke in awe as he remembered the ladder and the promise and provision of grace and the promise of God that attended. He called the place the "House of God." Solomon was

taken to the depths of his need as he slept and was there given the gift of wisdom that made him famous. It was in a dream that Joseph twice responded in the matter of the birth of Jesus and the flight to Egypt.

In this text we are reminded of the tendencies of men in matters they consider to be urgent. Even as we endeavor to serve the Lord, we often find ourselves slipping into the delusion that somehow it fully depends on us to get it done. It is good that we desire to serve the Lord and that we sense an urgency about it. All is vanity if it is not the Lord doing it. Surely, there is labor to be put forth, there is to be dedication to the Lord in doing it. But we must not forget that if the Lord doesn't do it, it will not be done.

In my childhood, the only people carrying guns were law officers. As time has gone on, we witness more and more folks arming themselves. This I advocate as a right under the law. There are greater and greater threats to personal security and safety. Yet, our text reminds us that if the Lord doesn't protect the city the watchman will be ineffective against the enemy. So, it is with us. I have heard of men sleeping with a gun under their pillow. I had rather pray my childhood prayer.

The Psalmist then addresses two common practices, rising early and sitting up late. For many years I got along with much less sleep

than is recommended. Yet, as I strained to milk the last minutes out of a day, I found that efficiency dropped, mental acuity declined and little, if anything was accomplished. In so doing, I was spurning a precious gift given me by the Lord. Anxiety and sorrow are allowed to rob us of sleep. We are taught to be anxious for nothing. I tended to push important things such as devotions and prayer to the last thing. In so doing much was diminished in value and certainly did not honor the Lord.

We come back to the thought that Jesus slept. We read, *And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? (Mark 4:37-38)*. We tend to pass from the fact that He was asleep to His calming of the storm. In their panic, the disciples failed to marvel that Jesus slept through the raging storm. Their tone may have been somewhat accusatory. It was as if they thought Him to be insensitive to their danger. Yet, what a precious lesson in faith they were given. They/we learned that the storm, as real and as threatening as it was, was never out of control. Its bound had been set and awaited the next command from the sovereign of the sea.

How then could Jesus sleep at such a time? His was an example of absolute trust. He was there to do the will of the Father. I believe that He not only slept, but that He slept as sound as

a little baby. It may not have been the most comfortable place to sleep but sleep He did. Truly the Father gave His beloved sleep. They witnessed His ability to fully release Himself to the care of His Father. Later, as He faced death, He would commend His soul to the hands of the Father having weathered the storm of the wrath of God upon Him. That night on that little ship He was so fully secure as to afford the most restful sleep.

C. H. Spurgeon wrote of this: "God is sure to give the best thing to his beloved, and we here see that he gives them sleep - that is a laying aside of care, a forgetfulness of need, a quiet leaving of matters with God, this kind of sleep is better than riches and honour. Note how Jesus slept amid the hurly-burly of a storm at sea. He knew that he was in his Father's hands, and therefore he was so quiet in spirit that the billows rocked him to sleep - it would be much oftener the same with us if we were more like him."

It is to be feared that we often overlook the provisions of our Lord to our hurt. And we often receive those things and fail to acknowledge Him in it. Do we realize that a terrible storm is raging about us even now? The principalities and powers and the hidden things of darkness are all about. The roaring lion is still seeking whom he may devour. No lock, no gun, no hi-tech security system can equal their power. It is the Lord that keeps the city of Mansoul. "Now I lay me down to sleep..." *bhs*

One Another's I Can't Find in the New Testament

The beautiful "one another" commands of the New Testament are famous. But it is also striking to notice the "one another's" that do not appear there.

For example, sanctify one another, humble one another, scrutinize one another, pressure one another, embarrass one another, corner one another, interrupt one another, defeat one another, sacrifice one another, shame one another, marginalize one another, exclude one another, judge one another, run one another's lives, confess one another's sins

The kind of God we really believe in is revealed in how we treat one another. The lovely gospel of Jesus positions us to treat one another like royalty, and every non-gospel positions us to treat one another like dirt. But we will follow through horizontally on whatever we really believe vertically.

Our relationships with one another reveal to us what we really believe as opposed to what we think we believe, our convictions as opposed to our opinions. It is possible for the gospel to remain at the shallow level of opinion, even sincere opinion, without penetrating to the deeper level of conviction. But when the gospel grips us down in our convictions, we embrace its implications wholeheartedly. Therefore, when we mistreat one another, our problem is not a lack of surface niceness but a lack of gospel depth. What we need is not only better manners but, far more, true faith.

Then the watching world might start feeling that Jesus himself has come to town: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35) – Ray Ortlund

Prayer’s Exclamation Point

All the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Prayer is a response to promises, that is, to the assurances of God’s future grace.

Prayer is drawing on the account where God has deposited all his stores of future grace.

Prayer is not hoping in the dark that there might be a God of good intentions out there. Prayer banks on the promise of God, and goes to the bank every day and draws on stores of future grace needed for that day.

Don’t miss the connection between the two halves of this great verse. Notice the “that is why”: “All the promises of God are Yes in Christ. That is why(therefore) we pray Amen through him, to God’s glory.”

To make sure we see it, let’s turn the two halves around: When we pray, we say Amen to God through Christ, because God has said a decisive Amen to all his promises in Christ. Prayer is the confident plea for God to make good on his promises of future grace — for Christ’s sake. Prayer links our faith in future grace with the foundation of it all, Jesus Christ.

Which leads to the final point: “Amen” is a full and precious word in times of prayer. It doesn’t mean primarily, “Yes, I have now said this prayer.” It means primarily, “Yes, God has made all these promises.”

Amen means, “Yes, Lord, you can do it.” It means, “Yes, Lord, you are powerful. Yes, Lord, you are wise. Yes, Lord, you are merciful. Yes, Lord, all future grace comes from you and has been confirmed in Christ.”

“Amen” is an exclamation point of hope and warranted confidence after a prayer for help. – John Piper, *From Future Grace*, page 105