

There is no way that Christians, in a private capacity, can do so much to promote the work of God and advance the kingdom of Christ as by prayer. —Jonathan Edwards

God's eternal election is the first link in that chain of a sinner's salvation, of which heavenly glory is the end! – J. C. Ryle

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. 23. What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

(Gen. 3:8,24; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41-46; Ps. 9:1)

Q. 24. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, having chosen a people to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to

bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer.

(Eph. 1:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 5:21; Acts 13:8; Jer. 31:33)

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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### OUR INFINITE RESOURCE

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)*

As our Lord neared the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, He addressed many essential issues pertaining to the life that would be faced by all true believers. This passage, as much as is the pattern for prayer given them in Matthew 6:5-13, indicative of a personal relationship with the Father. He uses the illustration of a father providing for his children in the verses that follow. We not only see here a precious promise given but are also made to see the desire of the Father toward us. It is troubling then to note that we so often fail to avail ourselves of that which is promised. The commands here given are with a sense of immediate and continuous need.

In the preceding verses He dealt with man's relationship to man and then declares to them that the needs to face such trials find their provision in the Father through Him. So, we are given three simple commands. Simple, yet profound in the thought that we might approach our God in this manner. And a precious outcome is promised. Thus, we ask where is such praying with subsequent action to be found? True belief is aggressive and sensitive to its needs. It also realizes that God alone, in Christ alone is our only resource.

Of need – we ask; of discovery – we seek; of opportunity – we knock. David Brown (JFB) wrote: “Though there seems evidently a climax here, expressive of more and more importunity,

yet each of these terms used presents what we desire of God in a different light. We ask for what we wish; we seek for what we miss; we knock for that from which we feel ourselves shut out. Answering to this threefold representation is the triple assurance of success to our believing efforts. “But ah!” might some humble disciple say, “I cannot persuade myself that I have any interest with God.” To meet this, our Lord repeats the triple assurance He had just given, but in such a form as to silence every such complaint.” Perhaps the missing element with many is “importunity.” A secular definition of the word is persistence to the point of annoyance. We are encouraged to importunity in matters of faith and in our sense of need before God. Our Lord related two parables to encourage it. This passage is easily memorized but difficult to apply.

We have precious encouragement throughout to ask. Our Lord so encouraged the woman at the well in that which is most important: *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. (John 4:10).* While we normally think here of salvation, being born again, we continue to drink of that living water. Should we not ask all the more in that we have been made to know the gift of God?

“We ask for what we wish.” Our Lord, looking to the need of faith encouraged faith, in saying, *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)*. We are reminded of the wish of Solomon for wisdom and marvel at that which was witnessed in his life. The Psalmist described a special need for preparation in writing, *LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: (Psalms 10:17)*. Again, we pray for deliverance but with a motive: *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. (Psalms 50:15)*. We are shown the contrast by the actions of the Laodicean Church as they see no reason to ask. James wrote, “Ye have not because ye ask not...” Are we asking? Are we asking with importunity?

The setting of priorities with many seems to be an issue. Our Lord set that in order for us in the well-known directive to “...seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Again, from David Brown, “we seek for what we miss.” Believers are seekers after God and the things of God by virtue of the new nature given them in regeneration. They crave the very presence of God: *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. (Psalms 27:8)*. The desire to know from Him and thus seek to know and cry unto Him, “Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.” There is the joy of discovery to be known by true seekers: *The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. (Psalms 69:32)*. The ultimate reward in seeking is declared by Paul to the Romans in writing, “To

them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. Let it not be said of us, “there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; rather let us be diligent seekers.

Paul requested of the Colossians that they pray “that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ...” He sensed opposition and closed doors. What do we do to gain entrance into a building? We knock. The thought here was ably grasped by Paul on his missionary journey as he came to Troas. A door was opened, and he was soon in Philippi and from there many doors were opened. But they knocked. To the church at Philadelphia this word was given: *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (Revelation 3:8)*.

As I read of men in the past continuing in prayer for hours, I am ashamed of how little, by comparison, that I do pray. The example is ever before us in the Word of God. The most important is that of our Lord who prayed all night and agonized in prayer at the prospect of the cross. We must ask, for what do we wish? What is it that we miss and for what are we longing? From what do we feel shut out from? We are instructed to ask, seek, and knock and to do so as we are bidden by our Lord being assured by our Loving Father. “If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”  
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Someone has pointed out that God had sent Moses to instruct His people, Isaiah to proclaim good news, Jeremiah to weep, but then at the right time He came Himself—in person, in the flesh, visible, audible, wooing, warning, pleading, offering rest to all the world’s weary. -- Geoffrey Thomas

## Before and During the Call

It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24) Quick work this! The Lord hears us before we call and often answers us in the same speedy manner. Foreseeing our needs and our prayers, He so arranges providence that before the need actually arises He has supplied it, before the trial assails us He has armed us against it. This is the promptitude of omniscience, and we have often seen it exercised. Before we dreamed of the affliction which was coming, the strong consolation which was to sustain us under it had arrived. What a prayer-answering God we have! The second clause suggests the telephone. Though God be in heaven and we upon earth, yet He makes our word, like His own word, to travel very swiftly, When we pray aright we speak into the ear of God. Our gracious Mediator presents our petitions at once, and the great Father hears them and smiles upon them. Grand praying this! Who would not be much in prayer when he knows that he has the ear of the King of kings? This day I will pray in faith, not only believing that I shall be heard, but that I am heard; not only that I shall be answered, but that I have the answer already. Holy Spirit, help me in this! –C. H. Spurgeon

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Nevertheless, the problem with the physical seed of Abraham was not that they were unable to keep the covenant of works. Instead, their failure was that they did not trust in the promise that God gave them. They should have known it was impossible to fulfill the law. The law was given to show them their sins. Because of their sins, they should have trusted all the more in the Abrahamic promise. Thus, their problem was not a lack of obedience but a lack of faith. They failed to believe because they took pride in the fact that they were the circumcised children of Abraham (Matt. 3:9). Moreover, they placed too much confidence in their moral ability. It seems many Jews of Jesus' day viewed the law as only commanding external conformity rather than demanding purity of the heart. Therefore, with a high view of themselves and a low view of the law, they sought to establish their own righteousness by works rather than submitting to the righteousness of Christ by faith (Rom. 10:3-4). –Jeffrey Johnson and Tom Nettles

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All conviction of sin wrought by the Holy Spirit is intended to drive us closer to Christ, never to place us at a distance from him, groveling in crippling shame, paralyzing unbelief, and self-loathing discouragement.

--Albert Martin and David Murray

To make light of prayer and take it for granted, to pray carelessly and flippantly, is to make light of the death of God's only Son. God doesn't answer cheap prayers.

--Warren Wiersbe