

We need a Savior who can now be our real Friend--loving us, keeping close beside us always.

We not only need a Savior who saved us by one great act wrought centuries ago--but one who continually saves us by His warm heart throbbing with love today, walking ever by our side.

Nothing less than a living Christ will do for us! That is what the gospel brings to us. It tells us of Him who lives. He was dead--the nail-prints are in His hands, but He is now alive forevermore! He is risen! He loves us now, today, always. He is ever with us!

--J. R. Miller

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. 29. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself, a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

(1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:28; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 2:17; 7:25; Rom. 8:34)

Q. 30. How does Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.

(Ps. 110:3; Matt. 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:25)

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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TWO OR THREE AND THE LORD

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:19-20)

In the course of my ministry, I have had occasions to meet with and speak to two or three because that was all who came. Were it not for the knowledge of the omnipresence of the Lord I might have been discouraged. This passage has often sprung to mind and was welcomed as a word of reassurance and consolation. Many have equated the Lord's blessing with a large crowd. Yet we read in John 6 that such was not the case as many walked away from the preaching of our Lord. Others have attempted to think of themselves in an exclusive manner when finding themselves in a small group thinking themselves aloof from the crowd. The difference will always be the presence or absence of the Lord Himself.

We would exercise caution in that many things in the Word of God when quoted are easily neglected as to their full impact on our lives and our faith. Our reaction to a small turnout might be, “we remember the two or three.” It is good that we have a grasp of Scripture to the point of such instant recall. But then there is often a failure to fully consider what we have said. It is better that we meditate on and further explore these things that may be common knowledge. In this way we are lifted up to a higher plane of worship and God-honoring utilization of His Word, drawing upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, it is the presence of Christ that makes all the difference, and that

difference will be with us as individuals who walk with Him. In fellowship, that which is known by each is experienced by all.

There are many presumptive claims that have been made about agreement in prayer. I have heard men declare that they were going to agree in prayer in order to accomplish some purpose. What was conspicuously absent was any reference to the glory of God or any sense of dependence on the grace of God or that they were looking to be led by the Spirit of God. They were just going to agree. That which is stated here is not of spurious claims expressed by the whims of two or three or a crowd. It is clear that the things sought after here do not have their origin with men.

This statement is given in the context of dealing with a conflict between brethren. See Matthew 18:15-18. Our Lord's teaching here reached back to the Old Testament teaching of issues being resolved with two or three witnesses. The implication here is that when these things are done with a proper consideration of the Lord, He will honor it. We are taught here that the Lord works through His people, through their fellowship, and in such a way that they sense His power and marvel at His grace. It is important to note that the issue of church discipline is a deeply spiritual concern and certainly the matter of agreement is not taken lightly.

While a specific application is made here, the principle may well carry over to many situations. Things desired that are consistent with the glory of God are in order as topics for both gathering and agreement. Paul certainly invoked such prayer and agreement regarding the ministry of the Word. He would ask the Ephesians to pray for him along with others. He would desire that the Word have free course. We need not be limited to things that might be easily attained; we might pray for that which would require a miracle. How easily we are intimidated by the enormity of some task. Yet, we have heard and know of recovery from illnesses considered terminal. Of especial note is the fact that we have witnessed the conversion of those who seemed hopelessly lost. Most of us are made aware after the fact that prayers were offered up for us.

The fact that two or three are referenced here may have been in opposition to the Jewish notion that ten are more were required. How often do we think in terms of a minimum number to properly consider a matter? In some matters that is wise. In the matter of needs, two or three is acknowledged and their authority is based on the presence of the Lord. Those things looking to the glory of God and the good of souls are proper topics to be considered in so meeting.

The essential here is that the gathering be in His name. How easily the expression, "In Jesus Name," rolls off our lips. It is to be feared that some think the words themselves are all that is required. In His Name is so much more than a mere title. It invokes the thought of who He is – God manifest in the flesh. It recalls all that He

has done in the matter of our redemption. That Name brings to our thoughts the great love wherewith He has loved us. In His Name acknowledges His sovereignty and the fact that all things are given into His hands.

It is He that is in the midst of such a meeting. This is not a symbolic presence where His name is tossed about or uttered in ritual praying. What a precious promise this is. We do well to seek after it and pray for His presence with us as we gather. There is an understood spiritual reality to His presence. One might be given to think that He is there because He came with me. Or that there is an implied blessing without a lively sense of Him being there. The presence here is sensed and brings reverence and Godly fear. Its impact is sensed in the heart and brings us to submission and worship.

John Gill expanded on this thought in this way, "...there am I in the midst of them; presiding over them, ruling in their hearts, directing their counsels, assisting them in all they are concerned, confirming what they do, and giving a blessing and success to all they are engaged in." It is even to such a small number as is mentioned here.

We rejoice in the omnipresence of Christ and the promise never to leave us. The promise is precious and is so fulfilled wherever and whenever His people are so met. And we would be ever aware that true needs are met, and His will is accomplished in us as well as for us.

O that the lovely Name of Jesus may bring to mind every proper thought of His Lordship over us, His tender care for us, and so provoke us to the praise of which He is worthy! *bhs*

Reading the Bible isn't just reading words on a page but listening to one who loves us more than life itself, and who has a very clear agenda for our lives and our world. —Gary Millar

It is not a small work to break the pride and stoniness of your heart. It needs power from above. —Nicholas Byfield

Not a Lack of Food, But a Lack of Hunger

I was once told of a woman who lived in a cold-weather climate. She suffered from poor health and this in a part of the world where she could not easily get the nutrition she needed. Doctors suggested she travel to the tropics where the setting might be more conducive to a recovery. A few weeks after her departure she wrote to a friend to say, “This is a wonderful spot where I have access to all the good and nutritious food I could ever need. If only I could find my appetite I’d be well in no time.” But within weeks she was gone. In the end, it wasn’t a lack of food that took her life, but a lack of hunger.

And in much the same way, we have before us all the spiritual food we could ever need—enough to fill and sustain us for a lifetime, enough to carry us through the most difficult trials we can ever face, enough to fit us for life on this earth and an eternity of heaven. The question is whether we will take and eat—whether we will satisfy ourselves with the bounty spread out before us.

Do you attend the worship services of your local church? It is here that you will be fed good food. It is here that the Bible is preached and read and prayed, here that you will see the Bible displayed in the ordinances, here that you will join to sing its very words and greatest truths. It is here that week by week you can take and eat. Do you?

Do you read your Bible day-by-day? Generations of our forebears and millions of our contemporaries could only wish to have the access to the Scriptures that we do today—a hundred translations, a thousand apps, a million opportunities to read it, to know it, to obey it. All that can keep you from the Scriptures and all their benefits is a lack of desire, a lack of hunger. Do you fill yourself with this food?

Do you spend time in fellowship with Christians, those who are charged by God to carry out the work of ministry, to speak the truth in love, to encourage you in your faith? To spend time with brothers and sisters is to spend time with those who can speak the greatest truths to your highest joys and your deepest sorrows. Do you spend time with them so you can enjoy the feast they provide?

Do you take advantage of the bounty of resources that is available to all of us today? Never in all of history have we had so many books and blogs, so many broadcasts and podcasts, so many sermons and periodicals. There is a great meal spread before us at every moment of every day and the only question is whether we will partake of it, whether we will join in the feast.

We see many withering and perishing around us, many diminishing and dying. Those who fall away and are lost can not possibly be said to have died from a lack of food, for there is an unending bounty spread before us. They can only be said to have died from a lack of appetite—from a simple failure to take what is offered, what can feed them, what can strengthen and equip them for a lifetime of serving God and an eternity of enjoying him. It is not a lack of food that threatens any of us, but only a lack of hunger. –Tim Challies, *BLOG June 29, 2022*