

Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit” – contrary to what we would expect, brokenness is the pathway to blessing!...The very thing we dread and are tempted to resist is actually the means to God’s greatest blessings in our lives. —Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

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. 96. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.

(Ps. 119:11-18; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:1-2; Rom. 1:16; Ps. 19:7)

Q. 97. How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer, receive it in faith and love, lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives.

(Prov. 8:34; 1 Peter 2:1-2; 1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 2:1-3; Heb. 4:2; 2 Thess. 2:10; Ps. 119:11; James 1:21-25)

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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

Volume 16, No. 7

February 12, 2023

RESISTING THE ADVERSARY

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (1 Peter 5:8-9).

When thoughts of warning come to mind, we are often directed to this text. The Word of God is filled with many warnings in both the Old and New Testaments. Who can read the prophets of old and the Apostles and not hear their plaintive cries concerning those things that threaten the souls of men and would destroy the testimony of the saints. And how often do we read of the disregard of those having been warned and then being visited with the consequences of their rejection of the divine message. It is obvious in this day that multitudes are in total contempt of the things of God and Him and His message as they were in the days of Jeremiah. This warning is to be conveyed to all and Peter would begin by directing the message to the “elders which are among you.” They were to convey the warning and thus all are advised to attend to this word carefully.

We do well to note the metaphors used in that they declare the degree of intensity with the matter at hand. In this case the adversary is described as a “roaring lion.” Several thoughts come to my mind at the thought of a lion. I still remember the first time I saw one (caged of course). Having only seen pictures I was struck first by the size of that beast and could only imagine its strength. Over the years I have watched several wildlife documentaries and noted some characteristics. The typical prey of the lion is the weaker of animals and those who

are separated from the rest of the flock. They are those who have carelessly strayed from the place of safety. The lion is often relentless in his quest for the desired kill and will patiently lie in wait to deceive. So, our adversary, the devil, walks about looking for just such victims and will pounce suddenly. I think if I were today in a place known to be inhabited by lions, I would be especially wary and would stay close to a place of safety. We live in just such a world.

Thus, the warning begins with “be sober.” Thayer gives the word here as being calm and collected in spirit and to be temperate and circumspect. This is followed by “be vigilant.” Besides being watchful and cautious, Thayer gives the following: “to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one.” The Lord asked the question “what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” We might ask, how carefully will one guard that which has been purchased at so great a price?

Peter, the aged Apostle, is certainly the voice of wisdom and experience. He had the experience of being caught by the “roaring lion.” We are shown much of Peter in both his times of weakness and now we read of his wisdom and strength. Peter was one of the earliest of the Apostles and was given a special designation in naming him Peter. He witnessed the mighty workings of our Lord in many situations and was

fully vested in what he saw. It was he who boldly declared “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” He embraced Him as the Messiah and as God manifest in the flesh. He was an eyewitness to His majesty. It was he who boldly asserted that he would never deny the Lord. Yet we read: *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. (Luke 22:31-33).* Soon thereafter we read of the sifting of which our Lord spoke. Peter begins with a rather quiet denial of our Lord as he warmed himself by the fire of those who condemned the Lord. It wasn’t long until another opportunity to stand by his commitment presented itself – again, denial with more intensity. At the third instance he resorted to swearing and cursing. At this time he was being mauled by the roaring lion and seemed defenseless. It was at this point that “the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.” His words were remembered with the effect that he went out and wept bitterly. We are not told that it was so, but we might surmise that now waves of self-condemnation and doubt rolled over him and it may be that Satan was not through with him and that he suffered greatly for the next several days. He was certainly in a weakened state and remained hesitant even after the resurrection. But the Lord had prayed for Peter and for many years thereafter he would strengthen the brethren as he is doing in this text.

We are encouraged by the fact that our archenemy may be resisted. James wrote to

some others about to be overtaken with these words: *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7).* So then, Peter here directs that we remain “steadfast in the faith.” Here it is not only that we act in faith but that it is “The faith.” Paul refers it to Titus as “the faith of God’s elect.” Jude called it the faith “once delivered unto the saints.” It behooves us to “draw nigh to God and to give heed to Gospel doctrine.

Another word of encouragement given by Peter is to be aware of the sufferings of others that are in the world. We hear much of those suffering for the cause of Christ even today. We would be reminded of those *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. (Hebrews 11:33-34).* We would avoid the presumptuous attitude of young Peter and give heed to the words of the wise old Apostle.

Kenneth Wuest gave the following translation of these two verses: “Be of a sober mind, be watchful. Your adversary who is a slanderer, namely, the devil, as a lion roaring in fierce hunger, is constantly walking about, always seeking someone to be devouring. Stand immovable against his onset, solid as a rock in your faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being accomplished in your brotherhood which is in the world.” Our enemy is real and we are no match for him. O that we may find grace to remain steadfast in the faith.
bhs

Grace and Humility

There should be a direct connection between grace and humility. If our works cannot possibly please God because everything is stained by sin, then the fact that God stoops down to save us when we cannot save ourselves should humble us. The

God who inhabits eternity and whose name is Holy yet dwells with the one who has a contrite and lowly spirit (Isa. 57:15). Indeed, 'All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word' (Isa. 66:2). Grace is not a concession to those who want a free ride; it is God's painful reconciliation of justice and mercy at the cross of Christ that sinners might have hope. If I fail at something I should have achieved, I feel humiliated; but if I contemplate 'Christ died for the ungodly', I feel humbled. Nevertheless, sometimes a truth can be somewhat distorted if it is expressed in an unbalanced way. Periodically, one comes across a vigorous assertion that when someone asks another if he is going to heaven, and the reply is 'I hope so', that is the trigger for an attack on the person for not being humble but arrogantly resting on his works. Conversely, if the person responds 'Yes, I know I am going to heaven', that is a sure sign that he is humble and resting on the work of Christ. There is much truth in this, but it is not always well expressed, and could do damage. As 'Rabbi' Duncan observed, all errors are 'abused truths.' Indeed, Duncan himself was one who often struggled in his faith, although he doubted himself rather than biblical truth. He once lamented: 'I am sure that Jesus is the Christ, but I am not sure that I am a Christian.' Accusing him of arrogance does not seem to be the best approach. Jesus was not so severe to the man who cried: 'I believe; help my unbelief' (Mark 9:24). Peter was sure of his faith when he was actually on the verge of denying Christ three times (e.g., Matt. 26:30-35). He was a true believer, but not aware of the depths of his own capacity to fail. Just as there can be a counterfeit faith, so there can be a counterfeit assurance. The spiritual life is not simple. The sheep who will be at the right hand of the Son of Man at 6 The Banner of Truth his coming in glory will not be aware of their own good deeds (see Matt. 25:31-40). A Christian is obliged to be loving towards fellow Christians and to keep the commandments, but it is dangerous to be aware that we are succeeding in these areas (see 1 John). Grace must lead not just to an understanding that we ought to be humble, but to actual humility. Humility is such a difficult thing to gauge. Charles Simeon desired it in his own life: 'I confess that this is the religion which I love; I would have a conscious unworthiness to pervade every act and habit of my soul'. He went further: 'The tender heart, the broken and contrite spirit, are to me far above all the joys that I could ever hope for in this vale of tears. I long to be in my proper place, my hand on my mouth, and my mouth in the dust.' Our hope is in Christ alone—in the perfection of his person and his work, and the wonder of his gracious promise that he will receive all who come to him (Matt. 11:28; John 6:37). That must humble us. To be genuine, humility must not even want to exude the least hint of arrogance to an uncomprehending world. If we are saved by grace, we must be amazed, and in evangelism somehow convey that amazement to others.

--Peter Barnes, *Article in Banner of Truth Magazine*

If you are Christians, be consistent. Be Christians out and out; Christians every hour, in every part. —Horatius Bonar