

Prayer is an acknowledgement that there are severe limitations to our human resources. Despite the media narrative, there are many situations that are way beyond our ability. This is not giving up or a lack of action, but just an honest acknowledgement that we are not God.

On the contrary, the lack of prayer is the height of hubris [pride]: a spirit of self-deification. Our weakness and limited power is such an obvious truth but it is painfully difficult for men to acknowledge. Prayer doesn't stop our action but gives us legs to run. It acknowledges our rightful place in the universe rather than believe the Disney theology that we need to just believe in ourselves. What folly. --Monergism

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)

VI. Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation

Isa. 55:1, Rev. 22:17, Rom. 16:25-26, Mark 1:15, Rom. 1:15-17, John 5:40, Matt.23:37, Rom.9:32, Pro. 1:24, Acts 13:46, John 3:19, Matt. 11:20, Luke 10:27, II Thess. 1:8

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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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THE LIVING WORD OF GOD

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

When challenged with reference to reading the Word of God, many will readily confess that they do not read it enough. Men sing *More about Jesus would I know...* while neglecting the very source of information and revelation about Him. It is to be feared that many who do read the Bible regularly are in search of mere information as opposed to application to their own hearts and lives. A contemporary writer observed in an article that the thought of many as to going deeper into the Word of God miss their real need of the Word of God going deeper into them. To many, the Bible is simply a book that is a bit above other books and thus it becomes lived out that “much study is a weariness to the flesh.” We have heard such complaints as “I just don’t understand the Bible.” That is an understandable statement in the mouths of those who neither know the Lord nor are they seeking after Him. When the Lord Himself becomes the quest, the search will be pursued with prayer and devotion and the language of the seeking Psalmists will be embraced by them. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. (Psalms 42:1).*

The connection of this verse to the preceding discourse on the rest promised to the people of God may not immediately appear. In the first verse, the exhortation is to fear missing the promise of rest. This not the rest of Heaven; rather it is that comfortable and comforting

state wherein we have assurance of salvation accomplished in the blood of Christ. Our text reveals the power of the Word of God and He who is the Word to go to the depths of our being and discover every need and address it with eternal efficacy. To the believer this is a most precious thought. To those who reject Christ and the Word of God the effect will be quite terrifying in that there is no rest to them.

The commentators differ as to the mention of the Word of God here. To some (John Gill) it is a distinct reference to Him of whom it was said “... and the Word was God.” To others, (Kistemaker) it refers to the written and spoken Word of God under the inspiration of the Spirit. Matthew Henry seemed to embrace both thoughts. In such cases I am often led to embrace both. What is evident is that the ability to discern the inner workings of men lies with God and that, as our text declares, nothing is hid from His sight as He is able to discern that which lies in the depths of us all. When the woman at the well in Samaria realized who Jesus was her report was “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did: is not this the Christ.” Those with Jesus on the road to Emmaus experienced the living aspects of the words of Christ burning in their hearts. And we are reminded of, *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)*

To this we connect the thought of the Word

of God being quick, that is, alive. That is the meaning of the obsolete English word here. Not only is it alive, it is life giving (able to make thee wise unto salvation). See also, James 1:18. We have experienced and have heard the same from others that in reading the Word it was sensed as living truth with direct application to our heart and lives. But the Word of God is much more. The terms used here in referring to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit and the bone and the marrow speak of precision beyond anything we might imagine. We are often amazed at the diagnostic tools used in the medical profession and of the skill of surgeons in executing delicate and detailed operations. Their abilities do not compare with the ability of God to expose us to the depths and bring about the only remedy possible. So, we pray with the Psalmist, "Search me and know my heart." We desire the full discovery of all that might be wrong so that we might rest in the knowledge that mercy and grace are ours in Christ. As we read the Word, hear it preached, and are in all ways exposed to it, it has the effect of revealing to us the awfulness of our sin, that which is required as a remedy, and the word of forgiveness we must have.

We are witnessing contempt for the Word of God and the God of the Word such as may have never been. That denial of the existence of God or the authority of His word neither excuses the

offender nor does it block the view that He has of the evil workings of their hearts. Simon Kistemaker wrote: "The writer reminds the reader that God's Word cannot be taken lightly; for if the reader does not wish to listen, he faces no less than God Himself. The Bible is not a collection of religious writings from the ancient past, but a book that speaks to all people everywhere... The Bible demands a response, because God does not tolerate indifference and disobedience." In a similar manner John Gill wrote: "all men, openly profane men, who are enemies to Christ, and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their persons, he sees their actions, even those that are most secretly devised and performed against him, and his saints; and he takes such notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal professors of religion, and upon what foot they have taken up their profession, and how they keep their lusts with their profession; he can distinguish between profession and grace; and he knows and observes the springs and progress of their apostasy: and as for true believers, he knows their persons, and knows them to be his; he sees their sins and their weaknesses; he takes notice of their graces, and observes their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the secret desires of their souls."

O to be so led in the way everlasting! *bhs*

Why such a vast universe?

I read once that there are more stars in the universe than there are words and sounds that all humans of all time have ever spoken. Why? The Bible is crystal clear about this: "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). Someone may ask, "If earth is the only inhabited planet and man the only rational inhabitant among the stars, why such a large and empty universe?" The answer is, because it's not about us. It's about God. And that's an understatement. God created us to know him and love him and show him. And then he gave us a hint of what he is like. That hint is the universe. The universe is declaring the glory of God, and the reason we exist is to see it and be stunned by it and glorify God because of it. On this point, Paul writes, "His invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are

without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him” (Romans 1:20–21). The great tragedy of the universe is that while human beings were made to glorify God, we have all fallen short of this purpose and “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man” (Romans 1:23)—especially the one in the mirror. This is the essence of what we call sin. So, why did God create the universe? Resounding through the whole Bible, from eternity to eternity, like rolling thunder, is the fact that God created the world for his glory.

--John Piper, *Astonished by God: Ten Truths to Turn the World Upside Down*

ON CONTENTMENT

The first principle to contentment is acknowledging that Jesus Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. He is seated at the right hand of God, controlling the universe in all its vastness and complexity. He controls every star in its composition and movement, appoints and determines every planetary system, and determines the qualities of every crystal and chromosome. As Augustus Toplady wrote, The fictitious power of chance And fortune I defy. My life’s minutest circumstance Is subject to his eye. Jesus is the One who has scattered a billion billion stars in space; He is the One who gives them all their names. Jesus Christ is the ultimate and foundational entity in this whole material universe. He is also sovereign over our daily lives, down to the most trivial aspects of our human experience. He numbers the very hairs of our heads and determines the bugs and viruses that give us sicknesses and colds. Knowing that we shall never have any day but a day which the Lord has made is one of the most comforting of Christian principles. Whatever storms may blow, the will of God always presides over our lives. Every day is His workmanship. This is the bedrock of my comfort: that Jesus Christ is in charge of today, just as He is in charge of every day. My life has not been a tale of sound and fury, told by an idiot and meaning nothing; my history has been written by the Savior who loves me. He is the author and finisher of my faith. –Geoffrey Thomas, *You Could Have It All*

This is a lonely world. We so often feel ourselves alone. Social media isn’t satisfying (however many likes you get). Friends let us down or are busy. Everybody wants somebody to come and help, to come and hold their hand. Let me tell you what you need. You need to look at God. You need to know God. You need to know there is a Creator and a Sustainer of everyone and everything, and that he is your kind Father. You need to know that he is slow to chide and he’s swift to bless. You need to know that he understands your needs and that he answers your prayers. You need to know that he chose you, he adopted you, he secured your destiny, he forgave you, and he sent his Spirit to you. Why? Because he loves you. You need to see all that you have in Christ, in glorious full-color focus. God has “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (v 3). Can you see it? Can you see him? –Alistair Begg, *PRAY BIG*

Shallow Christianity will not last in the coming generation, and it will not grow. Cultural Christianity is fading. The church in the twenty-first century must go big on truth or go home. —Kevin DeYoung