

Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. (Psalms 40:11)

"Our sins are many, but his mercies are more." - John Newton

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

95. Q. 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 (Pr. 8:34), preparation (1 Pet. 2:1, 2), and prayer (Ps. 119:18); receive it with faith and love (Heb. 4:2; 2 Thes. 2:10), lay it up in our hearts (Ps. 119:18), and practice it in our lives (Luke 8:15; James 1:25).

96. Q. How do baptism and the Lords supper become effectual means of salvation?

A. Baptism and the Lords supper become effectual means of salvation, not for any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ (1 Pet. 3:21; Mt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 3:6, 7), and the working of the Spirit in those that by faith receive them (1 Cor. 12:3; Mt. 28:19).

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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 GOD OF ALL COMFORT

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Those who love God have long rejoiced in the knowledge of His absolute sovereignty. It is wonderful to them all that the Lord who has promised good to His people is able in every way to carry out all that He has determined upon them. Of course, that knowledge tends to look out over the whole of creation and to marvel at the control that He exercises over it all. It is our delight to acknowledge Him: “All praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation...” As men scurry about seeking ways to control even the various occurrences of the natural world, we are reminded that it is He who calmed the seas and have learned that these things obey His will and purpose. It is well that we think “big” with respect to the infinite scope of His rule and reign. We would, however, be careful to note that His attention is given to the most minute details and that the things that trouble us are matters of His concern as much as anything. Thus, we are told to be casting our cares upon Him “for He careth for you.”

Paul supplies something here in his introduction to this epistle that should reinforce our thoughts of God’s care for us. While the reference to Him as the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is not unfamiliar in its references to covenant relationship between Christ and the Father, it takes on a very tender application here. Matthew Henry points out that God is the Father of Christ’s divine nature by

eternal generation; He is the Father of His human nature by a miraculous conception; and He is, as the God-man, in covenant relation to Him as our Redeemer and Mediator. We are then taught of the Lord to seize upon this relationship as a source of great comfort. That is, we are to be joined with Him in all appeals to the Father. In teaching the disciples to pray Jesus identified with them in saying “Our Father which art in Heaven.” When the Lord would dispatch Mary Magdalene with a message to the Apostles it was this: “...but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20:17).”

And so, from that we see Him further identified as the “Father of mercies.” Mercy could be considered as a mere fact. That is, we are not given what we deserve. There is no tenderness expected by a criminal who “throws himself on the mercy of the court.” But we, as the dear children experience much more than a dismissal of the charges; we receive the gentleness of Christ in vast applications to all that we experience in this present world. As the “Father of mercies” we would certainly understand Him to be the source of all that appears to our benefit. Some render this as the “Father of compassion” pointing to His ability to be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” “His compassions they fail not” and extend to

every situation in which we might be overcome. We rejoice in His determination to include us in His mercy in salvation; we are comforted at the tender application of the outcome of our Lord's sufferings in our behalf.

As "The God of all comfort" we are assured that He rules absolutely in that as well. Jesus promised the Comforter, the Holy Spirit as the one that comes alongside to help. The same word for comfort is used here. Not only is He the source of it, but He also rules well over it. He makes application in such a way as best suits the needs of those upon whom He has set His love. Our comforts are as particular as is our salvation. They are of design and made to comply with our needs and His glory. We may not always understand at the time of our trial but are assured from His word that the outcome will be good.

Suffering is a fact of the believer's life. Consider: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake... (Philippians 1:29)*. And we see further that Paul at Lystra was "...exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Christ warned the disciples to expect persecution for His name's sake. Paul wrote to Timothy that "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Peter encouraged us in that we may be happy if we suffer for righteousness' sake. But we would recognize that Christ was often found extending comfort to those suffering things common to all men. Suffering and grief are what they are, and they are often quite painful and a source of

great distress. The cry of God's people is heard even when it is not directed by them. In keeping with Romans 8:28 we may understand that He is in absolute control of all that befalls us and that we may profit from it.

Paul uses his own experience to emphasize the purpose of God in our suffering. The purpose clause of verse 4 arrests our attention. God comforts us in our tribulation to accomplish an even further purpose and as a result further blessing to the sufferer. It is that through the comfort given us we may be able to comfort other who suffer in a similar way. Certainly, we would seek to comfort where persecution is the issue. The same may apply to those who have suffered serious illness or those who grieve the loss of a loved one. The grief is not taken away, but the applied mercies and comfort is received with the acknowledgment of our God who is the God of all comfort. It applies to "them which are in any trouble." Paul declared that he took pleasure in his infirmities whereby he learned that when he was weak, he was strong. Trials and grief, not yielded to the sovereignty of the God of all comfort has a devastating effect in the life of a believer. Job's friends were of no value because they had not suffered themselves. We can be assured that Job was a wonderful comforter for having suffered.

Those of us who have suffered in any way are called upon to do two things. We are to submit to the Father of mercies and the God of all Comfort, and we are to be exercised in passing those comforts to others who may be suffering as well. All is to His glory. *bhs*

A Christian is not only one who has repented of his immorality, but, even more importantly, has repented of his morality. The more self-righteous one is, the worse it is for him. Our own merits are of no value for salvation, but will damn us. Whoever relies on his own goodness for salvation will suffer complete ruin. I am not suggesting that a person repents of being moral—but rather repents of making a savior of morality - of putting your hope in it. -Monergism

JUSTIFIED BY CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE

“By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many.”

(Jehovah of Jesus Christ in Isaiah 53:11)

1. Jesus Christ knew the decree through which He would justify Jehovah's people. For He was a party in that covenant made between Himself and His Father before the foundation of the world. Christ covenanted to represent Jehovah's people, die in their place and stead for their salvation. Jehovah's people, the “many” for whom Christ died, have been “justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9), and His blood is “the blood of the eternal covenant” (Hebrews 13:20).

2. Jesus Christ knew the place where He would justify Jehovah's people (Matthew 20:18f): “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify.”

3. Jesus Christ knew the time when He would justify Jehovah's people (John 17:1): “Father, the hour has come.”

4. Jesus Christ knew the means by which He would justify Jehovah's people – for they are “justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9). By the shed blood of Jesus Christ, all God's elect have been justified, declared righteous before Him, cleared of all their guilt and condemnation.

5. Jesus Christ knew the people whom He would justify. For they are His sheep, and He says “I know My sheep” (John 10:14) – “and He calls His own sheep by name” (v.3). Jesus Christ did not justify those to whom He will say at the Final Judgment, “I never knew you; depart from Me” (Matthew 7:23).

6. Jesus Christ is known by the justified. For this phrase “by His knowledge” may also refer to the knowledge of Him by the justified. If you by faith know Jesus Christ, you can say “I know whom I have believed” (2 Timothy 1:12), and God assures you that you are “justified by faith” (Romans 3:28; 5:1). Paul the apostle rightly associates his “knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” with His justification by Christ (Philippians 3:8f). If you never know Jesus Christ in faith, you were not justified by Him. – Daniel E. Parks

We are so prone to count our one or two troubles and so quick to dwell upon that one unkind word more than upon another hundred kind words for which we should be so deeply thankful. True thankfulness brings us close to the heart of God, to His love and grace. True thankfulness realizes that anything short of hell is grace. True thankfulness serves as a corrective lens—a lens through which we see God's grace in all things. Have you ever seen a severely sick person who is deeply thankful for the care he receives? A very old, physically frail person who is deeply thankful that she has a clear mind? Or a dying person who is deeply thankful that he still has time to speak to his family? Such a person has learned something of the art of thankfulness. –Joel Becke