

Discontent helps nothing. It never removes a hardship, or makes a burden any lighter, or brings back a vanished pleasure. One never feels better, for complaining. It only makes him wretched!  
—J.R. Miller

I never feel sorry for a Christian old man. Why feel sorry for those upon whom the glories of the eternal world are about to burst? —De Witt Talmage

Spurgeon's Catechism  
Compiled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon  
[1834 -1892]

"Heir of the Puritans" (*Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church*)

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

A. God having, out of his good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (2 Thess. 2:13), did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 5:21).

20.Q. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5), who being the eternal Son of God, became man (Jn. 1:14), and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever (1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:9).

**THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH**

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: [branthsi@msn.com](mailto:branthsi@msn.com)

Website: [www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com](http://www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com)

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

Volume 16, No. 25

June 18, 2023

---

---

### THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:17-18)*

We are promised that the taking of the whole armor of God will enable us to stand and thus obey the mandate of verse 14 – “Stand therefore...” This is not about trying to stand – we are, equipped with this armor, enabled to stand. The various pieces of equipment are not to be considered at the whim of the user – we are not shopping for armor, nor do we pick and choose. That which we are to take unto ourselves is of divine design and protects all that is vital (See Ephesians 6:15-16). By the very nature of that which is provided we are to understand that we are engaged in mortal combat. How many are unaware that there is a war going on and it is raging. We read of the horrors of war in faraway places and think ourselves blessed to be spared. Yet, we are faced with an enemy that is powerful, ruthless, relentless, deceptive, and very knowledgeable of the weakness in his foe. Without the whole armor of God there is no hope of succeeding against this enemy. Consider Paul’s description earlier in the chapter: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)*. The message of the many and the popular encourages systems of religion that are lacking in most, if not all, of this that the Apostle saw as vital to our survival.

That may seem to be a strong assessment, but to see it otherwise would be presumptuous and demeaning to the Captain of our Salvation. We know that our enemy is defeated. Yet, he is depicted to us as both wicked and aggressive. “For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, And, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal.” We are further reminded in Martin Luther’s great hymn that the right Man is on our side. But a further word of encouragement from Luther is that “One little word shall fell him.” We note that most of the armor of God is defensive in nature – designed to protect specific parts of the body (soul). But not so the sword of the Spirit. I have often heard it said relative to competitive sports that “the best defense is a good offense.” And we are reminded that our task here is to go on the offensive with the Glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we have the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Furthermore, the best defense is to keep the enemy at bay not allowing him to get close. A skilled swordsman would not only use his sword in attacking an enemy; but would also use his sword to fend off the thrusts of the enemy. So, we see the Sword of the Spirit as both offensive and defensive.

Thus, we consider the tactics of the enemy. This we see best illustrated as our Lord met the foe in the wilderness. We would note that he

sought a time at which he thought Jesus to be at His weakest. That being the case, he erred greatly. As Paul learned, it is when we are weak that we are truly strong. So, it was that forty days of fasting had cast Jesus in a way of full dependence on the Father as was always the case.

Satan tempted the Lord to use His power for personal gain. The scriptures verify that afterwards He was hungry (He was there in our stead). "If thou be the Son of God..." From the beginning the devil has questioned the word of the Lord and the identity of His people. He then tempted Him to presume upon the Word of God. He dared Him to make an ostentatious display of His power. Then Satan offered Him the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worshipping him. In every case those things were certainly within the abilities of the Lord to do. It was ordained of God that Christ endure such an insult in that He knew that the Lord's people would be faced with the very same challenges. After all, Esau sold his birthright for a morsel. Men, even today, make a mockery of the power of God in their marketing of religion. And how many have sold their souls in the interest of gaining power.

Our Lord's answer to these things was consistent. "It is written!" The appropriate answer was given from the Word of God. And the devil was sent away. In the first response of our Lord, He referred to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. We are here

instructed that the use of "word" here is "that which has been uttered by the living voice." The same word is used in our text. In the same sense we understand of the word of God that by it the worlds were made and by it they stand. It is the undergirding and overarching structure that orders all the way of creation.

It is at one and the same time compelling and revealing. One characterized it as "the book that understands me." It is convicting. We are reminded of the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way..." It is converting – lives are changed at hearing the word in ways that none can explain. And it is comforting as no other can be: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27).*

It is to be remembered that it is the "sword of the Spirit." It is to be looked to in that way lest we abuse and do harm as so many have done. It is God's word that we are using to both defend ourselves from the devices of the devil and as our weapon of assault against the gates of hell. We are not so foolish as to enter a debate with Satan – we would lose. It is not our task to display personal prowess or pride. It is to know wisdom in fact and application. Thus, we engage with prayer, supplication, and watching with perseverance. It only follows that we seek to be more skilled in the use of that given us to defend and to proceed in this warfare. *bhs*

---

## When You Do Not Dare To Go Alone

I was once told the story of a child who had been invited to spend a sunny summer day playing with his friends. He lived in a rural area and it took him a good bit of time to make the trek. But the child made his way toward his friends as they made their way toward him and eventually they came upon one another halfway. Soon they were climbing trees and jumping creeks and skipping rocks and generally having the time of their lives.

Around dusk, the boy realized he should begin his return journey. But just as he was about to say his farewells, one of the other lads began to tell a story. The child, once drawn in, couldn't force himself away. He sat in rapt attention as the story progressed, as the action waxed and waned, as the hero faced peril and emerged victorious.

By the time the story was complete, the sun had dipped behind the distant horizon. Now the boy gazed into the gathering darkness and realized he was afraid to set out by himself. He asked his friends to come with him, but they all needed to return in the opposite direction. As the boy dawdled and tried to work up his courage, the sun's last rays disappeared from the sky. He fretted about his family, wondering if they were concerned about what had become of him.

The night grew darker still as clouds rolled in and began to blanket the moon and the stars. At last he decided he must stop procrastinating and set out. But just as he stood to his feet, a blinding flash of lightning shot from the sky and it was soon followed by a mighty crack of thunder. His courage failed him altogether.

Yet just as he was about to sink into utter despair, his eye spotted a flicker of light bobbing in the distance. Curious, he watched as it grew closer, as it grew brighter. And, then, to his delight, he saw that it was his older brother come to fetch him, come to bring him home. And now he quickly said farewell to his friends and boldly stepped into the darkness. He confidently made his way toward his brother who then led him safely home—home where his family threw their arms around him, home where a meal had been laid out for him, home where peace and rest awaited him.

And after the storyteller had said all of this, he paused for a moment. He paused to gather his thoughts and consider his words. And then he spoke once more.

So may it be for you when the night of death comes. So may it be for you when your friends cannot accompany you. So may it be for you when you do not dare to go alone.

On that day, your friend who is closer than a brother, your Savior who is your elder brother, will come to meet you at just the right time. In his hand will be the lantern of all the precious promises he has made, and this will be the lamp to your feet and the light to your path. He will lead you through the dark night and into the brightest day. He will accompany you to the place where your family awaits you and longs to see you, the place where a great supper has been laid out for you, the place where God himself is ready to welcome you home. Never, no never, do you need to fear that you will have to go that way alone. —Tim Challies, *Blog from June 14, 2023*

---

Christian ministry is not about technique and it is certainly not about the latest fads or glittering programs. It is about the ministry of the Word—most importantly, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Gospel ministry and the preaching of the Word of God are not just an initial strategy—there is no Plan B. God's glory is in the preaching of his Word, and the evidence of the Word's power is a harvest of transformed lives. —Al Mohler, *Tell Me the Stories of Jesus*