

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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Jackson, TN 38305

[oldhickorycofc.com](http://oldhickorycofc.com)

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## The Train Just Rolls Away

I pass a town with no name  
Seen through the window of a train  
A boy and girl stand side by side  
The train arrives, she kisses him goodbye  
She turns away then steps on board  
He thought he'd die but now he's sure  
But as he thinks of one last thing to say  
The train just rolls away  
- from "Long Train Ride" by Lee Ben

We often suffer pain and sorrow in our lives from things that were never in our control. While that lack of control frustrates us, we somehow find the strength to persevere. However, no pain compares with that we suffer because of our own missed opportunities. Our gracious Lord gives us multiple opportunities to positively affect our own souls and those of others. How often do we recognize and appreciate these opportunities after they've gone by, sometimes just barely too late to make a difference?

The quiet man who sits on the eighth pew has been visiting services for several weeks. He hears the gospel and learns that God loves him (John 3:16), that Jesus died for him and shed His blood for him (Heb. 9:14). He finds it astounding, but somehow almost believable, that the one who created him would leave the perfect perfection of heaven so that he, this quiet and uncertain man, could see heaven's perfection as well. Yet, all that Creator asks of him is a few simple steps of obedience (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). Sure, he realizes that this obedience will be followed by a constant commitment to change his life to the wishes of his Lord. That, too, seems a small price to pay for what he wants more than anything. So as he leaves to go home, he knows he wants to change his life. He knows he wants to escape his uncertainty. He knows he wants purpose in his life. He knows he wants to live without the fear he's always felt. He doesn't know that before the sun rises again, he'll be dead And the train just rolls away.

The Christian sees his neighbor across the fence. He notices his neighbor's hair is thinner than it was 5 years ago when they first moved in. He realizes that neither of them is getting any younger. He is glad that he remembered to "love his neighbor" (Rom 13:9) He remembers with satisfaction how he mowed his neighbors' yard following the latter's surgery and how sincerely grateful his neighbor was. He remembers the quiet summer evenings they sat on the patio and talked while the smoke drifted from the grill. He remembered how they joked about their wives selling everything they owned in the joint garage sale. He then realizes he's never talked to his neighbor about Christ. It shames him to know of those who "went into all the world" with the gospel (Mark 16:15-16), yet he never took it next door. He knows that has to change. He knows now that he can and must do it. He knows that he will do it even if it upsets

his comfortable neighborhood. He just knows that the one person that will listen to him is his neighbor to whom he has gotten so close. He doesn't know that just a year ago his neighbor, after searching desperately for years for some higher purpose and finding only disappointment and disillusionment with religion, had decided to never try again. He doesn't know his neighbor has now shut the door of his heart with a vow to never open it again, a vow that will be kept the rest of his life. The Christian begins his efforts to teach, not knowing his opportunity has already passed. And the train just rolls away.

Christian parents, knowing they want to be godly parents, notice how hard it is to keep their children clothed and fed. They seem to be growing faster than their needs can be purchased. And lovely Children they are! Their teeth are straight, their bodies healthy, and their grades are good. These children are so comfortable in every social setting and excel at each of the dozens of activities afforded them.

What parents wouldn't thank God every day for them? But a troubling doubt lingers. They haven't always had time to be sure their kids learned the things of God that their own parents had taught them. (Eph. 6:4). Sometimes they really thought they should have been a little more restrictive with their children and disciplined them more often, but just look how popular and happy they are. But still the doubt lingers until they can ignore it no more. Things must change! The Lord must come first in their lives and in the lives of their kids. They know they can still point their kids toward heaven and instill the priorities that will get them there. They know that their kids can make the Lord happy every day. They know they'll spend a wonderful eternity with these precious souls. They don't know that their children's foundation has already been so

firmly laid that it would take 100 lifetimes to point them toward God again. A 100 lifetimes that no one has! And the train just rolls away.

A young woman's godly parents taught her the kind of man she should marry. (Eph. 5:23-25). They never seemed all that exciting to her. Her parent's idea of the perfect mate would have left her on the outside looking in. She would never have the house she wanted with things she wanted if she listened to them. She would never have the "right" circle of friends. She had decided to go her own path and have it all and still love her Lord. Then her best friend, from the little church in which she was raised, got married. Her friend's husband gave them all the things she herself longed for. But her friend wasn't as happy as before and it hurt her to see the sadness in her friend's eyes. She meets a young man, who thinks going to heaven is the most important thing on earth. She marries him although she knows she'll never have some of the things she once wanted so badly. She knows her parents were right, especially her daddy. She knows she should tell him so. She decides to thank her daddy just like she has thanked God for him a thousand times. Instead she thanks his grave. And the train just rolls away.

Two Christian friends are inseparable. They finish each other's sentences and are always on the same wavelength. They anticipate each other's every move, until one decides to leave the Lord. The one who remains faithful cannot believe the other has left and prays for his return. He asks everyone he knows to also pray. He doesn't know what he can say to bring his friend back. He keeps praying for months and months. After a couple of years, he realizes he must take more drastic personal action. (Gal. 6:1) He finally knows just the right words to say. He doesn't know that his friend kept expecting the doorbell to ring for months and was surprised when it didn't until he no longer cared. He doesn't know his

delay has made even the right words useless. He doesn't know that the time when he, and only he, could make a difference has come and gone. He learns with tears. And the train just rolls away.

- Martin Bragwell

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## **DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BURY THAT TALENT?**

Jesus' parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) teaches that we have obligations which cannot be forsaken. Not everyone has the same amount of ability, yet every Christian has some ability. Opportunity plus Ability equals Responsibility.

I am convinced there are many who do not want to bury their talent, they just do not know how to put it to use. A multitude of Christ-loving children of God fail to reach their potential because of feelings of inferiority. They have a degree of faith in God but no faith in themselves.

We live in an era of specialization. Many jobs are done by specialists who work in only one or two areas in their occupations all their lives. One fears having to enter a totally different occupation because he has not been trained nor had any experience doing that work, 'Let someone who knows what he is doing do that job.' Leave that task for a specialist. Guess who the expert at spiritual work is in the minds of many -- the preacher and elders. Thus, many leave that work for them.

A feeling of inferiority is a great contributing factor to the lack of work done by Christians. Many do not want to bury their talents, they simply do not feel adequately equipped to use it. Why do we bury our talent?

**FEAR OF FAILURE.** No Christian who fulfills his obligation to God ever fails. He might not see the results, but he has not failed; "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9). The only man who never fails is the man who never tries. You will fail at times -- not because of your inabilities, but because obedience to the gospel is always the other person's decision. The ground which you sowed seed in was not conducive to growth.

**FEAR OF REJECTION.** Ask a teenage boy how to overcome fear of rejection. After being turned down for a date, his fear of rejection is greater next time he asks a girl out. Sure, he realizes that many girls will say 'No' when he calls them for dates, but how many boys have you seen that obstacle stop? Not too many. He realizes what she is missing, and does not want to deprive the rest of the female population from having a chance to know him. Essentially, that is the attitude we must have to overcome this fear. Many will not heed the teachings of scripture, but brother, that is not your fault. Take it to someone who may be more apt to accept it (Matthew 7:6). They have not rejected you, but God (I Sam. 8:4-7).

**LACK OF CONFIDENCE.** Because we feel inadequate, we often lack the confidence in ourselves needed to be prosperous

workers. Many Christians lack self-respect. The successful man though, has confidence to handle any situation which arises. Of all men, the Christian should have the greatest degree of confidence in the work that God can do through him. "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13; cf. Matthew 17: 14-20; Ephesians 3:20; Hebrews 4:16).

Christian, do not bury your talent. Learn to use it to the glory and honor of God. Overcome obstacles placed in your way as tests of your faith. I know you don't want to bury that talent. Throw your shovel away, study your Bible and learn to be an effective servant of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:15).

- Rob Harbison

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## **Be Not Afraid**

When the storm clouds gather,  
And the billows roll high,  
Do we fear and forget,  
That our dear Lord is nigh?  
He was soundly sleeping  
At peace amid the storm.  
While the disciples toiled,  
The darkness hid His form.  
They rowed to save their lives,  
Forgetting He was there,  
Saw, then cried: "Don't you care?  
Please save us, hear our prayer!"

He stilled the raging sea  
And told the winds to cease,  
To show He rules all things,  
To help their faith increase.  
Lord, when waves engulf us  
And we can't understand,  
Please come and still the storm  
With love and caring hand.  
Lord, help us trust your word,  
You bought us with your blood,  
You will never leave us,  
And you control the flood.

- Kathleen Rogol

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*God's Nobility!*" (text: Acts 17:10-12); Sunday evening: "*The Preacher's Greatest ...!*" (text: Lam. 2:11-19).

**SCHEDULE:** Our Gospel Meeting will be July 28 – Aug. 2, Sun. regularly scheduled times, M-F at 7:00 p.m., with Tanner Campbell, of Piggott, AR.