

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Does Grace Teach?

There is a lot of teaching about the grace of God in the lessons and writings of denominational preachers. What is the general view of grace? According to “The Baptist Faith & Message (BF&M)” being chosen for salvation is *“the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners.”* Thus, according to this doctrine, the grace of God is fully sufficient for one to become saved and be always saved. Many denominations have worked very hard to rip, tear and cut scriptures on grace (like Ephesians 2:8-9) out of their context and into their own doctrine apart from, and contrary to, the rest of what God said about salvation. The scriptures are suffering violence at the hands of liberal and denominational men and women.

What is the biblical truth about grace? Titus 2:11 teaches that *“the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”* What does that mean? We know from John 1:17 that *“grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”* Putting this together with Titus 2:11,

we find that if grace brought salvation, and grace came by Jesus, then Jesus, by grace, came to bring salvation to all, thus His sacrifice for sin was gracious. But the text does not end there. Verse 12 begins with the words “*teaching us.*” What teaches us? According to verse 11, it is God’s grace. Therefore, knowing that grace can teach us, the next question to ask is: what does grace teach? The answer is found in verses 12-14. God’s grace demands out of us a number of things: (1) We must deny ungodliness. (2) Leave worldly desires. (3) Live soberly. (4) Live righteously (5) Live godly. (6) Look, watch, and wait patiently for the coming Jesus Christ. (7) Be zealous for good works.

In conclusion, God showed His grace to us through the works of Jesus Christ. In return, the same grace teaches us to deny sin, live a life of sincere obedience, a life of faith, love, submission, and many more good works. The denominations claim to believe in God’s grace, but the bible shows us they don’t. If they did believe in it, they would practice what the grace of God teaches.

-Tanner Campbell

Morality, The Government and Christians

Moral statements and positions will, necessarily, impact political issues. This is not because morality is inherently political, but because government has the task of recognizing the difference between good and evil, so moral issues will have to be dealt with

(Rom 13:3-4). This means that, contrary to what is so often stated and argued, morality will be legislated by government, and it will be legislated from a worldview that either recognizes the significance of God or not. To say that God needs to be kept out of politics, then, is to default to the secularized view of morality; and secularized morality will then be legislated. Why is it that people default to keeping God out of it instead of keeping the secularized views of reality out of it? And why do some Christians seem to be buying into all of this?

We need to see what has happened here. Many have bought into the notions that: (1) God and religion must be kept out of politics, and (2) morality is not something that can be legislated. In fact, both are false. God is never out of politics, and we are fooling ourselves if we think so, given that God rules in the kingdoms of men. Every worldview says something about God. If a worldview says there is no God, then a notion of God is still a part of the position, and actions will be taken that demonstrate that disbelief. Further, every law is a legislation of morality in one form or another; there is no way around it. The question is, will the legislation come from those whose worldview respects God as the foundation or not?

I don't say all of this in order to argue that Christians need to get more political. I'm arguing that Christians need to say more about God and morality in every area of life. We don't check our God at the door when we enter a political arena, and we don't set aside godly morals when we engage the culture. We don't take a moral view of something based on politics, but surely our political views ought to be based on godly morality. The point then is not that we

need more political activists. The point is that we need to be more engaged in the moral discussions of our culture and take a stand for what is right, regardless of political fallout. In other words, it's not about being political; it's about standing for what's right in the middle of a crooked and perverse generation.

Even more, we need to hold up the gospel itself to the world. The answer to our problems is not to vote in or out this or that politician. No government in history has been a bastion of godliness, and I don't expect that to change. The answer is always where it has been: in Christ. The problems of this world won't be fixed by human government, but by the gospel. "The kingdoms of earth pass away one by one, but the kingdom of heaven remains."

So Christians should be concerned with 1) holding out the gospel to a lost world, and 2) standing up for Christ and His morality. It's not politics. It's just what's right.

- Doy Moyer

How Could We Say It?

Recently we have had opportunity to express our Bible-based convictions about the sin of homosexuality. Events in our community have caused a heightened interest in this matter, and we have spoken out – even being interviewed by local TV news channels and newspapers.

As you might imagine, we've received a bit of 'feedback', and not all of it has been favorable. We have been repeatedly branded as 'uneducated', 'intolerant', 'hateful', and 'bigots'. Where, we wonder, is the love and tolerance of those who accuse us of having none?

One correspondent wrote: *"You're right God is not an "uneducated bigot" but apparently his followers are. It's so disheartening that his "followers" are unable to display the love that God has for us all, gay or straight. The intolerance of the church is why individuals are so skeptic (sic) and unwilling to attend church. Where is your message of love? For all people? . . . How much vinegar do you store away, and keep using, because surely you're not winning souls, just suffocating those that are already stuck and brainwashed with hatred."*

Our reply went like this: *"You have seriously misjudged us without knowing anything about us. Where is YOUR love and tolerance? We harbor no hatred at all. We love the souls of all men and women and seek their spiritual and physical well-being. We know the way to achieve that is to teach and practice what we find in the Bible. We would be glad to discuss all these matters with you in detail."* Unfortunately, an honest study of these matters is not going to happen.

All of this leads us to ask: How could we express our disagreement with the homosexuals and their agenda without an accusation of being ignorant and hateful? How could we proclaim God's truth on the matter without condemning those who practice it? We're sure that it is not possible - after all, Jesus couldn't do it!

- Greg Gwin
The Beacon, 7/2/13

How can you lead to Christ your boy
Unless Christ's method you employ?
There's just one thing that you can do —
It's let that boy see Christ in you.

Have you a husband fond and true?
A wife who's blind to all but you?
If each would win the other one,
That life must speak of God's dear Son.

There is but one successful plan
By which to win a fellow man;
Have you a neighbor old or new?
Just let that man see Christ in you.

The Church that hopes to win the lost
Must pay the one unchanging cost;
She must compel the world to see
In her the Christ of Calvary.

— *Author unknown*

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"The Spiritual Harvest!"* (text: Matt. 9:35-38); Sunday evening: *"DANIEL: Stranger in a Strange Land!"*

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.