

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Indictments of the Social Gospel

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL is a philosophy in religion that the church should concern itself with worldly problems rather than spiritual ones. It is more interested in ecology, biology, psychology and sociology than in theology. It is more concerned about preserving the whooping crane and alligator than about preaching Christ the emancipator. It spends more time fighting earthly pollution that MAY damage the body than with fighting spiritual plagues that WILL certainly damn the soul.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL is more interested in feeding the body than in nurturing the soul. Its goal is education, not salvation; recreation, not sanctification; fraternity, instead of eternity. It concerns itself with the "new morality" rather than with immortality; birth control rather than self-control; ministering to the "inner city" rather than seeking the heavenly city; slum clearance rather than with spiritual perseverance.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL philosophy is more interested in helping men make a living than in helping them make a life. It is more

concerned with civil rights than with spiritual fights; civil laws rather than spiritual flaws; revolution rather than revelation; civil disobedience rather than spiritual obedience; communism rather than faith, repentance and baptism.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL is a lame duck spiritually because it is without the power to fulfill the lasting needs of the human race. It preaches Christ as a great social reformer, rather than as a Spiritual Savior. It limits His work to earthly benefits for mankind; and Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. 15:19). Social 'Gospelism' can only leave man spiritually naked!

- James P. Needham

Poured Out As a Drink Offering

Knowing his time of death was in the very near future, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to Timothy his beloved brother and fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ. The letter is filled with heartfelt emotions as he told his dearest friend goodbye (for now). What a helper Paul had been to Timothy, and even in this final letter Paul leaves him with words he is to never forget; words of caution, truth, love, and spiritual reminders. As Paul approaches the end of the letter, he speaks vividly about his upcoming death, saying: "*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand*" (2 Timothy 4:6). He describes his death as a drink offering (like those performed in the olden

times: Genesis 35:14, Numbers 28:7). Only Paul will not pour out wine, but he is speaking of his blood poured out in death by the executioner.

Earlier, Paul wrote to the Philippians from his prison stocks, saying: *“Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all”* (Phil. 2:17). Paul enlightens us here that his death is an offering *“on the sacrifice and service of their faith.”* That is to say, he was to be put to death by the wicked for the sacrifices he made to help others come to a knowledge of the truth. And as anyone can read in the book of Acts, the extent of Paul’s sacrifices are truly impressive.

I am reminded here of one of my favorite statements that King David made. In 1 Chronicles 21, when David had fallen into the Devil’s snare, he ran to seek the forgiveness of God by building an altar to burn sacrifices of repentance. He journeyed to a portion of land owned by a man named Ornan. When David asked to buy the location to offer sacrifices to God, Ornan generously offered to give David the land as well as the supplies to build the altar and even the animals for the sacrifices. But David refused the substantial offer and what was his reasoning for refusing? Let’s read his answer for ourselves: *“Then King David said to Ornan, No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.”* (1 Chronicles 21:24). David knew that a sacrifice was not a sacrifice if it *“costs me nothing.”* Ornan offered David expediency, he offered convenience, but David knew that such a thing would not please God. In a world when everyone is tempted by avenues of expediency, we must always be careful to make sure what we offer to God is truly an appropriate sacrifice, and not that which we conveniently found along the way. For example, when we offer up our

sacrifice of prayer and praise, do we stop to make sure God is given our best time of day, or do we blindly stumble upon a more convenient time to pray to the Father (such as lying in bed at night, very tired, barely able to make conscious thoughts). Do our offerings to God cost us something? If we are unsure of an answer to that question, we should look to the example of Paul. For Paul's offerings to God most certainly cost him each day of his Christian life. Paul took David's words seriously everyday of his servitude to Christ. Even his death was a "drink offering", a sacrifice; living for Jesus cost Paul his physical life, and there is no greater sacrifice that we can give, then to give our very lives to the Lord.

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, penned down the following words to the Romans: "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*" (Romans 12:1). Paul lived out Romans 12:1, as he acknowledged to the Galatians: "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*" (Galatians 2:20). In another place, he said "*to live is Christ*" (Philippians 1:21), and in another place, he confessed that "*Christ is our life*" (Colossians 3:4).

Not only was Paul's life dedicated to the further spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but he made certain that his death would also be a suitable sacrifice to cause more people to come to the gospel. Before his death, Paul illustrates this point in Philippians 1:20, "*according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.*" Here he tells his brethren that while he

remains on earth he will profoundly show mankind that Christ is worth living for. But if he faced death, he will show in the trials of his death that Christ is worth dying for. Either way Paul sees great value in making such sacrifices in order to magnify his Master.

Going back to 2 Timothy 4:6, Paul explains to his brother that he is *“already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand”* The Greek word that Paul penned down for “departure” is truly poetic. The word refers to the loosening of the ropes that fasten a boat to the dock, and thus making preparations to set sail. So Paul, (with much experience himself at sea), uses this word to illustrate his departure from this earth, and setting sail to the heavens, where he knew and understood that he would *“be with Christ,”* which he confessed that that would certainly be *“far better”* (Philippians 1:23).

Do we have such a faith as Paul? Do we have such confidence and assurance in our salvation? I expect we all would if we will be a sacrificial servant of God, like unto Paul. We could learn a lot from Paul’s sacrifices, and often times what we learn from him is not expedient nor convenient for us to do, but it will make us ready to set sail ourselves for a heavenly home, and that is *“far better.”* Therefore, I will end this discussion, not with my words, but the words of Paul: *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* -1 Corinthians 11:1

- Tanner Campbell

Speaking The Truth In Love (Ephesians. 4:15)

How do you reconcile the teaching of the New Testament on love (as in 1 Cor. 13), with the requirement to speak the truth with boldness, rebuke sin and discipline the unruly. The answer is, you don't need to reconcile it. It is perfectly reconciled already, because God gave it. It is His perfect law. There is nothing God gives us in His Word that we need to "reconcile" or "harmonize." When we obey what God says about the truth, and we obey what God says about love, that's our response to God.

There is nothing about rebuking sin, seeking legitimate redress, preaching the truth or exposing error that isn't compatible with the love God defines in 1 Corinthians 13. Nothing about one that cancels the other. Ephesians 4:15 says we are to speak the truth in love. The truth can be spoken, can be applied and obeyed fully - while practicing everything this passage teaches about love. They are perfectly compatible.

To say that another way - there is nothing built into truth that contradicts anything else God has said. There is nothing about love that interferes with our devotion to truth in any way.

Don't let anyone tell you that you obey what 1 Corinthians 13 teaches about love, but that you stop that obedience when preaching the truth or rebuking sin! And let nobody tell you, that because of the teaching on love, you must compromise in

preaching the truth. The one sentence answer to all of this confusion is: Speak the truth in love!

- Warren E. Berkley

TWO WOLVES

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all.

"One is Evil - It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

"The other is Good - It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Why It Matters!"* (text: Gal. 6:9-10); Sunday evening: *"Pictures of God's Disappointment!"* (Hosea 7:1-16).