

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

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

---

November 03, 2013

Volume 33, # 45

---

## "And He took Courage"

*We come together not only for the purpose of worshiping God, but also for encouraging and building one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:25). Acts 28:15 says, "And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage." Paul had just arrived in Italy after his arduous voyage from Caesarea. He had great anxiety and discouragement since it had been so long since Paul had received word about his brethren. However, he found them well and resumed his journey with an eager and buoyant hope. Paul spoke a number of times of Christians who had refreshed his spirit. We are going to examine six traits that encouraged Paul when he saw them in his brethren.*

### ***He Took Courage Seeing Brethren Of Like Faith***

*In Romans 1:11-12 Paul longed to see the Roman brethren because their faith would encourage him. In 2 Peter 1:1, the apostle wrote to those who had received a faith of equal standing with the apostles through their careful study and conduct of life. Nothing is more encouraging*

*than spending time with brethren in Christ. They lift and refresh our spirits because we share one of the greatest bonds God ever created (Romans 12:10).*

### ***He Took Courage Seeing Brethren Rightfully Praised***

*The Roman brethren were worthy of praise because their faith was being proclaimed throughout the whole world (Romans 1:8). As Paul concluded the letter, he reiterated the great faith and obedience of those brethren (Romans 16:19). Our purpose should always be one of reproof and rebuking where necessary, but we also need to be praising where necessary. We need to know that we sometimes we do what is right.*

### ***He Took Courage Seeing Brethren Concerned***

*Galatians 6:2 gives us a command to bear one another's burdens. This is an excessive weight that needs the help of other children of God. John asserted that we demonstrate the love of God within us by how we help needy Christians (1 John 3:17). The Lord's people are to be compassionate. We need to be diligent to have a tender heart toward those who struggle with the trials of this life. Let us not close our heart against them.*

### ***He Took Courage Seeing Brethren Unashamed***

*In 2 Timothy 1:12-16 Paul gives commands to follow the truth and cites examples of both those who held fast and those who fell away. The only way the Lord's church will expand is through the hard work of its members who are unashamed to teach the gospel to the lost. It is disgraceful to see how many "churches" try to market the gospel as they would market a car and to make churches as "user-friendly" as possible.*

*The truth which will save people's souls is sometimes a hard pill to swallow and deliver.*

### ***He Took Courage Seeing Brethren Being Thoughtful***

*Paul outlined the humility of mind necessary for a Christian and then gave Christ as the perfect example (Philippians 2:3-5). In Philippians 4:15-17 Paul commended the Philippians for their participation with him in the spreading of the gospel. It was not the money which he needed, but he was appreciative of the gift because it taught the Philippians about the grace of God. When working with Paul, their gracious spirit would grow to even greater heights. God wants sacrifice, not self-centeredness. The quicker we lose ourselves the quicker we will treat our fellow man well.*

### ***He Took Courage Seeing Brethren Do The Unexpected***

*In 2 Corinthians 8:3-5 Paul was truly touched by the gift of the churches of Macedonia. They had a genuine concern and deep liberality, even though they were in poverty themselves. In Acts 2:44-45, we read of brethren who took these sacrificing steps because they wanted to, not because they were forced. It thrills the heart to see brethren act in a manner which would please the Lord. Thankfully, the Lord's body is full of brothers and sisters in Christ who are willing to go above and beyond to help those in need.*

*Let's encourage one another and make sure our lives reflect all the good qualities of the Lord's people. When we learn to associate with brethren of like faith, praise what is good, be concerned for the welfare of others, be unashamed to proclaim the true gospel, be thoughtful and do the unexpected, we grow. The world is so full of evil and how refreshing it is to surround ourselves with men and women whose characters reflect the*

*supreme character, Jesus Christ. It is only through living according to this example that we become like the Lord (Romans 8:29).*

- Kyle Campbell

---

## **“Faith Only”: Human Creeds vs. The Bible**

The message on the roadside sign at a local Methodist church recently read: “Faith Without Works Is Dead”

Of course, a truer statement could not be made – this one taken directly from God’s inspired Word at James 2:26. In fact, the entire context of James 2:18-26 powerfully shows the necessary link between faith and obedience. It is not enough to merely say you believe – you must show it by what you do. The text specifically says, “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (vs. 24).

We are glad that the local Methodists have apparently learned this truth, for it has not been the traditional position of that denomination. Perhaps these folks have not carefully reviewed their own official creed, wherein we read Article IX that says: “That we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”<sup>1</sup>

The Methodists are not the only ones who have trouble reconciling the statements in the Book of James to their human doctrines. For instance, Martin Luther tried to discredit James’ entire letter because of these difficulties. He wrote:

In a word St. John's Gospel and his first epistle, St. Paul's epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter's first epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore St. James' epistle is really a right strawy epistle, compared to these others, for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it.<sup>2</sup>

Our sincere hope is that the Methodists, the followers of Luther, and all other denominationalists will fully and completely abandon their man-made creeds and return to the Word of God as their absolute authority in all religious matters. As the apostle Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

<sup>1</sup> The Book of Discipline 1992; published by The United Methodist Publishing House

<sup>2</sup> The Harvest of Medieval Theology, Harvard University Press, p. 468-469

- Greg Gwin

---

## What About Narrow Preachers?

I don't know about you, but I get a little weary of hearing the word "narrow" used as a slur against preachers who adhere to the Bible in their preaching. Sure, they are "narrow", but so are factory workers, surgeons, druggists and teachers.

The factory worker is so "narrow" that he uses micrometers and measures to the thousandth of an inch the bores and pistons of engines, electronic components and balancing wheels in timepieces.

The surgeon is so "narrow" that he insists on ultra-technical laboratory analysis, meticulously sterilized instruments of special design. Why, he is so picky narrow that he makes his assistants wear masks over their faces!

The druggist is so "narrow" that he just has to have a prescription before he will let you have certain drugs. He says he has to be narrow because government regulations are narrow, and even thinks it is for good!

As you think about it, it's a blessing that somebody is narrow-minded. And however much we need to be "narrow" about vital material matters, we must be infinitely more careful and exact about spiritual laws. God will not be mocked.

- unknown

---

**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Real Christians Are Growing!"* (text: 1 Pet. 2:1-3); Sunday evening: *"NAHUM: The Fall of the Assyrian Capital!"*