

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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December 15, 2013

Volume 33, # 51

The Jerusalem Church

The Jerusalem church attended to its own affairs. It did not try to run the government, nor all the clubs and educational institutions. It preached the gospel to sinners, and looked after the needs of its members. The members needed teaching, they received the needed teaching. The poor needed help, help was given them.

The amazing growth of the church was not due to government favors, for the government was against them. It does not seem that the church has any members of great worldly importance. If so, they had no more attention than the poorest of members. If they had any great wealth, no record is made of it. They preached the gospel and lived it. Their preaching was not nullified by the conduct of ungodly members, nor by internal strife and confusion, as is often done now. Will churches of today ever learn the secret of success?

— R. L. Whiteside

Why We Exist

It is essential that the members of a New Testament church keep constantly in mind the reason for their existence as a church. The mission of Jesus was to save people from their sins, to seek and to save the lost (Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10). The local church is heaven's expression of the mission of our Savior. It is endowed with the obligation of carrying out His mission. This indeed, is the mission of every true church of Christ.

It will readily be seen that this mission pertains to the world to come. The scope of this mission is not to make people lead better or happier lives here, but that souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5). In a worldly, materialistic age it is easy for members of the church to forget the spiritual nature of our calling and strive to make the church partake of the nature of the institutions of men.

One of the great demands of this generation is ever-expanding social welfare. There are those who would succumb to the temptation to make the church a social institution. The church must supply the social needs of its young people and become a charitable organization concerned with solving the world's problems of poverty and delinquency, so these people tell us. This is not why we exist as a church. We exist as a church to preach the soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:8; Phil. 4:15). We exist to function as God's organization in edifying the saved (Acts 20:28), and helping needy saints (Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12). We assemble to worship God, to study His Word, and to preach the gospel. These meetings are not social. We do

not come together to honor men but God. We hold or use property, as a church, only to expedite the worship and to preach the gospel.

To this holy end we appeal to every member of this church to toil. The perishing things of clay we cannot allow to burden the church or detract her attention from her divinely appointed mission. God's converted people will delight to cooperate in such a mission. The unconverted will find that such does not appeal to their taste.

— George Jones

PERPLEXING FACTS

That human reasoning is capricious and often defies explanation can be easily demonstrated. Look at the following, only a handful of such examples that could be cited:

We fine a man for dumping garbage in a public place but would pay the same man a huge salary for dumping mental garbage on the public.

We force a man to clean up the filth on his property and properly dispose of the garbage. This is a matter of law. At the same time the law protects a man and guarantees him the right to keep pornographic filth and garbage on the magazine racks of his store.

We rise up in rage at a processor who packages his goods carelessly and thus exposes people to danger of disease and yet many argue for the legalized sale of drugs for recreation. The drugs are by far a greater danger.

We abhor rape and the rapist while we glorify the styles and fashions which incite him. Even churches sponsor parties and activities where the human body is undressed and shown off to the opposite sex, where the body wiggles and squiggles in every kind of sexually exciting way.

We count sacred the life of the snail darter, the baby seal, the whooping crane, and many other species of being. Some would even prohibit slaying animals for food whether by hunting or in a processing plant. Yet the same people force legislation which not only legalizes but would involve our government in subsidizing the slaughter of innocent little babies.

We endorse 55 m.p.h. speed limit on our highways because it saves lives. Then we guarantee the rights of people to make, sell, and consume alcohol, which accounts for more than 50% of all highway deaths.

We work hard at cleaning up the air and water around us because they pollute the body. At the same time we pander the lewd and lascivious writers, producers, and performers who use motion pictures, television, the stage, and the printed page to totally pollute the mind and disease the morals of a nation.

Prayer is legally eliminated from our schools, but atheists and communists which purvey ideologies that totally destroy our freedom are made professors at our universities and we are taxed to pay their salaries.

We piously mourn the blind, the maimed, the mentally retarded who are innocent victims of venereal disease and yet we destroy all moral restraints which might help keep those diseases in check and under control. We institutionalize the tubercular person and turn the venereal diseased back on the public and guarantee his right by law to continue to infect others if he so desires.

The list could be continued; however, these should be sufficient to validate the saying, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9.)

— Don McWhorter

Is He Coming Soon?

One of the favorite tactics of the pre-millennial rabble-rousers is to draw attention to themselves by predicting the imminent return of Christ. They whip their crowds into feverish activity by vivid and ominous portrayals of the just-around-the-corner coming.

There are a number of false notions concerning the time of the return of the Lord. One is that His return will be very soon. The Bible says "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." (2 Pet. 3:10). "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the

angels of heaven, but my Father only. . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matt. 24:36, 42).

I am often accustomed to exhort my audience to behave as if this were their last day. I am not certain that is the way the Lord wants us to behave. If we knew the precise last moment of this world our feverish concerns would certainly ignore the many seemingly mundane responsibilities the Lord has given us such as provision for our families and honest labor. We find in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 that some assumed the resurrection was past and were shirking their duty. The Lord wants us to be ready, and that involves living daily, normal lives. (Matt. 24:44).

On the other hand, some think the return of the Lord is far away. They then postpone all the urgencies of life. They ignore the needs for preparedness as a Christian. They neglect to remember the Creator in their youth. They are planning to fulfill all these responsibilities in the last few minutes of their lives. (2 Pet. 3:3-7). The Lord wants us to watch and be ready.

That day is certainly "nearer than when we first believed." (Rom. 13:11). It is the great day of our long desire. It is the day when with breath-taking astonishment we see the world interrupted and the humble servant of Galilee come for us with infinite power. It is the day when, with that uncontrollable shuddering combination of laughter and tears, we see those we had buried in hope bid good-bye to this world, and see the golden dawn of the new world arising over the gates of heavenly Jerusalem. Having dedicated our lives to Him, suffering and denying ourselves, we will know then that it was all worthwhile. Having grieved over our sins and

placed all hope upon Him as the single source of salvation and forgiveness, with a shout of joy tearing from our lungs, we will know that He has come to fulfill the promise beyond every dream. "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

— J. A. Welch

- > You can tell how strong a man is by observing how much it takes to discourage him.
 - > The very best marksmanship and aim is still in vain if the gun is loaded with blanks.
 - > The only safe and sure way to destroy enemies is to make friends of them.
 - > When children begin to sow "wild oats," it is time for the parents to start the threshing machine.
 - > The Bible says to bear one another's burdens, not bear down on them.
 - > Much trouble is caused today by workers who do not think, and by thinkers who do not work.
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"When & How Often Should Christians Eat the Lord's Supper?"* (text: 1 Cor. 11:24-25); Sunday evening: *"Gambling On Divine Indifference!"* (text: Zeph. 1:12).