

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

March 02, 2014

Volume 34, # 10

Do Our Teen-Agers Have Responsibility?

When we listen to some of our parents make excuses for the behavior of our young people, it seems as if the youngsters do not have any responsibility. To hear some of the teenagers talk, we get the idea they do not feel any responsibility for their behavior. Some say, "*They are young and they are going to sow 'wild oats,' so let them alone.*" The apostle Paul said we must reap what we sow. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7). If "wild oats" are sown they will be reaped.

Some may feel that the young people now are worse than ever, but I doubt it. "Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners and a contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders; love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants and not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, gobble up their food, and tyrannize their teachers." (Socrates [died 399 B.C.]). This was almost 2,000 years ago but this world still stands.

This shows that youth now, like that of those of us who are older, has not changed too much from generation to generation.

I affirm that our young people are responsible to God for their actions, and must be made to realize they have souls made in the image of God. (Gen. 2:7). When we reach the age of accountability we are responsible for the outcome of our souls. Jesus shows us that our souls are worth more than anything else in this world. (Mk. 8:36,37). I am afraid teenagers have the wrong conception of what is valuable because of the bad examples set by their elders along this line. Parents sometimes live as if this world were worth more than the world to come.

We have been led to think that we owe the teenager certain things. Churches have been put into the recreation business and other projects with the cry, "*We have to do it or lose our young people.*" That it is true we as parents sometimes fail to teach and to provide wholesome entertainment is no excuse for the church to provide that which God has not authorized. Does the teenager owe God anything? Does he owe his parents, community, and country anything? Why not teach him his responsibility and use the proper discipline in order to make a man out of him who will be an asset to his God and his country?

The teenager needs to learn that he can be lost in hell just as surely as any adult on earth. If he lives ungodly he will be lost if he dies in that condition. God does not handle the teenager with kid gloves any more than He does the adult. In the Old Testament the stubborn child was stoned (Deut. 21:18-21). He did not have special attention then; nor should he now.

We need to begin teaching our children from the "cradle up" about God and His law, so that when they reach the age of accountability they will know that one must hear, believe, repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins. We should also teach them that after obedience to the first principles, they must continue faithful to the commands of God. It is one thing to obey first principles, and an entirely different thing to have the courage to do that which is right afterward.

Teenagers and adults alike will be comparatively safe when they learn to sacrifice self and the world and love God more than the world. Someone said, "*I'd give the world if I had a faith like yours.*" to which the reply was, "*That is exactly what it cost me — the world.*"

We all have responsibility — even the teenager. "And now my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." (1 John 2:28).

- Delton Porter

“Let The Earth Hear His Voice”

I still remember the first time I ever sang the hymn “To God Be The Glory”. The Kleinwood church in Houston had purchased new *Songs of the Church* books to replace our worn-out Sacred

Selections. David Pickup was assigned to teach the congregation some of the newer songs and chose “To God Be the Glory” as one of his selections.

When we came to the chorus, the phrase that jumped off the page to me was the line: “Praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice.” We are used to making requests in our songs and prayers that the Lord listen to our praises and hear our petitions. But this song calls on the earth and all it contains to give attention to the divine voice of their Creator.

We certainly hear His voice with regard to salvation. In fact, “To God Be The Glory” was originally entitled “Praise For Redemption”. When we read the inspired word, we are in awe of the “great things He has done” to provide for our pardon from sin. We can hear with great clarity His voice from heaven, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Mark 9:7).

But that’s not the only way God communicates His existence and expressions of love (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20). Fanny J. Crosby, the blind hymnist, wrote this beautiful song during one of her famous “night watches”. Her experience testifies to the fact that the earth can hear the Lord’s voice in the beauty of His creation.

We hear His voice of power. Flooding along the Mississippi River. Tornadoes in Alabama and Missouri. Wildfires in Texas. These recent natural disasters remind us just how helpless we are to control the forces of nature. We have made remarkable advancements in the fields of communication, science, and technology, but we will ever be at the mercy of Him who spoke it

all into being. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). And thousands of years later, this is still our Father’s world.

What this power demands is submission. In recognition of God’s power and might, we glorify Him when we revere His name and obey His will. The winds and the waves do. How much more ought we who are anchored in hope and washed in the blood? Let the earth hear His voice and bow before Him.

We hear His voice of provision. God not only created the heavens and the earth, He sustains their existence. I am reminded of this every morning when I take my coffee out on the front porch and watch the world wake up. We have a bird feeder, but it’s more for our enjoyment than the birds’ nourishment. The Lord carefully looks after them and over all His creatures, great and small. Jesus said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will.” (Matt. 10:29).

What this provision calls for is thanksgiving. Not only do we tend to blame God for things He does not do, we take credit for the great things He has done. When God provides, let Him hear our voices of thanksgiving. When we began to worry about food or drink or clothing, let us be reassured by His voice of provision in creation. He cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. “Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10:31). Let the earth hear His voice and trust Him.

We hear His voice of purpose. Sometimes, when looking at a breath-taking sunset or majestic mountainside, someone will say, “I don’t know how anyone could look at that and not believe in God.” That’s the point. We’re not supposed to. But what’s even more amazing is that the One who ordered and arranged the universe did so with you and me in mind. David marveled at the same truth. “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him” (Ps. 8:3-4)? God not only considered man, He crowned him.

What this purpose requires is fulfillment. Is there anything that has been created that does not have some function or use? When wolves were killed off in the Rocky Mountain National Park, the elk population reached dangerous levels and was deemed out of control. The solution? Reintroduce wolves back into the ecosystem. Let us not lose sight of our even greater purpose in the world. When we allow sin to cause us to “fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), we are not fulfilling what we were put here to do. Let the earth hear His voice and serve Him.

“Praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice! And give Him the glory, great things He hath done!” This we must do while we await the new heavens and the new earth.

- Bubba Garner

Good Medicine

“A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.”
(Prov. 17:22)

A pleasant acquaintance from years ago contacted me recently to inform me that her husband has been diagnosed with cancer. After thirty-eight years of marriage, her world is falling apart.

In his affliction, he is depressed, irritable, bitter and curses the weakness of his body. He has been brought low by his plight and feels betrayed by life. His sadness has contagiously spread through his family; gloom and gray clouds linger in every situation and hang over every person. For them, the joy of life is withering and failing.

The suffering and death of Christ could have been an occasion producing a broken spirit, but it did not. What was the key? He, “for the joy set before Him endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2). There was no joy in crucifixion, but there was joy in resurrection!

One of the many great blessings we find in the word of God is the path to Christ, and the attending joy that is a characteristic of abiding in Him. “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” (John 15:10-11). God is the one who fills “with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom. 15:13). Christ in the heart is joy in the heart. Joy in the heart is good medicine!

- GFS

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*Dangers We Do Not See!*” (text: Judges 14:1-3); Sunday evening: “*Weep for Yourselves!*” (text: Luke 23:27-31).