

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

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oldhickorycofc.com

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Does God Bore You?

"This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." (Isa. 43:21,22). "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord." (Mal. 1:13). "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." (Micah 6:3).

This was a customary complaint against the people of God in the Old Testament. They made a chore and toil of service to God and in reality of God Himself rather than experiencing love and joy.

People get bored with God when they grow weary of their religion, grudge the expense of their devotion, and then what semblance of worship they offer is not in honor to God. Our interest in Divine worship and in the Lord Himself may well be a test of ourselves. If we have any degree of spirituality left there is sure to be some joy

in the Lord. It is possible for people to try to substitute an hour of worship for a week of righteous living. They may try to make up in public religion for neglect and indifference in private religion. There must be a revival of personal devotion and piety.

The church at Ephesus had several commendable things said about it but the Lord also said, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. 2:4). The devotion and enthusiasm they had when they first became Christians or when the congregation was first started had died down. They had fallen out of love with the Lord and the Lord had become a burden or a weariness.

Someone asks then: What can I do to serve God and still not feel bored? Sometimes I feel down, and I don't know how to make myself feel all excited and enthused and high.

It is quite possible that many are looking for something that does not exist all the time and was never meant to exist all the time. A bottle of carbonated beverage gradually loses its fizz, once opened, and becomes flat. A life in Christ, however, is not like a bottle of carbonated beverage. There may be times of great spiritual excitement but real, genuine, consistent godly living is not characterized by frothy, bubbly, effervescent 24-hour-a-day experience.

The Christian lives by faith and not by sight or feelings. (2 Cor. 5:7). One's emotions may seem changeable and affected by various factors but the Christian lives by a calm, quiet trust in God. He continues to believe with all his heart the gracious

promises that God has made in the Scriptures and he trusts in the Lord day by day.

Becoming a Christian and remaining a Christian is similar to entering into marriage with someone you deeply love. Love grows but also accepts realities and settles down to a variety of experiences. If I want my relationship to the Lord to grow and my love for Him to grow, I must read and study the Bible regularly. It is God's letter of love.

David said, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.' (Ps. 122: 1). Religious service kept within Divine limits should never become a weariness. What the priests of earlier years in Israel had joyfully accomplished, those of Malachi's time dragged through and were bored with. Compare: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirst-eth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1, 2); "But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it." (Mal. 1:12,13).

Two sit side by side in a church assembly and engage in the same activities. They sing the same songs, say amen to the same prayers, partake of the same Lord's Supper, hear the same sermons and give of their financial means. Men can see no difference in such worship, but God can and often does. The difference can be in the attitudes and moods of the worshippers.

The spiritual life of one may be low and have no personal joy in God or in the routine of worshipping God. He may be bored.

A study of the life of the Saviour will show that He was never bored with the Father or with Divine service and mission. "And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." (John 17:13.)

— David Claypool

“Access ... Into This Grace”

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1, 2).

"All have sinned." (Rom. 3:23). Every accountable creature is or has been in sin. At the point of accountability man separates himself from God by sinning against His will. (Isa. 53:6; 59:1- ff). This sinner is lost, and in danger of "the second death." (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8).

God wants man to be saved. It is not God's "good pleasure" for man to be separated from Him, either here or hereafter. The apostle Peter says, "The Lord . . . is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9).

Salvation IS by grace. That salvation is by grace, there is no question! In Ephesians 2:5, 8-ff., we read, "For by grace are ye

saved. . . . For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Thus, it is unmerited by man!

God has extended His grace to "all men." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). In Paul's letter to the Romans he says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (5:8). To Titus he said, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (2:11). So, God's grace is there, available to every sinner, without respect of persons. (See, in addition, Acts 10:34-35; Matt. 11:28.)

Salvation is NOT "wholly of grace," as some teach. We read in the manual of a well-known denomination, "We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace. ..." If this were true, then everyone will be saved, since we have seen that God is no respecter of persons; or, it is not really true that God is no respecter of persons, and He shall be responsible for every sinner lost in hell! Now, which of the horns of this dilemma will you take? Well, of course, neither is the case! Not all men shall be saved (Matt. 7:13, 14), nor will God be responsible for any who are lost, for: There is "access into this grace" made available unto all men. This "access" into the area of favor with God is through man's faith. (Note the statement of our text.) And, in Ephesians 2: 8 we read, "For by grace [of God — E.G.M.] are we saved through faith [of man -E.G.M.]. . . ."

When the sinner comes to have faith (by a careful study of the Word of God, Rom. 10:17), this faith "working through love" (Gal. 5:6) brings him to comply with the will of God (repenting of his sins, and being baptized for the forgiveness of the same, Acts 2:38); he, by this, moves, by faith, into the grace (favor) of God.

This access is by man's obedience. The Hebrew writer tells us that Christ "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-ff). Christ Himself declares in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Every man who wishes to avail himself of God's blessings (favor, or grace) must "do the will of the Father. ..." And, then see Revelation 22:14, in which we are told that "access" into heaven shall be only to them "that do his commandments."

Conclusion

God's grace is available unto you. He wants you to be saved, and for this He was willing to give His precious Son on a Roman cross! He extends His mercy to you in "longsuffering." Have you availed yourself of His grace? By faith, obey His will: repenting of your sins and being baptized into Christ. (Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:1-4). And then continue to be obedient to His will "unto death" (Rev. 2:10), and the "crown of life," or "crown of righteousness," shall be yours. (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

- Charles G. Maples, Sr.

- Take a tip from nature. Man's ears aren't made to shut but his mouth is.
 - Lost men have to find the truth, not because it is lost, but because they are.
 - There is no such thing as "idle gossip." Gossip is always a "busy body."
 - In a heated argument, the best instrument to hold is the tongue.
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"After Baptism, What Then?"* (text: Titus 3:3-7); Sunday evening: *"Help Me, Lord!"* (text: Psalm 63:7-8).

OUR GOSPEL MEETING: July 27 – Aug. 1, Sunday through Friday, with Jeremy Paschall preaching. Sunday at our regularly scheduled times, and Monday through Friday at 7:00 p.m.