

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

May 18, 2014

Volume 34, # 21

Looking For Gold

Would you go into the deserts and mountains to look for gold without first learning to identify gold ore? "This is a pretty rock!" "Let's stake this area, because it is so easy to reach!" "I know all about iron ore so this must be gold!" None but fools would search for gold on such bases.

Every serious prospector must know the characteristics of the ore for which he seeks. He knows how it looks, feels, responds to heat, acid, etc. He knows if it is malleable, and to what extent. If he is searching for gold he knows these features as they apply to **gold**. He may, or may not know much about iron, lead, silver, or other metals; but **he knows gold**.

But many are looking for the **right church**, having not the slightest idea of its true characteristics.

They "visit around" -- and think they are displaying great wisdom in so doing -- with no definite standard by which to identify the Lord's church, should they meet it in the middle of the road.

This church is nice, but we do not like the mannerisms of the preacher. That one is located in the wrong part of town. Another has a friendly group of people, but they are too strict for our taste. Yet another seems O.K., but none of our friends go there. We either continue to drift -- and avoid the obligations of church ties -- or we find a friendly group, whose building is conveniently located, and the preacher goes to the football game with us -- so we confidently affirm that this is the "right church."

If we are really serious about serving God shouldn't we look for the church of HIS choice, rather than the one of OUR choice? And can we really know HIS choice without going to His word, and reading the characteristics of the church that bears His name?

Before you set out to examine the various religious organizations in the world, shouldn't you consider the (1) Name, the Lord gave His people; (2) Terms of Admission stipulated, by which people became a part of His church in the first century; (3) the divinely ordained organizational structure, by which God's people work as one; (4) the Work assigned Christ's church; (5) the pattern of N.T. Worship; including (6) the means of support of church work; (7) the standard of Authority, by which all questions must be determined and settled? These things, and other like things you must know in order to recognize the Lord's church should you find it.

Some say this is all too complicated for them. Well, it takes some time, some study of God's word; but people genuinely interested

in serving God do not object to that. They expect anything so vital, so related to their eternal well being, to require effort and dedication. Anyhow, time, effort, etc., are not the big obstacles to finding the true church. **The really big problem is getting folk to subject their own will to the authority of God.**

Once we are willing to let God have His way with us -- we give ourselves -- then the search for truth is a happy, rewarding experience.

- Robert F. Turner, Plain Talk, Nov., 1966

"HELPERS"

And God has appointed in the church...helpers. 1 Corinthians 12:28

God appointed in the church some very impressive folks. Just go down the list and see for yourself: apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healers, administrators, and speakers in various kinds of tongues. There's a certain glamour and sheen to be found in each of these words. They are folks to be looked up to and respected because of the gifts God has given them.

But right in the middle of such distinguished company the Lord saw the need for "helpers." And maybe that's where I can fit in. If so, I will be rubbing shoulders with some very elite folks in God's scheme of things.

I think of some helpers in the first century: There was Dorcas who sewed and ministered to practical human needs. There were four

men who let the paralytic down through the roof of a house so that Jesus might heal him. And there were those who held the rope so Paul could slide down the outside of the city wall in a basket and escape those seeking to kill him. Apollos is said to have greatly helped those who through grace had believed. Timothy and Erastus are both called helpers of the apostle Paul. And Paul says of Phoebe that she was a helper of many, and of himself as well. I even read of some who helped by praying (surely something all of us can do). And who can forget those ladies who worked side by side with Paul "whose names are in the book of life"?

There's a place in the Kingdom for you and for me. We can all belong to the "Honorable Order of Helpers!" Remember the words of Paul to Titus, "And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful" (Titus 3:14).

- John Gipson

"EVEN THE WINDS AND THE SEA OBEY HIM"

Mark tells us that after Jesus finished telling the parables recorded in Mark 4 and Matthew 13, Jesus said to His apostles, "Let us cross over to the other side." Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said

to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?' Then He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'" (Mark 4:35-41).

Jesus had frequently shown Himself to be the master over sickness and disease. He had shown Himself to have power to control demons and displace them. Now, He shows that He possesses power over the natural elements of the universe -- the power to calm the sea and make the wind lie down.

The fierceness of the storm is evident when we remember that four of Jesus' apostles had been fishermen by trade. Peter, Andrew, James and John had ridden out many a storm on the Sea of Galilee, but in this case, the storm was so violent that the apostles feared for their lives. Jesus, on the other hand was able to sleep calmly through the worst of the storm, until His apostles woke Him in alarm, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Jesus mildly rebuked them for their fear, which indicated the shallowness of their faith. Then He worked one of the miracles that most amazed them, thus strengthening their faith.

Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that the primary purpose behind all of Jesus mighty miracles, signs and wonders, was to produce faith in those who had not yet become believers, and to strengthen the faith of those who were already His followers. Those miracles confirmed that His message and His mission were

from God, Mark 2:10; John 3:2. His miracles were recorded that they may also produce faith in the hearts of those of us who were not there to experience them in person.

- Clarence R. Johnson

Things I've Learned After 50 Years

Okay, so I actually just turned 52 years old. I'm allowed to round off. Here's a fun list and a more serious list of five things that I have learned after fifty (two if you insist) years of living.

1. Don't put a lot of stock in those aptitude tests given in school. Can you see me as a Forrest Ranger?
2. Girls don't really have cooties. I've grown quite fond of my wife.
3. Splitting your pants in 3rd grade won't be the worst thing that will happen to you in your entire life.
4. The number of army movies you watched as a child does not increase your chances of getting drafted because of the military knowledge you amassed from the movies.
5. Surviving quicksand has not proven to be as big an issue as I thought it would be when I was five years-old.

Now for five more mature observations...

1. God has incredibly blessed my life.

2. I'm thankful everyday for my wife.
3. I've learned that life is short, and eternity is long.
4. I've learned that loss and heartache fine tunes your focus on Heaven.
5. And most importantly, I've learned that Jesus is everything!

- Steve Higginbotham

-
- > Some people who would never hurt a fly stand by and let their brethren be devoured by Satan.
 - > With many people, sin is not merely missing the mark, its missing the whole target.
 - > Christians must be as hardy as weeds but bear the fruit of melons.
 - > I don't know how much wood a woodchuck and chuck, but I do know more Christians need to chuck their crosses over their shoulders and follow Jesus.

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Two Causes for Religious Error!"* (text: Matt. 22:23-33); Sunday evening: *"Persistence In Prayer!"* (text: Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8).

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.