

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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June 08, 2014

Volume 34, # 24

"You Hath He Quickened"

YE WERE DEAD -- In the Garden of Eden God had told man that when he sinned, "thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Paul then argues, through the first three chapters of Romans, that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Thus man, in his sinful state, is spiritually dead. Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). To be spiritually dead is to be spiritually separated from God, as death basically means a separation. Unconverted Gentiles were "separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Paul sums up one's pre-Christian status by saying that "ye were dead through your trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1, 5).

YE WERE QUICKENED -- The word "quick" in the Bible means alive. God is said to be the judge of the quick and the dead (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5). He thus is the judge of the living and the dead. The Hebrew writer states that the Word of God is "quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12--KJV). The American Standard Translation says the Word is "living and active."

Men were dead in sin, but God quickened them. Speaking of this regenerative act, Paul said: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). Thus in conversion, the dead

sinner becomes a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). Those dead in sins are raised to walk "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). The process by which a dead sinner is made alive again is called a "new birth" (John 3:5) He is begotten by the word (Jas. 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15), and therefore is born of water and the spirit. One, lost and dead, by the gospel is made alive again and is saved.

YE MUST BE ALIVE -- Activity is the way by which one can determine the living from the dead. Christians are said to have been raised to walk in "newness of life." This means that the Christian life is to be one of exuberant activity. We speak of zest in living, and there should be zest or zip in our spiritual life. We must act alive spiritually. Paul teaches that the Christian is to "be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11), and is thus to "present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13).

But it is possible for one who has been born again to become spiritually dead again. He can lose his zest for living. Paul described some in the Corinthian church as being "weak and sickly, and not a few sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30). There Were Christians in that church who were spiritually asleep; they were spiritually dead. Jesus said of the church at Sardis, "thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead" (Rev. 3:1). Paul charged the spiritually sleeping Roman members to wake up. He said, "already it is time for you to awake out of sleep" (Rom. 13:11)

If you are a sleeping church member, you must be awakened and be "alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11). The spiritual house of God is to be made up of "living stones" (1 Pet. 2: 5). If we live with Him now, we shall live with him eternally (2 Tim. 2:11), but we must LIVE with Him. Are you a living, zestful, active church member? If not, you must be if you are going to live eternally. We were dead; we were quickened; and we must now BE ALIVE!

- Cecil Willis, TRUTH MAGAZINE, July 9, 1970

The Greatest Task in the World

The Lord's church has been given the greatest task in the world. It has been charged with the awesome duty of preaching the gospel to all mankind. The design of that message is to turn people from darkness to light, to "rescue the perishing."

Jesus said the gospel was to be preached to the whole creation (Mark 16:15-16). Paul said the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). As such, it is expected to stand under and support the truth in the world. The church at Thessalonica was commended because from it had "sounded out the word of the Lord" (1 Thess. 1:8-10). The seven churches of Asia were described as candlesticks (lampstands) (Rev. 1:20).

They were to be bearers of the light of the gospel.

The greatest task in the world has been ordered by the greatest Being in existence, God himself. This task can only be accomplished by following the wisdom of the God who ordered it. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 1:25). God said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts and my ways are not your ways" (Isa. 55:8-9). The human mind would have required the massing of troops and the concentration of power to carry out this task. The mind of God ordained that there be no more complex arrangement than that of a local church doing what it can to the limit of its power, and the consecrated efforts of individual disciples whose hearts burn with a love for the souls of the lost.

The great worldwide spread of the gospel did not take place in the New Testament era until the concentration of thousands of members was scattered abroad (Acts 8:1-4). The scattering of the troops was contrary to anything the wisdom of men would have fashioned, but the wisdom and providence of God were behind it and it resulted in permeating the Roman Empire with the gospel.

The trend toward huge projects, mass meetings, great demonstrations of “our” numbers and “our” great men, and the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few elderships in large congregations is but a symptom of a loss of respect for the wisdom of God and an over-estimation of the wisdom of men.

With each congregation sounding out the word of the Lord under its own elders, using its own resources and answerable to no board or conclave known to man, and with each disciple personally doing all he can to teach the truth wherever his influence extends, then the task can and will be accomplished in harmony with the wisdom of the Being who ordered it. Let us be content to work according to his will. But let us not be content until we have done exactly that. Let’s get on with God’s work in God’s way.

- Connie W. Adams

Ten Misplaced Desires

Maybe you’ve heard the story about three old friends who were shipwrecked on a deserted island. After nearly a year of being castaways, a bottle floated up on the beach. One of the men opened it, and out popped a genie granting one wish to each of the three friends. Without any hesitation, the first friend said, “I wish I were back home in Knoxville.” Poof! He was gone. The second friend immediately said, “I wish I were back home in Knoxville, too.” Poof! Immediately he was gone. The third man was more deliberate. He told the genie he wanted to think about it a bit longer to make sure he didn’t waste his wish. After a full two months of isolation on the island, he said to the genie, “I’ve reached my decision. Over the past two months I’ve come to realize how much I miss my friends. It’s been so lonely here without them, so I wish my two friends were back here with me.” And poof! (Groan here).

I believe we can all recognize the misplaced desire this man had. The desire for companionship with his friends was noble, but that desire was

misplaced if it meant calling them back to the island. But now, before we laugh at this man we had better realize that sometimes, we too have misplaced desires; good and noble desires, but they can be misplaced due to context. Let me offer ten misplaced desires we sometimes have:

1. We want a Savior, but we don't want a Lord.
2. We want a crown, but we don't want a cross.
3. We want a harvest, but we don't want to sow any seed.
4. We want to go to Heaven, but we don't want to go to church.
5. We want to grow spiritually, but we don't want to feed on his word.
6. We want Hollywood to "clean up its act," but we don't want to stop watching.
7. We want the right to pray, even in school, but we don't want to pray.
8. We want the 10 Commandments posted, but we don't want to live by their moral principles.
9. We want to love God, but we don't want to abhor sin.
10. We want to die the death of the righteous, but we don't want to abandon the lifestyle of the sinner.

The man who wanted his friends to rejoin him on that deserted island was pretty short-sighted, but not nearly as short-sighted as those whose wants are identified above. Give it some thought.

- Steve Higginbotham

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- > One advantage of traveling the straight and narrow is that no one is trying to pass you.
 - > God stops his ears against the prayers of those who stop their ears against His law.
 - > Christianity is not half-hearted service, but it is whole-hearted sacrifice.
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