

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Today is Today

Jesus said in His mountain message, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matt. 6:34). What a telling statement. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about the value and beauty of a single day.

Each day has its own sunrise, its own sunset. No two are exactly alike. Every day is different, with its own weather, its own wind and temperature, its own warmth or lack of it. Every sunrise is special in its own way; so with every sunset. They are all similar, but no two are the same.

What a joy to see a new day born. Every sunrise speaks of a new beginnings — a new slate, a new page. No matter how bad last night’s nightmare, or yesterday’s bad weather, with the first splash of sunshine across your quilt, everything is washed clean and you can start over.

A new day is a resurrection of sorts, too. With each new day we are raised up to new possibilities, new perspectives, new opportunities to serve and glorify God. Sunsets serve a purpose, too. They remind us of what we did or didn’t do that day. As the

sun disappears each evening, we look for rest if we've used the day well. And it brings us little twinges of conscience if we didn't. If you're right with God, you can look forward to the sunset.

Each day has its own thoughts. The thoughts that accompany each new day relate directly to neither yesterday or tomorrow; they belong peculiarly to today. You can't do tomorrow's thinking today. Sure, you can plan for tomorrow; but the thought you used to do so is today's thought, not tomorrow's. And you can relate back to yesterday in your mind, but the very thoughts you used are today's thoughts, not yesterday's. "As a man thinks in his heart so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Today's thoughts belong to today.

Every day brings new circumstances and new possibilities. Circumstances have to be handled. So do possibilities. You have to choose every day what you'll do with them. That means you have to meditate, contemplate, discriminate, then decide on what actions you will take about what's happening around you. Oh, you can put off thinking about it, but procrastination seldom serves anybody well, and you'll likely be sorry if you put it off till later.

Good and evil thoughts battle one another every day. We all have some of both. You have to choose which you will allow residency in your mind. "...give no place to the Devil," Paul said (Eph. 4:27). Someone has said "you can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair." It's that way with evil thoughts. They're going to race through your mind every day — count on it — but you don't have to give them a place to stay.

Each day has its own joy and its own sadness. Information — both good and bad — travels quickly these days. And each day you'll find some good news and some bad, some joy and some sadness. Both, it seems to me, are necessary to the good life.

The joys bring us encouragement and give us pleasure. Sadness brings us to a realization of who and where we are, and the fragileness of time. Just as joy encourages and makes our disposition sanguine, so sadness brings us stamina, teaches us patience, and keeps us courageous as we struggle through the vicissitudes of life.

Solomon said, “in the day of prosperity, be joyful, but in the day of adversity, consider” (Eccl. 7:14). Did you notice that there is a day of prosperity and a day of adversity? The actions for each are recommended. When the day is good we should rejoice and be thankful; when it is not, we should give due consideration to the fragileness of life. Furthermore, we are told by the wise man, “Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other...” If you use each day to serve God, the adversity will be of as much benefit as will the joy. That’s if you serve God. Each day is a gift from God. Every one of them lasts 24 hours. It’s up to us what we do with them. We can use them to glorify Him, or we can waste them with inordinate pleasures, worldly ambitions, and illicit thoughts. It’s up to each one to decide what this 24 hours will mean in his life. And no matter how many of those 24 hours we still have, each one is its own, and each one will be used as we see fit to use it.

I read somewhere that “yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift, that’s why we call it the present.” “It is not the care of the day, but the cares of tomorrow that weigh man down. For the needs of today, we have corresponding strength given. For the morrow, we must trust. It is not ours yet” (George MacDonald).

“Today, if you will hear His voice...” (Psa. 95:7).

- Dee Bowman

Which Ones Have You Encouraged?

The Lord's church is composed of both strong and weak members. Each one needs encouragement at times, but certainly the weaker brethren need a greater amount of special attention. Also, there are some members who are not necessarily weak, but who have special physical problems, causing them to need special attention. The apostle Paul taught that the responsibility of helping the weaker members rested upon the shoulders of those who were mature, full-grown Christians (Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:1-2). In the minds of some, this type of responsibility is the work of the elders, deacons, or preachers. Indeed it is; but the instruction is given to all Christians.

Sometimes elders and preachers are negligent. Sometimes there is simply more work to be done than a limited number of men can accomplish. Which ones have you encouraged?

Some members are forsaking the assembling of the saints. This sign of weakness is obvious to any mature Christian. It takes no special training or skills to make a phone call, write a note, or drop by for a short visit to say, "I've missed you." Would it be presumptuous to say almost all Christians could render service in this area?

Some members are attending without the support (perhaps with the hindrance) of their spouse. A mother rises early on Sunday morning to prepare breakfast and dress the children to get them to Bible class; and they leave home with the father still in bed. Sometimes the fathers have the same problem, leaving the mother at home. All recognize the special problems faced by such parents, admire their effort, and are encouraged by their faithful

attendance under less than ideal circumstances. Are we not obliged to reciprocate some type of encouragement to these faithful parents?

Some members are presently experiencing family problems. There are parents who are struggling with a rebellious child. There are married couples who are experiencing serious problems, perhaps resulting from an immature spiritual life. There are adults who have aging parents who are sick or confined, and demand much of their time and attention. In many cases, an encouraging word may be all that can be offered. Who offers it?

Some members are facing problems associated with aging. The elderly and widows find it more and more difficult to do the basics, such as driving to services, shopping at the market, visiting with others, etc. Many live alone, without the encouragement or support of a faithful companion. Encouragement may be extended both verbally and actively. This list could go on and on, but the initial question would remain the same, namely, "Which ones have you encouraged?" As the members of a congregation consider one another, the opportunities to serve are abundant.

Christians may avoid the question for the present, but one day all will stand and give an answer. What will it be?

- David Thomley

➤ "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."

➤ "Remember, your basic assignment as a parent is to work yourself out of a job."

- > "The bad news is times flies. The good news is you're the pilot."
 - > "Smart people learn from their own mistakes. Smarter people learn from the mistakes of others."
 - > "Failure is frequently the path of least persistence."
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"How Jesus Identified Himself With Man!"* (Text: Heb. 2:10-18); Sunday evening: *"Can You Believe They Said That?"* (Text: John 19:14-16).

GOSPEL MEETING 2015: Our Gospel Meeting is scheduled for July 19-24, with Jerry Crolus, of Conway, AR, preaching. Please mark your calendar.