

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

*Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## **“The Peace That Passeth Understanding”**

"And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7)

I like to lie in bed on stormy nights and listen to the rain beat on the roof and the wind moan through the trees outside. I think the reason I like this is because it gives me a feeling of security, or safety, to be protected from the elements. But this same storm that gives me a feeling of satisfaction and well-being may mean the death of another man somewhere. In like manner, the same tensions, heartaches, hardships, vicissitudes and uncertainties of life that are driving millions to seek escape in alcohol, dope, and the marts of sinful pleasure, are bringing others closer to God. When the pressures of living in this modern world are too much for the flesh alone, the faithful Christian finds a refuge in the promises of God. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "But seek

ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things, (material) shall be added unto you." (Matt. 11:28-30; 6:33).

Many millions of dollars are being spent every year to maintain some semblance of peace in this turbulent world. In my humble opinion, the time is not far distant when the world will be thrown into a holocaust that will destroy civilization (?) as we know it. My reasons for this opinion are two: (1) From the strictly human side, it seems to me that two ideologies as antagonistic as those represented by the United States and Soviet Russia cannot long survive together in a peaceful world. Somebody is bound to get trigger-happy one of these days and set the fuse. It just isn't human to have a new gun and not want to shoot it, and both sides in this affair are armed with every means of destruction that human wisdom can invent, (2) Looking through the eyes of the Old Testament prophets as they pronounced the everlasting doom of such ancient nations as Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon and the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of their sins, it seems unlikely that He will continue to put up with this vaunted display of human wisdom and idolatrous worship of man's achievements, to say nothing of the blasphemous disregard for decency and righteousness that is causing the nations to rot inside.

But whether he lives in quiet surroundings or in circumstances that strike fear to the hearts of brave men, the faithful child of God will have an inward peace that the world, and the half-hearted Christian can neither have nor understand. He is not terrified by the thought that the Russians might drop a bomb and destroy the city where he lives. If his doctor should tell him today that he has

but a few months to live, after the shock of the news had passed, he would face it as calmly as one "who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams." He likes to live, but he is prepared to die. And whether in life or in death, he will glorify God. Whether in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth, whether his time be months or many years, he will be grateful and will use it as a sacred trust. In this man's heart will abide the "peace of God that passeth understanding."

But this kind of peace does not come to the Christian who is so busy in the pursuit of "things" that his heart has become a spiritual refrigerator, and the church is only a "place" where he comes for one hour each week to be "served" the Lord's supper. I wish some of the members of the church could be made to realize what a mistake they made when they traded the "Peace of God" for a piece of the world that they can't keep for very long, and that will be burned up when the day of the Lord comes. (Written Feb. 12, 1961)

- Luther Blackmon, Truth Magazine, 6/6/1974

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## Some Facts About The Church

1. It is not a human denomination, but the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 2:5-6.
2. It was built by Christ and he is its foundation. Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11

3. Christ is its only head. Eph. 1:22-23.
  4. It was purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Acts 20:28.
  5. The saved are added to it. Acts 2:47.
  6. Its worship is in spirit and in truth. John 4:24.
  7. Its work is assigned by the Lord. Eph. 4:12-16.
  8. Its organization is congregational. Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17, 28; 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-3.
  9. It is God's house. 1 Tim. 3:15.
  10. Christ is its Savior. Eph. 5:23.
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## **ATTENDING TO PRIORITIES**

A commitment to Christianity affects our priorities in every aspect of life. It affects the priority we give to morality in our lives. It affects how important money is to us in life. It affects how much we think people matter in life. It affects how we address temptation in life. It affects how we prioritize our lives in every way. The apostle Paul noted that new priorities come with a commitment to Christianity when he told the Colossians, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection

on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Therefore, when Christians do not give spiritual matters priority in their lives, the only conclusion one can draw is that they are not truly committed to living a life that is risen with Christ. While this is true in all the ways mentioned above, it is most obvious when examining the priority a person gives to assembling with other Christians to worship God and study His Word.

**First, our attendance shows how important God is to us.** Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23). If we reverence God, if we want to glorify God, and if we love God, we will assemble to worship God. If we choose not to assemble with the saints to worship God, then these attributes are lacking, regardless of our protests.

**Second, our attendance shows how important the church is to us.** The apostle Paul emphasized the significance of the church in relationship to our coming together in his discussion about the Lord's Supper, saying, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (1 Cor. 11:33). If you think about it, when someone chooses not to assemble with the saints, he is saying, "I do not need exhortation from you, and I do not care if you need exhortation from me." How anyone could imagine that such an attitude is acceptable for a Christian is beyond me.

**Third, our attendance shows how important Christ's death is to us.** The purpose of the assembly that God called for every Sunday (Acts 20:7a) is specifically that the congregation remembers the death of their Lord in the partaking of the Lord's

Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26). You cannot possibly “do this in remembrance of me,” if you cannot remember to be in the assembly in the first place! Remembering Christ’s death reminds us that he had to die for us, and that is important in keeping us focused throughout the week. However, when we decide we do not want that reminder, Christ’s death itself is vain (Gal. 2:21; Heb. 6:4-6).

**Fourth, our attendance shows how important God’s Word is to us.** Luke reminds us, “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). These Christians wanted to hear the gospel proclaimed. Indeed, they stayed late into the night listening to it. When we think that a Bible class or sermon is too long or too burdensome, that we simply cannot fit it into our busy schedule, then we must not truly care about God’s will for our lives. “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97).

David said, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1). When we truly love God, when we truly love the church, when we truly remember why Christ had to die, and when we truly care about living God’s will, we will make our attendance for worship and for a study of God’s Word a major priority in our lives. Are there a lot of hypocrites that attend worship and Bible study? Of course. There are also a lot that claim they love the Lord and then just stay home.

- Kevin W. Rhodes

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- > "No matter what screw in the head is loose, it is usually the tongue that rattles!"
  - > "Beware of your spiritual condition when the most pleasing part of the service is the closing song and the dismissal prayer!"
  - > "There are preachers who round off their sentences so beautifully that they roll off the sinner's back!"
  - > "Quiet people aren't the only ones who don't say much!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*Being A Christian: No Bed of Roses!*" (Text: 2 Tim. 3:10-12); Sunday evening: "*What a Twelve-Year-Old Girl Saw in Her Father!*" (Luke 8:40-56).

**GOSPEL MEETING 2015:** Our Gospel Meeting is scheduled for July 19-24, with Jerry Crolius, of Conway, AR, preaching.