

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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A Record for All to See!

Several days ago I received a note from a man now living in the same house where I spent my boyhood days in the Florence area. The note asked me to contact him when I was in that area next.

In a few days I made that contact and found that he wanted to give me something that he thought I would enjoy having. He had found three papers with school work on them while he was removing the mantel in the living room.

Before you begin rushing to conclude that I had tried to hide the evidence of some poor grades, I will tell you that the grades did not require that kind of effort. By some means they had been slipped between the mantel and the wall and for years had lain there concealed.

The paper was brown from age, and the date was clearly discernible—July 25 and 26, 1956. My name was there for all to see, and inside the better handwriting of those days framed the math and dictation exercise in that English class long ago at Oakland in the middle of summer. Some of you will recall the mid-July starting date for schools in those years, to enable us to stop school for a few weeks in the fall to pick cotton.

There was my record from that distant time. Lessons began stirring my mind, and I share them with you. The work that I had done then was known by others. The teacher, my fellow-students, and the people living in the same house where we had lived all knew something of my work. Though the papers had been hidden from view for thirty-seven years, the record of my work did become manifest.

Regardless of our sins, whether committed under the cover of darkness, in the secret confines of private quarters, in our minds alone, or in the distant past, their record will be known. Human beings sometimes learn about them, and the Lord always knows. "All

things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13) Our sins will find us out often in life, but always in the judgment.

Our records will not always be the kind of which we can be proud. Sin is indelibly imprinted on the record of accountable beings. (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8, 10) The passing of decades nor the poor memories of others will efface the record. Time and elements remove the markings from monuments and grave stones, but the record of our lives will be there for the Lord to deal with and for us to recall. Are you willing to face yours? It will have something to do with your eternal destiny! You will be judged according to your works. (2 Cor. 5:10).

There is no way for any person to remove the sins of the past, apart from the system of forgiveness revealed in Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that God will not ignore sin and that man cannot remove it. Only through the offer of pardon graciously proffered the world in Christ can sin be successfully handled. The One making the offer also sets the condition upon which the offer can be received — faith in Christ, that vital, obedient faith that believes God and responds to His direction. (Rom. 3:23-26; Heb. 5:8-9). Because of the removal of that record of sin, we do not have to face our record. Continued faithfulness to Jesus Christ entails walking in the light as He is in the light, so the blood of the Son can forgive us of all future sins. Repentance and confession of sins is here included in walking in the light. It is truly thrilling to know that we do not have to face that old record of sin, because the alternative prospect is not one in which we could delight.

- Bobby L. Graham

Anger

"Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath."(Eph. 4:26). Indignation, a righteous anger that leads to the correction of injustice or evil, is good. In healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, Jesus asked the question, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" When the people remained silent, He looked upon them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts. They did not intimidate and keep Jesus from healing the man on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6).

Paul's statement shows that anger can be the cause of sin. This could be when anger is without cause, when anger is greater than would be justified by the cause, when anger lingers and grows into bitterness and malice, when anger seeks revenge, or when anger hardens the heart and allows no place for mercy and forgiveness.

Righteous anger can be a driving, compelling motivation for good in opposing evil and injustice. On the other hand we are not to allow the sun to go down on an anger that could lead to an evil and revengeful heart. Such anger is sin.

Christ's Work

Jesus said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." (John 5:17). While on earth Christ completed his work as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (Heb. 7:27). However, to make possible our salvation He continues to work as High Priest (Heb. 8:1), Advocate (1 John 2:12), Deliverer (Rom. 11:26), Head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18), Savior (Luke 2:11), Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Pet. 2:25), and Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). In addition to all the work that He does as indicated by these references, He ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

If we are lost, that which could add to our suffering would be the tormenting thought that Christ worked ceaselessly for our salvation, while we did nothing. He invited, "Come unto me." (Matt. 12:28). We refused. If we are lost, who is to blame? Neither Christ nor God. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21).

"NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES"

"Give me neither poverty nor riches — feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God." (Prov. 30:8-9).

One should be willing to work that he might be able to meet the obligations of life. However, no one should have an inordinate desire for wealth. The poor, not being able to meet their obligations, in desperation, may steal, but stealing is sin that excludes one from heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10). On the other hand wealth may place a burden too heavy to be borne. Commodore Vanderbilt left a huge fortune in the care of his son, William Henry. Though the son doubled the fortune he said to his family: "The care of \$200,000,000.00 is too great a load for any brain or back to bear. It is enough to kill a man. I have no son I am willing to afflict with the burden."

As did the wise man, let us pray, "Give me neither poverty nor riches."

The Whole Counsel of God

Truth must have no addition or subtraction according to the scripture. The perfection of truth demands this. The scriptures themselves declared, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8). "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18-19).

Perhaps the most deceptive tool of Satan is to cause men to believe partial truth is sufficient. An example is when Saul said, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." (1 Sam. 25:13). Samuel responded, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? (verse 14). Saul was reproved and rejected for this transgression.

Partial obedience is not obedience, and to lead men to believe that a little truth is better than no truth is destructive.

- Johnny Richardson

"The Work of God"

"Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food."(Rom. 14:20).

Paul refers to the Christian as "the work of God." This work was accomplished at exorbitant cost: "Do not destroy with food the one for whom Christ died." (Rom. 14:15). Because the church in the first century was made up of Jew and Gentile a problem existed. The Jew might consider certain foods unclean, while the Gentile held no such scruples. Paul said, "I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing [food] unclean of itself..." (Rom. 14:14). Do not establish divisive convictions over that which has its place only in the realm of opinion.

Whether certain foods are clean or unclean may not constitute a problem in the church today. However, the failure to distinguish between faith and opinion is the problem.

"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things whereby one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God..."(Rom. 14:19-20).

- > "A happy home is the single spot of rest which a man has upon this earth for the cultivation of his noblest sensibilities!" - F.W. Robertson
 - > "When home is ruled according to God's word, angels might be asked to stay a night with us, and they would not find themselves out of their element!" - C.H. Spurgeon
 - > "You are in no position to recommend the 'bread of life' to others if you act as though it disagrees with you!"
 - > "There will be fewer 'problem children' when parents are properly 'disciplined!'"
 - > "We should teach our daughters to dress in such a manner as to be chaste rather than to be chased!"
 - > "Sometimes you can know which way you are headed by looking at the crowd with you!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Home & Family!*" #1 (*Introduction*) (Text: Gen. 18:19); Sunday evening: "*True Values!*" (Matt. 13:44-46).