

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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October 02, 2016

Volume 36, # 40

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### Why Don't I Speak Up?

From time to time, I am troubled by a problem that I see within myself; perhaps you sometimes see this problem within yourself as well. The problem involves those of us who believe with all our hearts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and yet somehow refrain from talking about Him and His Word to people about whom we care a great deal. If we are to remedy this situation, we must ask and answer a very simple question--Why? Why do we so often refrain from talking about Jesus and salvation to those people we know have not heard and who need to hear?

The most logical answer, and the one that none of us really wants to admit is that our faith in Jesus and the saving power of the gospel may not be quite as strong as we think it is. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 4:13, "Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we also believe, and so we also speak." This passage certainly seems to suggest that if we really believe in a person or thing, we will speak about it. Why isn't the same thing true if we really believe in Jesus? In fact, Paul pointed out that it was their belief that prompted them to speak.

On one occasion, a man came to Jesus desiring that He cast an evil spirit out of his son. The exchange is found in Mark 9, and we want to look at verses 23 and 24. In verse 22, the man expressed doubt in the Lord's ability by saying, "But if you can do anything ..." Notice our Lord's response in verses 23 and 24. "And Jesus said to him, 'If you can! All things are possible for the one who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'" Perhaps, on occasion we also should cry out this father's cry to the Lord.

Possibly, we sometimes fail to grasp the fact that we are not the only ones who need Jesus; the entire world needs salvation. Do you remember how Peter answered the question about the power that healed the lame man at the temple gate? He said, in Acts 4:10,12, "Let it be known to you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus

Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man is standing before you ... And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Knowing that salvation is found only in Jesus and really believing that the people outside His church are going to be lost are two entirely different things. Do we really believe that the only hope of eternal salvation is through Jesus? If so, why do we sometimes hesitate to mention it? Let's speak up!

Could our problem be that we just don't feel as though we should be the ones to have to accept responsibility in the matter? A bunch of us certainly seem to subscribe to the motto, "I am not my brother's keeper?" Today's society is filled to overflowing with people who just aren't that interested in "getting involved." But when our Lord gave His apostles the Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28, what instructions did He give them?

He not only told them to go and teach all nations, baptizing those who were taught, but He also said in verse 20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." If I understand what this means, the apostles were to teach and baptize people, and continue teaching them all that Jesus had said. This would include teaching them to also teach and baptize. If this is so, each of us has a responsibility to quit holding back and start speaking up to fulfill this commission in our generation.

It could be that we are afraid. We all have areas where we feel uncomfortable; where we are at least a little afraid of how others may react. Many times, this is just as true, maybe even more so, in the area of religion. Sometimes we just don't want to offend people by disagreeing with them; so we hesitate to take to the very people we love the most, the one and only thing that can save their souls. Stranger still, we often hesitate in the name of love! Remember the old saying, "If that's the way he treats his friends..."

Many of us are not combative or naturally aggressive people; but this does not excuse us from telling folks about Jesus. I like the example given in John 1:40-42. It says, "One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (Which means Christ) He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas (which means Peter).'" We can read a few verses further to verse 45, which says, "Philip found Nathaniel and said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'" Both of these men--Andrew and Philip--heard some extremely good news, and they could not wait to share it with those for whom they cared the most.

So what is my problem and yours? Is it instead that WE JUST DON'T CARE? I pray with all my heart that this is not the case. Somebody--perhaps our parents, or a good friend--cared enough about you and me to bring us the word of Jesus. Who do you care enough about to bring them the good news about Jesus and the opportunity to be saved? Let's drop to our knees and pray for mercy and forgiveness for those opportunities we carelessly waved on and for the Lord to send us more. Let's start praying that we will be able to find those good and noble hearts that are searching and scratching to fill the void of emptiness in their souls. And let's spend some time preparing ourselves to be effective teachers by studying and applying God's Word and how to communicate it to others. Remember, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." If you care, tell someone about Jesus!

- Adam Litmer

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## Jesus Understands

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows..." (Isaiah 53:4). Jesus understands. Jesus knows how you feel. You're under the gun at work? Jesus knows how you feel. You've got more to do than is humanly possible? So did He. People take more from you than they give? Jesus understands. Your teenagers won't listen? Your students won't try? Jesus knows how you feel. "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18, NKJV).

You are precious to Him. So precious that he became like you so that you would come to Him. When you struggle, He listens. When you yearn, He responds. When you question, He hears. He has been there. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the son of God, Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are — yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may

receive mercy and find grace to help is in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16, NKJV).

- Jason Cicero

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## Who Gets Hurt?

An old preacher said to his audience, "some people think they hurt the church when they get mad and quit, but they are wrong about that. It never hurt a good tree for the, dried up apples to fall off."

The lesson is that people who might have a spiteful attitude and who try to show their anger in an effort to hurt the church, actually only hurt themselves. There are a very few who may feel that the church can't get along without them. They want to be begged constantly, so they won't quit.

Actually, I would be glad to beg such people to be faithful, but my reason is not that they will harm the church, but that they will be lost if they quit. If they are as dried-up apples, they can do no harm by "dropping off." The "tree" will not only survive, but it will be free from this extra load. But if they quit, they will have cut themselves off from the source of all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

Don't quit the church, for when you do, you quit the Lord. He does love you, but He won't save you outside the blood-bought body, the church, for which He died (Eph. 5:25). If you love the Lord who died to save you, you will certainly love the Church which is His.

- Leslie Diestlekamp

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Home & Family!" #2 (The Bible Directs Husbands!)* (Text: Eph. 5:25, 28); Sunday evening: *"Who Is Responsible If I Am Lost?"* (Matt. 7:13-14).