

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

January 01, 2017

Volume 37, # 01

Heroes

Every society has heroes. The heroes in a society are those who are glamorized, looked up to, and imitated. To the ancient Greeks, Achilles, Odysseus, Ajax, Nestor, and other warriors from *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were among their heroes. During the early days of the Roman Empire, poets and conquering generals were looked up to. Our own society has had distinct heroes within the past century. We have tended to idolize those who sacrifice themselves for the common good: firemen, soldiers, and anyone who risks their own life to save another. Notice how this theme of sacrifice is even in our comic book heroes of the past century.

But how do we decide who our heroes are? I believe this question is a case of “which came first, the chicken or the egg?” A society’s heroes are a reflection of what is important to the society, and in turn shape what values that society will hold. Greek boys grew up thinking that a hero is someone who kills a lot of people in war and wins great victories. Romans were taught that a hero is someone who achieves success through talent and is honored for it. Therefore, these societies were being taught to win renown through determination and skill. You can see, then, how fortunate our country has been in the past couple of generations. Our grandparents and parents grew up thinking that a hero is someone who sacrifices for a common good. And so this idea has been ingrained in their thinking and behavior. As a general rule, we have been a hard-working, unselfish society. But our heroes are changing.

The last half of the 20th century saw new heroes arising in our society. More and more, entertainers have become the idols and examples of young people. At this point, a young boy or girl grows up seeing actors and actresses and believing that heroes are physically beautiful, glamorous, and live how they want to. Boys and girls see athletes and singers and think that is a desirable lifestyle. “I would have it made if I could be talented, wealthy, and famous like So-And-So,” is thought by so many young people. If they can’t make it like their entertainment heroes, then they will be satisfied being a poor-man’s version and living a life imitating them.

Needless to say, our entertainers are often anything but godly. Greed, sexual immorality, selfish ambition, and pride are the character traits many of them possess. These are the traits that so often get them to where they are. These are the traits children learn to graft into their lives. Certainly not all entertainers are corrupt, and those who are wholesome ought to be supported, but overall the industry is ungodly. Since we as the people of God cannot “go out of the world,” we need to be aware that our society influences us and that it must be resisted.

Instead of our young people looking up to immoral singers, they should see Joseph, Ruth, and Daniel as heroes for their purity and strength (Gen. 39:6-10; Ruth 3-4; Dan. 1:8). Rather than covetous, arrogant athletes being the heroes of our children, they should look to Paul and admire him for his humility and service (1 Cor. 9:19-27). Train your children so that Abraham, Deborah, David, Esther, Timothy, and other men and women of the Bible are their heroes. Above all, make your children grow in admiration and love for the Son of God. He is our great example and the One to be imitated (Phi. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:18-25).

How often do you tell your children the stories of the Bible or refer to them as examples, compared with how often you talk about their favorite entertainer? Your child will imitate a hero. Teach them to model their lives after great men and women of faith.

- Jonathan Reeder

Are You A “Pilgrim?”

Peter writes with the authority of an “apostle” of Jesus Christ and he writes to the Christians who were scattered. In 1 Pet.1:1, Peter speaks of “pilgrims of the dispersion”. He was likely speaking of the Christians who had been scattered since the days when persecution had scattered the church everywhere (See Acts 8:1-ff). Many of these brethren had to leave their homes to keep their faith and family together.

A pilgrim sees himself as on a journey. The houses he happens to stay in are viewed as temporary places to stop on his way to the enduring land he seeks. Many of us in these prosperous United States have come to think of ourselves as permanent residents of our homes. We work and live as if it is all about having and keeping this house. We allow ourselves to become slaves of material things. One day all of this stuff is going to burn up. Our children will need “faith” in God and spiritual directions for living.

We need to see ourselves as pilgrims, just passing through this world, on our way to the more permanent home prepared for God’s people. Do you really view yourself as a “pilgrim”? Is your heart set on going to heaven? Do people you live with KNOW that your heart is set on something greater than this world offers? How can you really be a pilgrim

if no one you work with or no one you live with knows that your heart is set on going to heaven? Pilgrims make preparation for their journey. What kind of preparations are you making for heaven?

- Terry W. Benton

The Creed That Needs No Revision

If you were to ask a Christian for a copy of the “creed” or “book of rules” of the church of Christ, he could only offer you a copy of the New Testament. The only written creed the church that Christ built has ever had is the New Testament. It was given by inspiration of God, and is sufficient to furnish the man of God unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3:16,17. It meets the needs of the whole world, Mark 16:15. This is the only message we are authorized to use in the conversion of sinners, Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:19,20. Jesus taught that the word of God is enduring and that by it we shall be judged, Luke 21:33; John 12:48. The authority of Christ, as expressed in the New Testament, is the only safe guide for the church. It is sinful for the church to submit to any other authority. The gospel is God’s power to save, Rom. 1:16. James says it is able to save, Jas. 1:21. Paul writes that it did save the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 15:1,2. The curse of God rests upon the man who preaches another gospel or dares to add to or take from it, Gal. 1:8; Rev. 22:18,19.

In spite of plain Bible teaching, we find good, religious people subscribing to human creeds. Even those who subscribe to man-made creeds will not claim for them any saving power. They are but the products of human opinion and stand as barriers to the unity of religious people. Man-made creeds are based upon two wicked assumptions: 1. The New Testament is not sufficient to meet the needs and govern the people of God. 2. This supposed insufficiency can be remedied by weak, fallible, erring men. Without such assumptions, there is no excuse for the making of any human creed.

Human creeds are objectionable for many reasons: 1. They are not inspired of God. 2. They do not meet the needs of the whole world. 3. They are not perfect. 4. They must be revised every few years. 5. We shall not be judged by them. 6. They set aside and make void the word of God. 7. They teach many things contrary to the New Testament. 8. They keep people divided on the question of religion.

They should, therefore, be laid aside forever, or better still burned and forgotten. When a single one of them endures in force anywhere, division will exist. They are subversive of divine authority and of the peace, unity, and fellowship that should characterize those who desire to please God and go to heaven when they die.

As simple Christians, we take the authority of Christ, as expressed in the New Testament, as our only rule of faith and practice. It is the one creed that needs no revision. We invite all of you to meet with us on the New Testament in order that we may be united in work and worship.

- Rufus R. Clifford

Death of the Righteous

Dealing with the death of a loved one can be one of the greatest agonies that a person faces. We think of the death of a loved one in terms of heartache, tears, sorrow, and pain. Yet, Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Let us consider how that the death of one of God's saints is "precious" in His sight.

Whereas the death of a loved one causes us to have sorrow and pain, God has a different perspective. The verse above is looking at death more from the perspective of God. It is clear that God is delighted when a person becomes a Christian. Certainly, there is rejoicing in heaven. We can also say that He is delighted when He sees the new Christian progressing from a new born babe in Christ to a mature Christian. Parents rejoice when their children achieve certain goals, such as earning their high school diploma, for example. God rejoices when we reach the end of our lives as faithful Christians.

When we die, we are going home to God. Paul, according to Philippians 1:23, contemplated death near the end of his life and stated that he had a "desire to be with Christ; which is far better." (Note also 2 Cor. 5:6-8.) Those who die in Christ are going home to their heavenly Father.

We may refer to death as a "departure," and in a certain sense it is just that. There was once a tribe in Africa who referred to death, not as a departure, but as an arrival. They were looking at death from heaven's standpoint.

Losing a loved one is very difficult. But, if we can look at our loved one's death as God does; if we can look at their death as "precious," then perhaps we can be comforted when our loved ones die who are faithful Christians. We will probably still feel "sorrow upon sorrow" (Phil. 2:27), but we should also look at their death as God does. Their death is "precious" to the Lord.

- Mike Johnson

> "Do not regret growing old; it is a privilege many do not have!"

- > "The Christian life is like an airplane in flight - when you stop, you drop!
 - > "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it!"
 - > "The proud man boasts about how much he knows; the wise man is humbled that he knows so little!"
 - > "Remember sadness is always temporary. It is a mere wisp in the vapor of life!"
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*What Is Your Life?*" (Text: Jas. 4:13-15);
Sunday evening: "*A Young Woman's Choice!*" (Ruth 1:16-17).