

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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## Attitude Is Everything

"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." (Acts 16:25)

There is nothing that has a greater impact on our lives than our own attitude. Consider Paul and Silas. They had undergone at Philippi what could only be described as spiteful treatment. (1Thess. 2:2)

They were manhandled by men who dragged them to the city authorities. They were afforded no trial — no benefit of the doubt. They were stripped naked and beaten with rods. They were bruised and humiliated. They were thrown into prison as though they were outlaws and heavily guarded as though they were the vilest of them. (Acts 16:19-24)

Their feet were fastened in stocks which history teaches were long wooden beams that kept the prisoner's legs spread apart insuring that they remained immobile. At midnight, when most were found sleeping, Paul and Silas were trying to find courage and strength. While most others were dreaming, they were aching and bleeding.

Yet even the most brutal abuse could not drive them to despair. They were "praying and singing hymns to God". Even the most savage treatment could not smother their desire to praise God. Why? Paul and Silas had outstanding attitudes. That's why.

Be advised that without proper attitude nothing good can be accomplished in our lives. Without a godly disposition, every spiritual molehill will seem an insurmountable mountain. Without an attitude that looks unto Jesus, we will be weighed down and beset. (Heb.12:1-2)

But if ours is an attitude that recognizes Jesus Christ as a constant, powerful force in our lives, we can do all things through Him. (Phil. 4:13) There will never be an affliction so

oppressive as to shake our faith or quench our zeal if we have an appropriate attitude. Attitude is everything.

- Jason Malham

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## **GOD'S DEFINITION OF A CHRISTIAN**

### **ACTS 11:26**

*"the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."*

There are various definitions given of a Christian. The only one that is worthwhile is God's definition. The only kind of Christian worthwhile is the one as defined by God. The reason for saying this is God's definition of a Christian is because of the meaning of chrematizo, translated "called." It is not a nickname, claimed by some. "And it was in Antioch that the disciples first received the name Christian." (Weymouth).

The Greek word rendered called implies a divine source. It is "to be divinely instructed, to receive a warning or revelation from God" (Green's Greek-English Lexicon). "To give a response to those consulting an oracle, to give divine command or admonition, to teach from heaven; to be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed; to be the mouth-piece of divine revelations, to promulgate the commands God" (Thayer).

The word is found nine times in the New Testament (Matthew 2:12; 2:22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Hebrews 8:5; 11:7; 12:25; Romans 7:3; Acts 11:26). In all of these instances it has reference to divine revelation, unless Acts 11:16 is an exception.

The meaning of the word fits Isaiah 62:2: "Which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." Compare Romans 7:3: "She shall be called an adulteress." Who calls her an adulteress? Compare "defer not, for thine own sake, my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name" (Daniel 9:19). In Israel, we have the root of Elohim, the Hebrew name for God, which supplies an explanation for the statement, "Thy people are called by thy name." Amos 9:12 and Acts 15:17 are equivalents. Thus, the subject: "God's Definition of a Christian.'

Why was not this name given at Pentecost? We may not know, but I can think of a reason. Christian is the sum of Christianity. Christianity not Jewish, not peculiar to Jews. This is implied in the very fact that the term that most describes Christianity was not given until Gentiles were brought in. Thus, those who think of Christianity offering something yet for Jews in a special way have not properly understood Christianity.

A Christian is one who heard the Gospel and believed it (Acts 11:19-21). Why were there no Christians in Antioch prior to this time? There were not any that had heard the Gospel and believed.

A Christian is one that assembles (Acts 11:26; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42). The Christians at Antioch assembled. The Christians in every place assemble.

A Christian is one that accepts responsibility (Acts 11:29). Note the words – every man – determined – according to his ability. They did not seek to do as little as they could but as much as they could. Many seem to think today that a Christian is one who does as little as he can. A Christian does not shirk responsibility.

A Christian is one in the Lord's church (Acts 11:26). There were no Christians in Antioch that were not members of the church. There were no Christians in Antioch that were members of another church. "I give in mine house and within my walls...a name" (Isaiah 56:5). The church is God's house (I Timothy 3:15; Acts 2:42; Galatians 3:26-27).

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN AS DEFINED BY GOD?

- Franklin Camp

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## Beyond Your Ability

The story is told of a lawyer and businessman who were making a tour of a foreign land and were being guided by a missionary, who also served as their interpreter. "That's an odd picture. I suppose they are terribly poor," the businessman said, pointing to some workers in a field.

"That's the family of ChiNou," the guide answered. "When the church building was being erected they were eager to give but had no money. So, they sold the one ox they had and gave the money. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves."

For several moments, there was an uneasy silence. Finally, the businessman spoke: "That must have been a real sacrifice."

"No, they didn't call it a sacrifice," said the preacher. "They thought it was fortunate they had an ox to sell."

The apostle Paul wrote about the brethren in Macedonia: "that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:2-5). Paul was using the Macedonian brethren to inspire the Corinthian brethren to give toward the needy saints in Judea.

God speaking through an apostle encouraged His children to give by letting them see the diligence of others who gave toward His work. He didn't want to command them to give but rather touch the sincerity of love that was in their hearts which would move them to give (2 Cor. 8:8).

There are some principles that are given in God's word that will help us in our giving to His work. We are guided to give as we are prospered (1 Cor. 16:2), to give according to what we have (2 Cor. 8:12), to give generously, bountifully, purposefully, cheerfully and not grudgingly or of necessity (2 Cor. 9:5-7). In the New Testament, the Lord does not designate an amount as He did in the Old Testament. Surely, ten percent if at all possible would be a good starting point (Heb. 7:2).

Have you evaluated your giving? Based on the Biblical principles listed above, we all need to sit down and consider what we put in the offering plate each Sunday, and what we do to help with special requests for help. If the followers of Christ in the illustration above did not think selling their ox was a sacrifice — what do you think would have been a sacrifice for them?

We may not know the answer to that question, but we do know that most of us have not come close to that kind of giving. May God help us to be givers who give beyond our ability! (Thanks to Don Truex for the illustration on giving an ox.)

- Ron Drum

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## Rust in Peace

Perhaps you have seen the clever sign suspended over the gateway of an automobile junk yard which reads "RUST IN PEACE". Within this morgue for deceased motors, there are many cars that had once been polished and shining synonyms of power and speed, but now they lie here rusting and wasting. Once they traveled the streets and highways, once they climbed the highest hills and crossed the hottest desert sands...but now they are victims of rust and ruin.

What kind of Christian are you? Are you staying busy in the Lord's service, or are you resting on your past reputation? America is filled with people who used to be faithful in the work of the Lord but now they are inactive. "I used to be a worker in the church back home and never missed a service", they say. What are they doing now? Negligent, careless, and indifferent, having lost their former zeal and enthusiasm, they never darken the door of the church building and their children are being reared without knowledge of God's truth.

An energetic old gentleman, whom I knew, was always in a hurry. He would rush from one job to another as though he never had a moment to spare, and when his friends would urge him to slow down, he would say, "I would rather WEAR OUT THAN RUST OUT." Unfortunately, we have thousands of "rusty" Christians whose lives ought to be brightened and made useful in the service of God. They will never wear themselves out in the work of the church because they never intend to do anything but rest and rust.

However, I do not believe that they are destined to "rust in peace" for very long. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begins at us, what shall the end of them be that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4:17).

- Unknown

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- > "Worry is the darkroom where negatives develop!"
  - > "When you have nothing left but God, you begin to learn that God is enough!"
  - > "Pick your friends, but not to pieces!"
  - > "The world is full of people who are making a good living but living poor lives!"
  - > "To hatch despair, simply brood over your troubles!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*The Heart of the Matter!*" (Text: Matt. 13:1-9); Sunday evening: "*Miracle at Cana!*" (Text: John 2:1-12)