

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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HEAVEN

Heaven is the destiny for which the Christian longs. It is given as a reward. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for great is their reward in heaven" (Mat. 5:10-12). The reason we long so for heaven is because we have no continuing city here on earth (Heb. 13:14). The elements of the physical universe are going to pass away ... melt with fervent heat ... be burned up ... be dissolved. The Christian, according to God's promise, is looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which only righteousness dwells. Therefore, we should live in anticipation of these coming events with holiness of character and godliness of manners. See: 2 Pet. 3:10-14.

The appointment of death is for all (Heb. 9:27). What is beyond the grave is unknown to us regarding having experienced it. And yet, God, dwelling in the realm of the eternal, has revealed to us what is on the other side. All the dead will be raised. Those who did good in this life will be raised to life with God. Those who did evil in this life will be raised to damnation. See: John 5:28,29. Those who have done good are further described as the ones who did the commandments of God. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). "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 which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21).

Heaven is described as an eternal place of glory. It is put in contrast to our lives here which are temporal, physical, painful, and perishing. When we put off this earthly body, we shall be clothed with a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 4:15 - 5:10). The hope of the Christian is "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:4,5). There are two points I wish to emphasize from these two verses: 1. There is a salvation that we do not have in this life: eternal life, which is reserved in heaven; and, 2. It is not on this earth. It is reserved in heaven. The earth is temporal and will pass away.

The Christian longs for the day when he shall be rid of the pain ridden body of decay, and clothed upon with immortality, and the eternal life that is promised. A day of joy!

- Raymond E. Harville, via *The Mount Pleasant Record*, 04/29/1976

“In The Good Old Summertime...”

Summertime is a delightful season in many ways. It is joyfully anticipated by school children and teachers who need to relax from the regimen of the classroom. It is usually a time for many families to take a much-needed trip to a place where they can have fun and enjoy themselves. But, as God’s people, let us remember that as Christians we are always Christians wherever we are and at whatever time of year it may be. Christianity is a year-round religion. However, during the summer, there are certain temptations that we must overcome and avoid. Let us notice some of them in this short article:

1. *Neglected worship.* We are taught not to forsake the assemblies of the church (Heb. 10:25). But some who have been regular in their attendance during other seasons of the year will start allowing summer activities to get in the way, and they will start missing the services of the church. Some will take vacation trips with carefully laid out plans for food, lodging and entertainment, but with no advanced planning or thought to where they are going to meet to worship with the saints on the Lord’s day. Christians should not plan vacations and weekend trips with no intentions of attending the worship services of a faithful congregation. This is very unwise and will weaken one’s faith.

2. *Neglected local obligations.* Every Christian is to support the work of the local congregation by giving cheerfully on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). How could any child of God think that he is excused from this responsibility because it is summertime? Why should the work of the local church suffer because Christians fail to “make up” their contributions after they return from a trip? One thing is for certain, congregational expenses do not cease during the summer.

3. *Indecent exposure.* Some think the moment the weather warms up, it is time to start taking off their clothes, and begin wearing skimpy clothing that leaves most of their bodies exposed. The Apostle Paul plainly says that Christians are to dress modestly (orderly and decent), with propriety (with a sense of dignity, shame, with the ability to blush), and with moderation (seriousness which reflects a heart of modesty and purity) (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Another problem with immodesty is that the person dressing in such a manner can cause another person to sin (Matt. 5:28). If parents have not instilled a sense of modesty in their children’s hearts and minds when they are very young, by the time they reach adolescence, it is probably too late. Do you as a parent, or as a husband, want your daughter or wife to become sex objects when they appear in public wearing skimpy, immodest clothing, tight, revealing outfits, swim suits, costumes, uniforms, etc. Do you

want your wife or daughter to be the objects of vulgar leers of worldly men who make it a point to lust after and observe their nakedness in scanty, revealing clothing? Is dressing (or better yet, undressing) this way becoming to a Christian? Think about it!

Some years back, the Army did a study concerning how soldiers should dress in tropical, desert climates. They found that skin temperatures were actually cooler when they wore loose long pants, as opposed to knee-shorts worn by British soldiers. If you will notice, those who live in hot, desert areas, wear loose, long, light-colored clothing that covers the entire body. Exposing our skin when it is hot is not to be used as an excuse to stay cool and dress immodestly.

May we all have a pleasant summer season. But please remember your responsibilities as a Christian. Don't allow the casual, easy-going spirit of the warmer months to sear your conscience and weaken your faith in God.

- R.J. Evans

FRIENDSHIP

It has been observed that man have many acquaintances but few friends. Perhaps this is because of what it means to truly be a friend. A friend is one to whom you can pour out your heart, your weaknesses, your failing, your doubts and fears, and even to whom you can confess your sins. You can know that it will go no further, and more than that, you will know that this one still loves you. We may not have many friends because we refuse to be a friend to many: "He that makes many friends does it to his own destruction; But there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:23).

Jesus is the "friend that sticks closer than a brother," our example of a true friend. Regardless of how many times I have had to go to Him confessing my sins, I have never had reason to doubt His love. He forever proved His love and friendship for me when He "lay down his life for" (John 15:3) me.

For friendship to be at its best it must be reciprocated. A one-way friendship is selfishness in action. How can I be a friend to Jesus? I cannot listen to His confession of sin (He has none) and still love Him. But I can be His friend: "Ye are my friends, if you do the things which I command you" (John 15:14). I may never be called on to lay down my life for this Friend, but He has asked me to present my body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1).

God, strengthen me to be, in truth, a friend to Your Son.

- William (Bill) V. Beasley

- > "When a dishonest man makes a mistake, he tries to cover it up; when an honest man makes a mistake, he corrects it!"
 - > "Truth and error have one thing in common - they are directly and diametrically opposed to each other, and no power on earth, heaven or hell can harmonize them!"

 - > "He who carries a tale makes a monkey of himself, and sometimes others!"
 - > "The humblest citizen of the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error!" - William Jennings Bryan
 - > "Some people do not fight the Devil because they never feud with their kinfolks!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Favorable and Unfavorable Things Concerning the Kingdom of God!*" (Text: 1 Cor. 15:24-26); Sunday evening: "*John's Last Testimony!*" (John 3:22-36).