

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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

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“WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?”

This question was asked by the disciples of Jesus after he had spoken about how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven" and "it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23, 24). It is no wonder that His disciples were astonished at this statement since it is contrary to just about everything one has come to believe concerning the entrance into the kingdoms of men. The kingdoms and institutions of men open readily to the rich. Some would even make wealth a prerequisite to entrance. Now Jesus declares that the possession of wealth would hinder rather than help entrance into the kingdom of God. "Who then can be saved?"

What if I were to tell you that no one could be saved? I am sure that many would rise up in protest and declare, "that just isn't fair. How could God sentence anyone to hell if it is impossible to be saved?" Yes, it would indeed be upsetting to know that we could not be saved, however I believe it is just as bad and should be just as upsetting to one who is NOT saved but COULD be. In fact, this is even worse, for if we could not be saved there would be nothing you could do about your lost condition, but not being saved when you could be means that you simply are not concerned enough about salvation and the kingdom of God to do anything about it.

Yes, salvation is possible, but "Who can be saved?" We learn from the teaching of Jesus on this occasion that those who depend upon their riches for salvation cannot be saved. Many who are rich think they are great because of their riches, but it is not only the rich who are deceived in this matter. Many who do not have riches have the idea that they would be great if they had riches or that they are "nobody" due to the lack of riches. These are making the same mistake as the rich who think that such is assurance of greatness. There are some things that riches cannot do and making one a citizen of the kingdom of God is surely one of them.

Who can be saved? Only those who are lost. Some never inquire about salvation or the need for salvation because they have never come to the realization that they are lost in their present condition. Cornelius was told to send for Peter "who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved" (Acts 11:13, 14). I have heard some contend that Cornelius was not lost until after Peter preached to him. I know this is not so because he needed to hear words whereby he might be SAVED and ONLY LOST people need to be saved. Much of the preaching we have recorded in the word of God is not designed to tell men WHAT to do to be saved but to convict them of sin and make them realize the NEED to be saved. When men realize that they are lost in sin and condemned to eternal damnation they will cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"

As Peter quotes the prophet Joel he gives us the answer to our question. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). We sometimes sing "whosoever meaneth me." Yes, I can be saved. I can call upon the name of the Lord, but just what does this mean and how can I do it? It surely means more than just saying the name of the Lord for Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

We call upon others for that which we cannot do for ourselves. If we are physically ill we call upon the physician for healing. We understand that this calling upon the physician for healing involves the going to the doctor, his diagnosis of the problem, his prescribed treatment and medication and the application of that treatment and medication. All of these things are involved in calling upon a doctor for physical healing. To refuse any of these items and still expect to be healed would be foolish on our part, however many think they can ignore the prescription of the Great Physician and still be healed spiritually.

Calling on the name of the Lord means doing the will of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21). Calling on the Lord is an admission of our inability to save ourselves through our own doing and a demonstration of our faith in His ability to save us. When Saul of Tarsus realized that he had been guilty of rejecting the Christ in his persecution of Christians he was told by Ananias to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). If you would be saved by calling upon the name of the Lord you must follow the example of Saul. Having believed that Jesus was the Christ he now turns from his rejection of Christ and is told to be baptized that his sins may be washed away. This is the same message Peter preached in Acts 2. Those who believe Peter's preaching of Jesus as the Christ (v. 36) now asked what they must do (v. 37). Peter told them to "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (v. 38).

Yes, friend, YOU CAN BE SAVED! God wants you to be saved. What about you? Do you want to be saved? If so, you must call upon the name of the Lord.

- James Hahn

LEAVING HOME

The most fascinating, enjoyable, perplexing, complex, and challenging time of life is youth. A part of youth is leaving home, temporarily at first, then permanently. All too soon to most parents and not soon enough to most young people, children grow up and leave home - ready or not, prepared or unprepared - and face one of life's greatest trials. Some leave home for an education; some for marriage; some for military service; and some for a job. Many of these young people are Christians who have parents (one or both) who are Christians. Have the parents done their work well? Will the young people stand the test?

If you are a young person who will soon take this venture, what does leaving home mean to you? Does it mean greater responsibility? opportunity? challenge? Are you resolved to make it a step toward maturity? Seriousness of purpose? Making a life? Or, to you, does leaving home mean freedom from the restraining influence of your parents? Does it mean that you will be your own boss and can do as you please? No doubt, leaving home means to some that they can start doing some things they were not permitted to do and stop doing some things they were made to do. Some will choose a college away from home, not because of the better quality of education, but merely to get away from home. Some will volunteer for military service or even get married for the same reason.

More likely you are going to appreciate home and your parents and other blessings more than you ever did before - after you have been away for a while. If when you were 16 or 17 your parents seemed to be so ignorant, by the time you are 19 or 20, you are going to be amazed at how much they have learned in just two or three years. We take so much for granted, and we fail to show gratitude while we are young and at home. "You never miss the water till the well runs dry."

If you leave home for a job, you will have to pay all your own way - the bills will be yours. If you leave home for marriage, you will be entirely on your own, and you will soon come to understand all your parents did for you. Of course, you will be sharing your life with another, and you may soon have children to care for. If you leave home for military service, you will not be your own boss at all; you will rather be under rigid discipline (but not a rigid moral standard) unlike anything you have ever known. Parents, home, school and other things will be seen in a new light and appreciated more than ever. If you leave

home for college, you will not be under compulsory education - it will be a sought education. It will be very costly to your parents, and you must not waste that cost or your time. You should come to appreciate the little world you left behind.

After you leave home temptations are going to be greatly increased. There will be temptations to run with the wrong crowd, to seek the wrong companions, to make friends of the wrong people. "Be not deceived: evil companions corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). There will be temptations to commit sins you have previously resisted. "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). There will be temptations to become unfaithful or negligent as a Christian. Many young people, the majority in fact, leave home and leave the Lord. The casualties are especially high in military service. "Nor forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Heb. 10:25). There will be error. "Take heed lest there shall be anyone that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

When you leave home, (1) you are going to show what kind of person you really are and want to be, (2) you are going to reflect the success or failure of your parents in rearing you, (3) live in such a way that your parents will be proud of you. (As a student, worker, soldier, husband or wife, above all things, be a faithful Christian), and (4) study your Bible, pray, live right before all others, and be an active, functioning member of a faithful and sound congregation.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore, remove sorrow from thy heart and put away evil from thy flesh; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity. Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come and the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 11:9-12:1).

- Bill Crews

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- > "Nobody else can do the work that God has assigned you!"
 - > "Many people want what they don't need and desperately need what they don't want!"
 - > "Your children reflect the training you give them - or the lack of it!"

> "One who never speaks of heaven is not likely to go there!"

> "It is a weak religion that is never strong except when its owner is sick!"

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Peace Without Honor!*" (Text: Matt. 5:9-12);
Sunday evening: "*A Harvest Mindset!*" (John 4:35-45).