

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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

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Lessons in Times of Disaster

What lessons should the faithful Christian learn from times of disaster?

1. Disaster can strike at anytime or place and can start in the smallest ways (the proverbial “finger in the dike”). We must remain alert and watchful at all times, physically and spiritually (Eph. 5:15-17). The Christian will appreciate the brevity of life much more than those who have hope only in this world (Jas. 4:13-15).
2. All that we possess may be gone in a moment. Earthly things are uncertain, and the faithful Christian will not put his trust in such things, but use them to the glory of God (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
3. Life is more precious than property. If a great disaster is predicted to come, the Christian will seek safety, and not foolishly risk his life for the sake of earthly things that can be replaced. The Hebrew Christians did not worry when their goods were plundered because they had better possessions waiting in heaven (Heb. 10:34). God teaches us to properly order our priorities so that we will not fall into the snares and dangers of life (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9).
4. Only our relationship with God is everlasting. We can be separated from earthly things and relationships, but nothing on this earth can separate us from the “love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:37-39). In life or in death, we are “more than conquerors through him who loved us.”
5. Our attitude must be one that will accept the trials of life as we faithfully lean on God to care for our souls. Paul overcame despair and depression by learning to be content (sufficient, adequate, trusting) in any given situation, good or bad (Phil. 4:11-13). Paul had plenty of disastrous moments in his life (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24-28), yet he learned how to suffer with integrity and faith. It is easy to be content in good times, but we must be

determined to learn how to suffer with patience in times of disaster, avoiding the temptation to sin with our mouth or commit acts unbecoming of a child of God.

Whatever may happen on this earth, eternal salvation is always available by grace through faith. Let us hear and obey the will of the Father so that we may face the trials of life and death with trust and hope in our God who has preserved an eternal inheritance for us in heaven. In that heavenly home, we will endure no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain (Rev. 21:4). I know this will be true, for no earthly disaster will ever touch it!

- Marc W. Gibson, via *Truth Magazine*, 11/03/2005 [edited]

God Is on the Throne Not on Stage!

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in Scripture as a friend to man (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), He is not some sort of "good buddy" to joke with or about.

Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6); His ways remain higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9), and His authoritative Word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Revelation 20:12).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven detracts one bit or whit from His inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our reverence; thus, we must serve Him "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Truly, reverence is the "very first element of religion."

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all about him" (Psalm 89:7). Worship performed "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving - they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist, but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or rock concert. Regardless of where, when, or by whom the worship is performed - it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message. We do not gather to pay homage

to men but to worship God. We do not come together as we would at football game or a band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the intent of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our assemblies and see a marked difference between the worship of God and the Jay Leno show.

In the realm of worship, zeal without knowledge (Romans 10:2) paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented, and riotous assemblies. Most of our denominational neighbors have long gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christ-like reverence for things holy. And may we teach our children so.

Remember, our God is on the throne - not on stage.

- Dalton Key

Departure In Doctrine

As we travel today we often see the warning sign, "Beware!" "Danger!" If we are wise, we take heed and move with caution. A red lantern serves as a warning of danger. The apostle John hung out the danger sign when he said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jn. 9). Had this danger sign been heeded as the years have passed since the church was established there would have been no apostasy either from, or of the church. Unfortunately, this warning has not been heeded. Hence the division that exists in the religious world today.

The course of the falling away which resulted in the apostate church was characterized by two phases, both of which stemmed from the same basic cause - unwillingness to "abide in the doctrine of Christ." The first phase had to do with the organization of the church, the second phase was in the realm of doctrine. In both cases the early members of the church were trying to improve upon God's plan. They were not satisfied with things written, and failed to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.

In the year 120, the practice of using holy water was introduced into the church. This water was said to be especially blessed by the priest. In the year 157 the doctrine of penance crept into the church. Doubtless this grew out of asceticism, which was not unknown or uncommon in some religious circles before the church was established.

Penance was the subjugation of the body to some self-imposed physical agony or pain, in order that one might expiate his own sins.

The next departure was the introduction of Latin Mass. According to their own definition, "mass" is "the sacrifice of the New Law in which Christ through the ministry of the priest, offers himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearance of the bread and wine" (Baltimore Catechism, p. 239). This was in 394. The doctrine of extreme unction and last rites appeared in 588. When a soul is subject to some impending crisis, or to immediate danger, either physical or spiritual, the priest pours oil on the head, and thus prepared the endangered person for the ordeal through which he must pass.

In the year 593 the unscriptural doctrine of purgatory reared its ugly head. This doctrine holds that those who died unprepared and without hope, may be freed from the agonies of torment in which they are writhing, by the payment to the priest of a sufficient sum of money. This became popular because it provided much revenue with which to build cathedrals.

As the years passed new departures came. Transubstantiation appeared in the year 1000. This doctrine claimed that through the power of prayer the fruit of the vine and the bread are mystically changed into the literal body and blood of Christ. By the year 1015 it was decided that priests ought not to marry, hence the doctrine of celibacy.

One of the most damnable of doctrines was introduced in 1190. This was known as the doctrine of indulgence. if you wanted to "paint the town red" you could purchase a license to commit most any sin. By paying a stipulated fee, your sins would be forgiven before they were committed. This was very popular because you could sin to your heart's content with a good conscience. Thus more fine cathedrals were built.

Auricular confession came into practice in 1215. This doctrine taught that when a Christian sinned he could confess his sin to the priest and his sin would be forgiven. The practice of sprinkling for baptism was adopted by the Council of Ravenna in 1311. It had been practiced in the event of serious illness since the year 251, but was not formally indorsed until the Council of Ravenna.

These departures in doctrine naturally corrupted the worship, consequently, the apostasy was now complete. By substituting the commandments and doctrines of men for the law of the Lord they corrupted the organization, the doctrine, and the worship of the church. The whole process required 1300 years. N.B. Hardeman said, "This ecclesiasticism is purely-of human origin. It is human in origin; it is human in doctrine; it is human in practice.

The best definition I could render of such a hierarchy would be to say that it is a mixture of Judaism, paganism and Christianity. "

- Loren N. Raines, via *Guardian of Truth*, 10/20/1983

- > "Meditation takes time - that's why many of us don't do it!"
 - > "Tears are necessary sometimes - they wash out the bad stuff!"
 - > "It's hard to be yourself when you don't really know who you are!"
 - > "There is more to sin than just making a mistake!"
 - > "Half our troubles come from wanting our own way - the other half comes by having it!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*A Word Is A Pledge!*" (Text: Matt. 5:33-37);
Sunday evening: "*The Voice of The Son of God!*" (John 5:25-30).