

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Church: The Body of Christ!

Jesus is the builder! Matthew records in his gospel Jesus' promise to build His church: "...upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." (Matt. 16:18). The "rock" upon which Jesus Christ would build His church was the "good confession" (1 Tim. 6:13) that Peter had just previously declared: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16). It is this strong conviction that stands as the underlying fundamental truth of Christianity, upon which the very people of God "are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22). That rock-solid conviction has maintained the church of Jesus Christ such that it has never disappeared from the face of the earth through apostasy, nor through the vicious onslaught of demons, Satan and death! "The gates of Hades will not overpower it."

Jesus paid for it and rules over it! The Apostle Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28). The blood of Jesus was the price for

purchasing these people. Who can place a value on the precious blood of the Son of God, which so effectively and powerfully obtained a people for God's own possession! It is the blood of Christ that provides redemption and forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). How could anyone conclude that it is unnecessary to be a part of the Lord's church in order to enjoy salvation from sins? The church *is the saved!* (Eph. 5:23-ff). Paul declared that Christ is "the Savior of the body," (Eph. 5:23) and the body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24). "Christ also is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23), and God "put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church," (Eph. 1:22). "The church is subject to Christ" (Eph. 5:24).

The church is the household, or family of God. Paul instructed Timothy, "so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15). Just as a person is born into his physical family, entrance into God's spiritual family requires a birth, the "born again" that Jesus described to Nicodemus. "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'" (John 3:5-6).

Are you in the body of Christ? Friend, Jesus died to make a way for men to be saved in the church He built. Do you believe what Peter confessed to the Lord, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Jesus said, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24). "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Heb. 11:6). The faith that saves is the faith that "comes from hearing ... the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Faith alone will not avail (Jas 2:14-26).

The “obedience of faith” brings salvation (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). The preaching of the Apostles by the authority of Christ demanded a turning away from sins in repentance: “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,” (Acts 17:30). One who believes the “good confession” and makes it (Rom. 10:9-10), having repented of his sins is ready for baptism. That is the final step of admission “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27), and thus, into the family of God. Those who are baptized “for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38) are added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47; cf. Acts 5:11; 8:1).

What about you? Friend, have you done what the Lord requires of you in order to be a part of the church that He built? Are you truly “in Christ,” God’s family? Are you being led by the word of Christ, the source of real faith? May we help you to be a part of the church that Jesus built?

- GFS

We Must Obey Truth

Truth is something that we cannot ignore and successfully escape. It is something we must search out — understand — obey — uphold. It is something that is worth losing all to find and yet, it is something that we have a tendency to let slip by as we busily engage in the time consuming work of "making a living."

Jesus told Pilate that he came to the world to bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37). He had earlier identified "truth" as being the word of the Father (John 17:17). There are things that are "truth" in many areas, but the truth of which I speak is that regarding man's spiritual being, well-being and destiny. One of the tests of true discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ is one's knowledge and continuing in truth (John 8:31-32). Yet some men say that truth is unattainable and that

there is no such thing as TRUTH. Could be we are trying to justify our refusal to search out truth and stand for it.

What is your attitude toward religious truth? How hard are you seeking to find it? How firmly do you stand in the defense of it? How earnestly do you oppose all that opposes truth? In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 Paul speaks of those who do not believe the truth and who do not love it. He points out that God will thus send them a strong delusion and that they will be damned because of this! They didn't love it — They didn't believe it!

In Romans 2:8 Paul points out that God will punish those who do not obey truth. This same thing is taught in Galatians 2:14 and 5:7. Thus the importance of knowing truth and obeying the same cannot be over emphasized. God would have all men to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1) and be saved. Souls are purified when men obey truth (1 Peter 1:22). We should clearly see the need to search out, understand, obey, and uphold God's word (TRUTH) in all things. Are you doing that?

- J. F. Dancer

“A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity...the same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever...each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny...How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness...! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked.”

- Adoniram Judson

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *“Implanting Kindness In Our Children!”* (text: Col. 3:12-15); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *Destination: Temple!* (Mark 11:15-19).