

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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ABRAHAM ACTED BY FAITH!

In Romans 4: 11-12, Abraham is described as “the father of all who believe” and “the father of ... those who ... also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham.” The quality of Abraham’s faith truly shines forth from the pages of the Scriptures. Our faith can be commended by God, if it ACTS as did Abraham’s.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place ... not knowing where he was going.” (Heb. 11:8). When God called Abraham to leave his country, his kindred, and his father’s house, He did not reveal what country would be his new dwelling place. Abraham did not seek another country simply because he saw that it was better; he did not know where he was going. He would leave his home and go where God lead him because he walked by faith. He was obeying God.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac,” (Heb 11:17). When Jehovah commanded Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there

as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Gen. 22: 2), Abraham promptly obeyed! Later God stayed his hand, but Abraham had clearly demonstrated his unfaltering faith in God. Abraham could have reasoned that if he obeyed God's command, there would be no way for Him to fulfill His promise which was to be fulfilled through Isaac. But a strong faith will not yield to that kind of thinking. Abraham reasoned that God is able to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19).

Faith is taking God at His word and obeying without question. Abraham possessed that kind of faith. We too must cultivate that kind of faith. It may mean following God when the destination is not shown to us. It may mean refusing to give way to our own frail reasoning. It certainly means obeying His will in all things. This is the faith that pleases God. Is this the faith that you possess?

- GFS

Things I Don't Have Because I'm a Christian

One tendency we have, I think, is to dwell on what we can't do because we're Christians. Young people think, "I can't have any fun if I'm a serious Christian." Older people make excuses to their friends, coworkers, family members – they regretfully say, "I wish I could, but my church doesn't allow that." Still others learn to be sneaky. They feel like their brethren are stealing all their fun and wouldn't understand, so they begin leading a double life – one in front of "church people" and another the rest of the time.

But the truth is that a devoted, taking-it-seriously Christian is the happiest person on the planet. I have yet to know someone like this that wasn't happy, content, at peace, and joyful about life. On the contrary, the bitter Christians I've known have been the ones who are still carrying some baggage of the world with them.

But I want to mention some things I don't have or can't do because I'm a Christian.

I don't have a long list of regrets.

Gal 5:24, And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Phil 3:12-14, Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Cor 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

I don't have a lot of lies to remember.

Eph 4:25, Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

A Christian has nothing to be ashamed of, no secrets to keep, nothing that would worry you if people found out about it. Contrast with those you know who sneak around and have to keep all the different facets of their life balanced separately and secretly from the others.

I don't have a blacklist.

Matt 7:12, Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Matt 6:12, And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Mark 11:25-26, And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Rom 12:19-21, Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

I don't have a fear of death or of judgment.

Heb 4:16, Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 Jn 4:18, There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

1 Cor 15:55-58, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my

beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Somehow, I don't think I miss any of these things I've lost by being a child of God.

- Brad Hopkins

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: Gregg Needham - *"Giving God Control"* (text: Eph. 3:1-3); Sunday evening: Tim Powell – *"Scars"*