

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

The word of God teaches, and we must recognize that we all are guilty of sin (Rom. 3:9, 23). God, who knows our every sin (Heb. 4:13), does not leave us stranded and helpless in the corrupting filth of our own iniquities. The same reliable word that informs us of our blemishes also makes known the way to remove them, to cleanse ourselves from all defilement, to wash away our sins, and to be accounted as righteous before God. To accomplish this we must possess an intense desire to conquer sin in our lives, and this is expected of us (Rom. 6:1-2). Regardless of the number of sins committed each day, you, as a

concerned Christian, are willing to put forth every effort to overcome sin in your life. Here are some divine helps:

THE WORD OF GOD. Jesus taught that the actions of life spring forth from the heart (Mark 7:20-23). A good treasure in the heart brings forth that which is good; an evil treasure in the heart brings forth that which is evil (Luke 6:43-45). If we implant the word of God in our hearts, righteous deeds will come forth. As long as God's seed (His word – Luke 8: 11; 1 Peter 1:23) abides in our hearts, we will not persist, continue, and live in sin (1 John 3:9). David declared that the preventative of sin is laying up the word of God in our hearts (Psalm 119:11). This was our Lord's method of successfully dealing with temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). Brother, do not put yourself in constant jeopardy of being overtaken in faults! HEAR THE WORD OF GOD, HOLD IT FAST IN THE HEART, AND BRING FORTH FRUIT (Luke 8:15)!

PRAYER. Remember that Jesus taught His disciples to pray: “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (Matt. 6:13). There is power in prayer! Foolish is the man that neglects such aid in his endeavor to gain spiritual victory. Paul instructed, “devote yourselves to prayer” (Col. 4:2a), and “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

Paul gives several lines of instruction that we “will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11b). This is accomplished when we “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:11a), and “with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18a). Remember, “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (Jas. 5:16b).

CARING BRETHERN. The spiritual battle that the Christian wages every day certainly results in quite a number of battle-weary saints. Sins which so easily beset us seem to plague our every effort to perfect our faith and please our God. Too many battle-fatigued brethren are going forth to meet the enemy with the white flag of surrender. Casualties can be avoided when we utilize our two

greatest weapons discussed above, but let us not forget that our brethren can render invaluable assistance. Our personal battles are much easier fought when we are confident that somebody cares for us and is willing to help. Certainly, our God cares (1 Peter 5:7). We also have brethren who care (1 Cor. 12:25). Too often in our struggles we forget this, and we feel alienated from other spiritual warriors and unaided by God's victorious power.

Soldier, have you forgotten that you have brethren who are compassionate, loving, tenderhearted, humble-minded (1 Peter 3:8) and kind (Eph. 4:32)? Have you forgotten that you have brethren to whom you can confess your sins without their broadcasting them all over town (Jas. 5:16), brethren who pray for you (Jas. 5:16), exhort you (Heb. 3:13; 10:25), consider you (Heb. 10:24), edify you (Rom. 14:19), build you up (1 Thess. 5:11), comfort you (1 Thess. 4:18), admonish you (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16), forgive you (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32), and by love serve you (Gal. 5:13)? God's plan works well when we work His plan! Why should a brother be afraid to ask another brother for spiritual aid? Is heaven not worth every effort?

Brethren, we must strive to overcome every sin! Sin crucified Christ. Sin keeps us from abiding in God's word. Sin keeps us from prayer. Sin causes us to lay aside the whole armor of God. Sin causes us to neglect the spiritual resources available from our brethren. Utilizing God's blessings coupled with a firm commitment and dedication to Him will produce what we desire: ABUNDANT LIFE NOW AND ETERNAL LIFE TO COME.

- GFS

IF YOU ARE MAD AT THE DOG, DON'T KICK THE CAT!

A preacher once asked a certain man why he had just ceased to attend the services. He replied, "*They haven't treated me right over there.*" The preacher asked, "*Then why don't you go home and beat your wife?*" The startled backslider gave the preacher a look which questioned his sanity. "*My wife hasn't done anything against me,*" he said.

"Well," replied the preacher, "*has the Lord Jesus done anything against you?*" Being peeved at the brethren and forsaking the Lord is about as logical as being angry with the dog and kicking the cat. If you don't believe Christ judges your feeling for Him by the way you treat the church, then try to explain Acts 9:4 and Matthew 25:40.

Acts 9:1-5 -- Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

Matt. 25:40 -- The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me."

WHEN PAUL WAS DEFEATED

Paul once got the defeat of his life! No, it wasn't at LYSTRA, where he was stoned and left for dead, for he planted a church there. It was not at PHILLIPPI, where he was beaten with rods and put in stocks, for he planted a church there too. Nor was it at THESSALONICA, where he was mobbed, for he built a church in that city. No, it was not at CORINTH, nor EPHESUS, where he was persecuted, for he successfully defended the cause of truth in those cities. Where was Paul defeated? At ATHENS! At ATHENS where no violence was shown, but where they were just INDIFFERENT to the cause of truth!

Indifference to the invitation of Christ! How subtle and how dangerous indifference is! Indifference can destroy a soul just as surely as adultery or murder! "How can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). Christian, if you value your soul, don't be INDIFFERENT to the church of the Lord!

–Bill J. Humble

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Render Unto Whom?*" (text: Luke 20:20-26); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *Before Pilate!* (Mark 15:1-15).