

# The Old Hickory

## Bulletin

### Old Hickory Church of Christ

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## JESUS' APPROACH IN CONVERSION

In the Apostle Peter's second Jerusalem sermon following the resurrection of Christ, he concluded by stating that God sent His Servant, Christ, "to bless you by turning every one *of you* from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:26). Peter had indicated previously how the blessing from "turning" would be realized: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, ..." (Acts 3:19; KJV). A "conversion" (turning to God from sin) was necessary before sins could be blotted out. Jesus emphasized God's requirement of conversion several times in His teaching ministry (Matt. 13:15; Mark 4:12; John 12:40; Matt. 18:3).

**Open & Honest!** On one occasion, a scribe came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." Jesus replied, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but

the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (Matt. 8:19-20). Jesus did not want this scribe to become a disciple while thinking that such a course would be a path to material gain. Was the Lord trying to discourage this seeker from becoming a disciple? Certainly not. Jesus invited “all who are weary and heavy-laden” to come to Him (Matt. 11:28-30). But Jesus was always open and honest in His efforts to gain disciples. He never mislead anyone by being dishonest, or withholding any truth details in His eagerness to acquire converts. There was risk in frightening some prospective disciples away, but He wanted them to be fully aware of the conditions they were signing up for in advance of their full commitment to discipleship.

**Terms of Discipleship:** Any worthwhile endeavor usually has some stipulations attached, and this is certainly the case with any who desire to be acceptable to God. They must comply with any terms of discipleship as set forth by Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matt. 10:37). He went on to say, “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matt. 10:38). Luke records the Lord’s statement about discipleship in this way: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.” (Luke 9:23).

**Extreme Demands:** The demands of discipleship are definitely radical, marked by a considerable departure from what one would normally think. A worthy disciple will renounce being led by selfish interests and motives in order to adhere to the will of the Lord Jesus. He will die to self (Gal. 2:20) and live only as his Lord directs (Luke 6:46). It is required that a disciple render full and complete submission to the words of His Master (Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21; 2 Thess.

1:8; Rom. 6:16; Jas. 2:10). Jesus wanted men to know, prior to committing, the challenging demands of loyalty to Christ. It requires renouncing self and resolutely accepting pain, shame and persecution for Christ's cause. A failure to embrace His radical demands will result in discipleship failure. Rejection of the characteristic difficulties of discipleship attached to the suffering Servant of God leads only to a life of continued spiritual compromise, and in the end, "I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*" (Matt. 7:23).

**Accept His Terms!** Many have risen to the challenge and accepted the Lord's terms of discipleship. Countless numbers have received God's word, come to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, renounced themselves, repented of sins, confessed their faith in Him and been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. [see Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:9-10, 14-17; 1 Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:27; Rev. 2:10] Many are living lives as disciples of the King of kings and Lord of Lords. Dear reader, you can be a disciple also. Will you? May we help you?

- GFS

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## "Be of Good Cheer"

People who are able to accept things as they are and are always able to see their blessings in the darkest hours are people of good cheer. If you think about it, what else can you do in the face of things that cannot be altered? If we count our great blessings from the "Father of lights," we will realize that they will always outweigh the tragedies and disappointments of life (James 1:17).

A positive, cheerful outlook on life is critical to being a true disciple. There is entirely too much defeatism in the world without Christians contributing to it. Children of the King are to be conquerors (Romans 8:37). Think positively – we can do it. Talk positively to your brethren – it can be done. Act positively – don't ever quit trying; never resign yourself to failure and it will be done.

Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice," (Philippians 4:4). But we are not able to rejoice, if we do not see the reasons for rejoicing. And, if we do not see those reasons, we do not have the right kind of fellowship with God. Because you are blessed so abundantly in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3), be of good cheer, my brethren, and when you see your brethren discouraged and troubled, lift up their hands and strengthen the weakened knees (Hebrews 12:12). Cheerfulness is contagious.

– Jim R. Everett

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## **A Prayer For Patience**

God, teach me to be patient,  
Teach me to go slow,  
Teach me how to wait on You  
When my way I do not know.

Teach me sweet forbearance  
When things do not go right  
So I remain unruffled  
When others grow uptight.

Teach me how to quiet  
My racing, rising heart  
So I might hear the answer  
You are trying to impart.

Teach me to let go, dear God,  
And pray undisturbed until  
My heart is filled with inner peace  
And I learn to know your will.

- Helen Steiner Rice

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**SUNDAY'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Every Good Gift!"* (text: Matt. 7:7-11); Sunday evening: Bi-monthly Singing.