

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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God's Power to Save

When Paul wrote the letter to the saints at Rome, he explained to them why he had not visited there yet. He had promised to come and still intended to do so (15:24), but had been prevented (1:13). Then he set forth the basic principle of salvation - ". . .the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . ." (1:16). He was ready to preach the gospel in Rome, for it was the means by which people could be saved from their sin.

Basically, the gospel means "good news" and has to do with the death, burial, resurrection and new life (1 Cor.15:1-8) of Jesus. There are some facts that those who are to be saved must believe. But, there is also something in the gospel that demands obedience. In Rom.10:16, Paul mentions some who had not obeyed the gospel. In 2 Thess.1:8,

condemnation is promised (at the coming of Jesus) to those who have not obeyed the gospel. So, the gospel has to do with some things to believe and some things to do because one believes.

We see this illustrated in Acts 2 where Peter and the other apostles are preaching in Jerusalem. Peter reminds those present that Jesus had been crucified and buried, and then affirms that he was raised from the dead. He tells those present they should "know assuredly" that when God raised Jesus from the dead he made him both Lord and Christ (verse 36).

Upon believing this, some of the people asked what they needed to do (verse 37). They now believed the facts but realized they were not right with God. What did they need to do? They were told to "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (verse 38). About 3,000 of those present gladly did what Peter told them to do (verse 41).

When Paul reminded the saints at Rome of what they had done in order to be forgiven, he told them they had been " . . .buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom.6:4). On down in the chapter, he reminds them that, when they obeyed this, they were " . . . then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom.6:18).

Truly, they had obeyed the gospel! They believed the facts that had been presented to them about Jesus and they obeyed the commands they were given. When Jesus told the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel, he told them that those who believed the things preached (the good news) and were baptized would be saved (Mk.16:15,16). In Acts 2, they are

doing what Jesus told them to do. Certainly, those who obeyed were blessed, as Jesus said they would be, because their sins were forgiven.

Have you heard the good news about Jesus? He died for you, he was buried and he arose from the dead. Have you believed and been baptized for the remission of your sins? The gospel is the power that God uses to save. If salvation is your desire, this is the way God will accomplish it.

-- J. F. Dancer

Via The Admonisher, March 2003, Jackson Drive church of Christ, Athens, AL

The Flip-Flop Generation

Flip flops are perhaps the most casual footwear known to man. According to an online article entitled "The History of Flip Flops," flip flop type footwear has been around for thousands of years, but has only become accepted in American culture since the 1950's (<http://www.pecheblu.com/history.php>). The article states the following:

"Flip flops became defining examples of an informal lifestyle and came to represent the California lifestyle in general and surf culture in particular. It seemed like all kids wore them to the beach or the pool and cheap rubber flip flops appeared in every dime store and beach shop. Over time, designs spread from rubber to wood to leather to bamboo and stylized platforms, yet all of them remaining true to the original base design of the early rubber flip flops. Flip flops were mostly summer shoes for most of the country until the 1990s, when fashion in

the workplace started changing and loosening, with experiments like casual Fridays and casual summer dress codes."

Nowadays, flip flops are everywhere. On July 19, 2005, some members of Northwestern University's national champion women's lacrosse team even wore "flip-flops" to the White House to meet with President George W. Bush.

Just as flip flop footwear epitomizes our generation's casual approach to attire, the term flip flop also captures our generation's approach to truth and morality. Don't get me wrong. I am not at all claiming that the moral demise of America can be attributed to its choice of footwear. While it could be argued that a casual approach to dress may be linked to a casual approach to morality, that is not my point. My point is that whether there is any direct connection or not, the generation that wears flip flops on its feet is also the generation that flip-flops in its soul.

God's truth is "forever . . . settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). But it is not settled in the minds of many of today's men and women. Like Reuben long ago, we are "unstable as water" (Genesis 49:4). We cannot seem to make up our minds for certain about any number of moral and spiritual issues. Think about these questions.

- Can a person be saved without being baptized for the remission of sins? (see Mark 16:16)
- Is drinking alcohol for pleasure wrong? (see Proverbs 23:29-35; 1 Peter 4:3)
- Is it wrong to promise to repay a loan and then fail to do so because it presents a hardship? (see Proverbs 15:4-5)
- Should Christians go to church regularly? (see Hebrews 10:25)

- Is it wrong for women (and men) to dress in immodest or provocative attire in public? (see 1 Timothy 2:9; Matthew 18:7)

The sad truth is that most people in the world, and far too many Christians, cannot seem to make up their minds about these issues (and many others) from one moment to the next. We are like "children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). Bible virtues such as conviction and steadfastness have no place in our modern lives. We have not heeded Peter's warning: "Beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Peter 3:17). We need to repent and pray like David did, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

-- Steve Klein

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Just A Joke!"* (text: Eph. 5:1-10);
Sunday evening: *"How To Change A City!"* (text: Jonah 3:1-10).