

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### ***Silent Before Him***

*"But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20).*

In some churches, this text is often quoted or sung at the beginning of the worship as if it meant that people must be "quiet in church." But being "quiet in church" just is not the point of this verse at all. In the context, Habakkuk contrasts the dumb wooden idols created by men with the true God who sits on His throne. His point is that God, the Creator, is in His holy temple, the place from which He speaks; His creatures must therefore shut up and listen to Him! Men do not have the authority to command, nor do the idols that they have created. God is the One - the only One - who speaks with authority; He is the

only One who has the right to command, and we (His creatures) must listen to and obey His voice.

You see, the point of this text is not related to our demeanor in church services. It has to do with God's authority - to which men must quietly submit. Man must not rebel against God, nor must he try to speak for God. What man must do is humbly listen to and obey the voice of God - and that's all.

When you see this as the real point of the verse, you will see that it relates a lesson that modern religious men need to hear.

This, and many other Scriptures, makes it clear that we cannot have God's approval unless we're willing to be quiet while He speaks. Jesus, for example, taught that we must submit to the authority of God in order to reach heaven; He said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Note that it is the Father's will that must be done, not my will or your will or the will of some dumb idol. And, according to the New Testament, we cannot know God's will without His revealing it to us, which He has done in the written Word (1 Cor. 2:11-13). The written Word, then, because it accurately relates God's will to us, becomes that which must be obeyed. And without obeying His will we cannot have His approval.

And so, when we start trying to figure out how to acceptably serve God, we must have His Word on it. When we start doing things that we do not have His permission to do, then we are not being silent before Him.

And right here is where most people in our religious world today get in trouble: They do not want to be silent before the Lord. They will not shut up long enough to hear what God wants, because they're too

busy inventing their own way of serving Him. Hundreds upon hundreds of examples could be given of how man has added to and subtracted from what God has said, and all of them prove that men are not listening to God. When will modern men learn that our additions to and subtractions from His Word are all our own creations, and are therefore no better than the idols carved by the ancient pagans? These inventions will not bring us closer to God; they will only serve to separate us further.

Indeed, God "is in His holy temple." And if we would be wise creatures, we had better be quiet and listen to Him. We are His creation; therefore "let all the earth be silent before Him

- by Rick Liggin

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## Addicted to Good Works

Do you know folks who seem to be addicted to good works? They join diligent hands with the woman who did a good work by anointing the head of Jesus with oil. (**Mark 14:3-8**) This woman and a host of others were highly praised for their good works.

Paul says the household of Stephanas was "devoted to the ministry of the saints." (**1 Cor. 16:15**) Dorcus was highly praised for making "tunics and garments for the widows." (**Acts 9:39**)

Brethren bore witness of Gaius' charity before the church testifying to John that Gaius does "faithfully whatever he does for the brethren and for strangers." (**3 John 3-6**)

Phoebe was spoken of as a "servant of the church," for doing whatever her righteous work allowed her as a woman to do. Paul called for the

brethren at Rome to “receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever she may need from you.” (**Rom. 16:1**)

These slaves of good works beckon us to a higher calling; to a notable gauge of faithfulness. Consider Timothy’s gauge, there is “no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.” (**Phil. 2:20**)

Who can forget Barnabas who “having land; sold it; and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet for the poor saints?” (**Acts 4:37**) Can you imagine being so addicted to good works and doing such a thing?

Would it be better if these folks could stop their addiction to good works? The loafers and critics would feel better; if no one works, they won’t be embarrassed by their own idleness. Instead of criticizing, it would be far better to join and assist them. Titus assisted Paul and became, as Paul put it, “my partner and fellow worker for you.” (**2 Cor. 8:23**)

Folks addicted to good works set the bar high! Next time you find someone diligently helping the saints; they likely would welcome your help; just ask. You too, can become a fellow worker in Christ.

The work is easy to find. Just look around you. Someone has a need you can fill. It might be as simple as giving a drink of cold water to a weary saint; driving Miss Doylene; lending an ear; or shoulder to a troubled saint. Just do it. I promise you will find it rewarding. Let’s all get addicted to good works!

- Wendell Ward

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## How to build stress:

- Put off everything until the last minute. In this way you can create a sense of frenzy and chronic stress no matter how much time you had in the first place.
  - Set unreasonable goals. No matter how much money you're earning, remember there are others doing better. Try to name three of them, preferably younger (and better looking) than you are. Think how others could do a better job than you.
  - Never let others know how you feel or what you want. You shouldn't have to tell them. They should be able to read your mind. If you assume this, you stand a good chance of feeling really deprived.
  - Never trust anyone. Struggle with problems alone. If you feel the urge to confide in someone who seems to care, remind yourself that people are basically no good and are out only for themselves.
  - Never take a vacation break. It's a luxury you can't afford, especially if you're working up to a really good state of exhaustion.
  - Never seek help. No matter how serious the problem, convince yourself that asking for help is a sign of weakness and that you can tough it out alone.
  - Do not pray.
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**A fine thing to remember,**

**A better thing to do:**

**Work with the construction gang,**

**And not the wrecking crew.**

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**SUNDAY'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Why Do Bolts Fail?"* (text: Psalm 12:1-4); Sunday evening: *"The God Who Gives A Second Chance!"* (text Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-3).