

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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What You Really Are

"Tell me what you are busy about, and I will tell you what you are"

The above quotation, when applied to our lives, rings true. How we spend our time and what we allow to occupy our attention tells others what we really are and that may be dramatically different from what we claim to be.

Professing to be Christians does not mean that we are living as the children of God should. Unless we conform our thoughts and actions to the word of God and the example set by His Son and be busy about the Father's business, others will know and the Father will know that even though we claim to be dedicated to the Lord, our affections lie elsewhere.

What are you "busy about?" Is it your job? Does it take all of your energy and most of your time? Is your main interest in life the amassing of "things?" Do you use all spare moments in some recreational pursuit? If any of these apply, you need to take stock and channel your "busyness" into that which is more profitable -- serving the Lord. If one is going to be Christ-like, he must have

the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). It is evident that Christ's attitude while on earth was to be busy about His Father's business (Luke 2:49). Such passages as John 4:34, 6:38 and 9:4 show that He continually focused on doing the will of God. In turn, He taught His disciples the most important thing in life for them was to do God's will and be concerned with His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).

The apostle Paul zealously applied himself to the will of God. He was always busy serving the Lord. He constantly pressed on so that he could attain his goal to live a life pleasing to God so that he would gain an incorruptible crown (Phil. 3:7-16). On the other hand, Demas, a fellow-worker with Paul, busied himself with other things -- the things of this world (2 Tim. 4:10). His love for this "present world" ultimately caused him to abandon both Paul and the Lord.

When Jesus was in the house of Mary and Martha, two sisters who lived in Bethany, both of them were busy. In the eyes of the world and even in the eyes of her sister, though, one seemed to be idle (Luke 10:38-42). Martha was "distracted with much serving" (Luke 10:40). She busied herself seeing that the needs of her guests were satisfied. She became so anxious about it that it consumed her. Her sister Mary sat at the Lord's feet not wishing to miss a single word He was saying. She busied herself listening to Him knowing that it was the most important thing she could be doing. When Martha complained to Jesus about her, He told her not to worry about so many things that, in reality, were not necessary. Rather, she should devote herself and her time, as Mary had, to "the one thing that is needed" -- hearing and obeying the word of God. Again, with what are you busy? Is it your job, a hobby, material possessions or worldly pleasures? If so, what does that say as to what you really are? What do others think is your first love? What is the Lord's view of you?

A question that has been used before, possibly overused, but nevertheless is relevant to our line of thought is, "If you were tried for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict

you?" If you were "busy about" that which you should be busying yourself with, it would be evident to all what you really are. All would know you are a Christian, see the glory of God in you and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16). More importantly, the Lord would know. If you claim to be a Christian, get busy doing the will of the Lord.

- Gene Taylor

Mary, The Mother Of Jesus

What attitude should Christians have towards Mary, the mother of Jesus? Should we worship and praise her? Should we pray to Mary as the "Co-Redeemer" of humanity?

One [Roman Catholic](#) "Saint" claimed that, "At the command of Mary all obey, even God. She is omnipotent, for the queen, according to all laws, enjoys the same privileges as the king; and since the son's power also belongs to the mother, this Mother is made omnipotent by an omnipotent Son." (Alphonsus Ligouri, *The Glories Of Mary*, [New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co.], p. 114).

Several years ago **Time** magazine carried an article about Mary and the viewpoint many have towards her. "Among all the women who have ever lived, the mother of Jesus Christ is the most celebrated, the most venerated, the most portrayed, the most honored in the naming of girl babies and churches. Even the Koran praises her chastity and faith. Among Roman Catholics, the Madonna is recognized not only as the Mother of God but also, according to modern Popes, as the Queen of the Universe, Queen of Heaven, Seat of Wisdom and even the Spouse of the Holy Spirit." (Richard N. Ostling, "Hand-maid or Feminist?," *Time*, Dec. 30, 1991, p. 62).

There is no question Mary was honored by being selected to bring the Son of God into this world. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you

among women" ([Luke 1:28](#)). In view of the confusion about Mary, I believe it would be good for us to explore a few of the myths Roman Catholics have perpetuated about Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Immaculate Conception

Many people confuse the phrase "immaculate conception" with "virgin birth." These words do not refer to the same thing. Karl Keating, a noted Catholic apologist, explains it like this: "The Immaculate Conception means that Mary, whose conception was brought about the normal way, was conceived in the womb of her mother without the stain of original sin. The essence of original sin consists in the lack of sanctifying grace. Mary was preserved from this defect; from the first instant of her existence she was in the state of sanctifying grace." (Karl Keating, *Catholicism And Fundamentalism*, [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988], p. 270).

In a booklet distributed by **The Knights of Columbus** there is a section on the fall of man. The book speaks of inherited sin and attempts to explain how the "defects" of Adam were "passed on to his children as a man may pass certain qualities by heredity. First of these defects was, of course, the original sin. Adam's children (and we are all Adam's children) were born without grace. And all inherited other evils as well" (Imprimatur of John F. Whealon, *The Apostles' Creed*, p. 10).

The Bible never speaks of "inherited sin." Instead, it teaches "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." ([Ezek. 18:20](#)).

Mary did not inherit any sin from her parents-no one ever inherits the sins of others. Mary did commit sin. We know this because she, like the rest of humanity, needs a Savior. She said, "my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" ([Luke 1:47](#)). You cannot save that which is not lost!

Perpetual Virginity

Roman Catholics also insist that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life, even after her marriage to Joseph. "Accusation has been made by many rationalists and others attacking the perpetual virginity of Mary because of reference in the gospel to the 'brethren' of our Lord. This reference denotes solely a group of cousins. It is clear from the gospel that Mary kept her resolve and had no other children after the virginal birth of Christ." (Robert Broderick, ed., *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986], p. 601).

Keating asserts that, "A careful look at the New Testament shows Mary kept her vow and never had any children other than Jesus" (Keating, p. 284). This statement makes me wonder if Keating has ever read the Catholic Bible, for it says Mary did have other children! "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't Mary known to be his mother and James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers? Aren't his sisters our neighbors?" ([Matthew 13:55](#), *New American Bible* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983]).

Keating also says, "It is traditional, at the conclusion of the (wedding) ceremony, for the bride to take a bouquet to a side altar and lay it at the feet of a statue of the Virgin, at the same time praying that she might emulate Mary as a wife and a mother" (Keating, p. 259). Not many men would want their spouse to "emulate Mary as a wife," if the Catholic claim of her perpetual virginity is true. It is interesting to note that if an engaged couple told a Catholic priest that they wanted to get married but intended to remain celibate the priest would not allow them to get married!

The apostle Paul tells us, "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" ([1 Cor. 7:2-5](#)).

"If Mary was married to Joseph and Joseph to Mary in appearance only, then they were recreant to each other and to the ordinance of God which made them one. How a Roman Catholic, to whom [marriage is a sacrament](#), can entertain such a notion is an unfathomable mystery. The fact that Mary was miraculously the mother of the Messiah has nothing to do with the question of her privilege and obligation in the holiest of human relationships. Back of this unwholesome dogma are two utterly false ideas: that the marriage relationship is incompatible with holy living, and that Mary is not to be considered a human being under ordinary obligations of human life" (James Orr, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], Vol. III, p. 2003).

Our Mediator

Many people mistakenly believe the Roman Catholic Church teaches Mary is on par with Jesus in the role of mediating between God and man. Some of this confusion comes when non-Catholics hear The Hail Mary prayer: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus, Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

The *Catholic Catechism* says, "Mary, ever associated with her Son, prays for us with Him. She is not alone in this. The whole community of the blessed in heaven imitate Christ in continuing their concern for us. As we pray for one another upon earth and for the souls in purgatory, so our brothers and sisters in heaven intercede for us. We are united with all of them by the intimate bonds of Christian love. But Mary, our spiritual mother, has an altogether exceptional role in this. Among those redeemed by her Son, her intercessory power is by far the most extensive and effective." (Ronald Lawler, ed., *The Teaching Of Christ*, [Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1983], pp. 228-229).

The Bible teaches there is "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)). This passage not only rules out Mary as a mediator, but also all of the other Catholic "saints." You will also note

the Bible never calls Mary our "spiritual mother" nor mentions a place known as purgatory.

Assumed Into Heaven

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that after Mary ended her earthly life, she was taken up into heaven in body as well as in soul. This doctrine was "defined" in Catholic theology by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

You might wonder where the Bible teaches such a doctrine as this. Knowing that no verse in the Bible even hints at this doctrine, Keating, in his chapter on Marian Beliefs, says, "fundamentalists ask, where is the proof from Scripture? Strictly, there is none The mere fact that the Church teaches the doctrine of the Assumption as something definitely true is a guarantee that it is true" (Keating, p. 275).

Keating is willing to reject the Bible and accept the word of the same people who brought us the Crusades and the Inquisition.

While Jesus was teaching in Galilee, "a woman from the crowd called out, 'Blest is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!' 'Rather' He replied, 'blest are they who hear the word of God and keep it" ([Luke 11:27](#), NAB). This woman had the same idea that Catholics have today. The reply of Jesus cuts at the heart of Mariolatry. While not denying that Mary was blessed in being His mother, our Lord insists that more blessed are those who "hear the word of God and keep it." ([Luke 11:28](#)).

- David Padfield

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- "If the wind will not serve, take to the oars."
 - "The father who does not teach his son his duties is equally guilty with the son who neglects them."

➤ "One who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake."

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Why God Chose Mary!*" (text: Luke 1:26-38); Sunday evening: "*Joshua: Victory in Canaan!*"

SCHEDULE: Our Fall Gospel Meeting will be July 29-Aug. 3, with Aaron Andrews.