

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## What denomination are you?

“If {anyone suffers} as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” I Peter 4:16

We are simply Christians, no more, no less. That’s what Jesus wants us to be. Wouldn’t you agree? Have you noticed that churches seem to have a hard time deciding to be content to be just churches? Christians need to be content to be Christians and churches need to be content to be churches. What does the Bible actually teach us?

Most are unaware that the modern series of divisions that we call denominationalism is actually addressed (in principle) by the Bible. “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.” I Corinthians 1:10

Look up the word “denomination” in any good dictionary or encyclopedia! The Wikipedia encyclopedia entry begins with... “Christianity is composed of four major divisions of Churches: Roman

Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Protestant. Denomination typically refers to one of the many Christian churches.”

Now compare “denomination” to the word “division” of the bible verse above I Cor.1:10. It comes from the word schisma in the Greek. Do you recognize it? We get our word schism from it. It means a tear or a division. It shows up two more times in the Corinthian letter.

I Corinthians 11:18 “For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.”

I Corinthians 12:25 ” that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.”

Not once, but three times, Paul admonishes that fracturing church to allow no schisms or denominations to develop. But that was “just Paul’s opinion” right? Actually no! Many are familiar with Jesus’ brokenhearted prayer of Gethsemane. Not my will, but Thy will be done! Almost none are familiar with the prayer that preceded it. Are you aware that Jesus prayed first for the apostles, then for us, BEFORE He prayed for Himself! Do you know what He prayed?

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, {are} in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me." John 17:20-21

We should owe our allegiance to no manmade creed, no manmade denomination. Our loyalty must be to no one other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ. Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" I Corinthians 1:12-13

Many through history have recognized this very principle. None other than Martin Luther said, "I pray you leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not let any call themselves after Paul, nor of Peter, but only of Christ. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with all; and let us call ourselves Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes." (The Life of Luther, by Stork p.289)

Isn't it interesting that in the 1500's Martin Luther actually quoted the same passage, and used it in the same way as we have been? Then he begged his followers to call themselves Christians rather than Lutherans. They waited till he died, then did as they pleased... calling themselves Lutherans against Luther's will!

We are neither Catholic nor protestant nor Jew. We aren't protestant or protesting anything... We simply choose to be Christians.

"God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, So that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:10-11

Do you believe that the name of Jesus is to be exalted above every other name? God does!

Will you bow before the name of Jesus?

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."  
Acts 4:12

Want to be “just” a Christian?

We cannot claim to believe in Jesus, if we do not also follow what He said.

- Jerry Blount

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## **If We Confess Our Sin We Don't Get to Explain Why We Sinned**

When we confess our sin and seek forgiveness, we don't get to say why we did what we did, because that would amount to an excuse or a "reason" for our sin, a defense of our behavior. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) who threw away his inheritance in immorality didn't come back home explaining why he did it. He could have said it was due to being young and foolish. He could have said it was because of peer pressure. He could have said it happened in a momentary lapse of good judgment. But he didn't. He didn't defend his actions or try to explain why he did what he did. He came home and told his dad, “I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.” Humility forbids anything else. The nature of true repentance is not found in self-defense.

- Robert Hines

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# “TOO MANY IF’S”

Several years ago, a denominational preacher invited people to come and listen to his teaching on some privately owned property near Summertown, Tennessee. I attended at the invitation of a friend. Several statements were made that contradicted what is taught in the Bible, one of which was that when an individual becomes a Christian, it is impossible for him to so sin as to fall from God’s grace and be eternally condemned. After the period of teaching I approached the man in order to give reasons why I disagreed with his teaching. The point I made was that if a Christian chose to sin, and if he chose not to do what the Lord requires of him in order to be forgiven of the sin, he would be lost as a result. His reply was, “There are too many IF’s in your religion!”

If there are too many “IF’s” in my religion, there are too many “IF’s” in the Bible – that is where I get my religion! The fact is recognized that there are far too many “IF’s” in the Bible for many of the human doctrines and false teachings that saturate most of the religious groups of today. Most have left the truth of the Bible and are content where they are. That is why men disagree with and oppose the “IF’s” of the Bible.

The word “IF” means “in the event that,” “allowing that,” “on condition that.” In John 14:15 Jesus said, “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.” In the event that one loves Christ (with that condition met) he will keep the commandments of Christ. Please note in the following passages that ONLY when these conditions are met, the result is forgiveness now and heaven after death:

IF ye forgive men their trespasses (Matt. 1:14)

IF ye abide in my word (John 8:31)

IF a man keep my word (John 8:51)

IF any man serve me (John 12:26)

IF ye have love one to another (John 13:35)

IF ye love me (John 14:15)  
IF ye abide in me, and my words abide in you (John 15:7)  
IF ye keep my commandments (John 15:10)  
IF ye do the things which I command you (John 15:14)  
IF we have become united with him in the likeness of his death (Rom. 6:5)  
IF by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13)  
IF ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you (I Cor. 15:2)  
IF any man is in Christ (II Cor. 5:17)  
IF we faint not (Gal. 6:9)  
IF so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:23)  
IF ye be zealous of that which is good (I Pet. 3:13)  
IF these things are yours and abound (faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love) (II Pet. 1:5-8)  
IF we walk in the light (I John 1:7)  
IF we confess our sins (I John 1:9)  
IF we keep his commandments (I John 2:3)  
IF our heart condemn us not (I John 3:21)

All of these passages show conditions that **MUST** be met before blessings can be received. If the conditions are not met, there will be no blessings. If a Christian chooses to give up his efforts to please God, condemnation will result. If you are not a Christian you can become one IF you obey the gospel of Christ. If you are a Christian you will receive heaven IF you remain faithful to Christ.

- GFS

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*The Clash of Values!*" (text: Luke 10:38-42); Sunday evening: "*The Neglected Garden!*" (text: Prov. 24:30-34).

**SCHEDULE:** Our Fall Gospel Meeting will be July 28 – Aug. 2, Sun. regular times, M-F at 7:00 p.m., with Tanner Campbell, of Piggott, AR.