

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## A Forgotten Word: Duty

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

We need to think about the word "duty." A more important word (for Christians) can scarcely be thought of, yet rarely does one hear it spoken. Do you ever ask yourself "What is my duty here?" Is anybody doing his or her duty anymore, or is this just an outmoded, forgotten word?

The Oxford American Dictionary tells us that duty is, "a moral or legal obligation, a task that must be done, action required from a particular person" (p. 200). Can I shorten that down some? Duty is "doing despite." Doing what you are supposed to do (that "moral or legal obligation") despite hardship, despite fear, despite opposition, despite anything or anyone. Duty is doing despite it all.

Duty is the recognition that the obligation is more important than anything else and so the obligation must be fulfilled.

Noah serves as a fine example of this idea. He was tasked to build an ark. He did this duty, despite opposition and despite a lack of perfect understanding on his part. He performed this duty despite its inconvenience. Over and over the text emphasizes that Noah obeyed God exactly (see Gen. 6:22; 7:5). He did his duty.

What does any of this have to do with our walk with God? Simply put, God has given His people certain "moral obligations" and "tasks that must be done." Those tasks must now be accomplished despite the times and environment we live in. We must do our duty.

Christians are obliged to be morally pure, to read their Bibles, to worship, to teach others the Gospel and more. Do you take those obligations seriously? Do you stop to consider "What does God want me to do? What is my duty to Him?"

Duty is oft forgotten in our "me-first" society. Rarely do we see people who bravely struggle on doing their "moral and legal obligations" despite so many other factors. Dare we allow such to be said of our spiritual lives? Remember, Solomon came to understand that serving God was the "whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Are you doing your duty to God? Are you doing what God commands you despite every reason not to? Let's remember our duty!

- Mark Roberts

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## *Do You Feel Saved?*

Are you saved? How do you know you are saved? "I know I am saved because I feel it in my heart," many often say. But are the feelings of your heart the proper standard to determine your salvation? We do not use this standard in other matters. No one says of his bank statement, "I know it is right because I feel it in my heart," while they ignore to properly add and subtract from their balance. No carpenter says, "I know the board is 10 feet long because I feel it in my heart" — he checks the board with the proper standard, the measuring tape! But, when it comes to a matter far more important than bank balances and board lengths — salvation — many are willing to trust their eternal welfare to their feelings.

Can you trust the feelings of your heart to tell you whether or not you are saved? The Bible says "No!" "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28:26), for "the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23). "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14:12). Feelings are subjective; they change from person to person and even within the same person. Truth is objective; it remains fixed and does not change, regardless of the person or the year.

The way you feel about salvation does not change God's truth concerning it, just as the way you feel about math, does not change the truth of it. Whether or not you are saved is an objective fact, not subject

to the whims of how you feel from moment to moment. So how can they know they are saved? The Scripture says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

You do not have to rely upon your own faulty and deceptive feelings concerning your salvation. The Lord has given "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). The knowledge and confidence of salvation can only come from the objective standard of God's Word. God will judge you by His Word, not by how you feel. Jesus proclaimed, "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). What is your salvation based upon? Many people feel in their heart they are saved because they have "simply believed" in Jesus. While salvation certainly requires faith in Jesus, faith alone does not and cannot save according to God's Word. James wrote, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). Other people have prayed and "asked Jesus to come into their heart" and now they feel they are saved. But nowhere does the Bible teach one must simply pray to Jesus in order to be saved. God's Word teaches to be saved you must: hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17); believe Jesus is the Son of God (Mk. 16:16); repent of your sins (Acts 2:38); confess Jesus (Rom. 10:9; Acts 8:36-38) and be baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16). Those who obey God's Word do not have to guess whether or not they are saved based upon the feelings of their heart. They know they are saved because their salvation is based on the unchanging Truth of God's Word.

- Wayne Greeson

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# THIS SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE

Debra Gabel was 13 years old and in the 8th grade at Barre, Vermont, public school.

She had chores to do after school each day which included feeding the riding horses of the family.

She also regularly attended Bible classes Sunday morning and Wednesday night.

Recently, she was unable to complete her assigned homework on a Wednesday night and found it necessary to work during lunch hour the following day to try to catch up. The teacher asked why she didn't do the work the night before and Debra said she had to go to church. The teacher then inquired if she didn't think her homework was important, and she replied, *"yes, but I think church is important too, don't you?"*

*"Well, yes, I guess so,"* he said, *"but you know you could flunk your school work if you don't get your homework."*

As quick as a flash Debra answered, *"I may flunk in school, but I think I will go to heaven, and I think that is more important, don't you?"*

Well, do you ???

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# HE MADE NO MISTAKES

He made no mistakes, took no wrong road,  
No, never fumbled the ball.  
He never went down 'neath the weight of a load,  
He simply did...NOTHING AT ALL!!!

He lost no hard fight in defense of the right;  
Never bled with his back to the wall.  
He never felt faint in his climb to the light,  
He simply did...NOTHING AT ALL!!!

So death came nigh for life slips by,  
And he feared the judgment hall.  
When they asked him why, he said with a sigh,  
"I simply did...NOTHING AT ALL."

God will pardon your mistakes, my friend,  
And regard with pity your fall;  
But the one big sin that He will not mend  
Is simply to do...NOTHING AT ALL.

- unknown

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"How's Your Hearing?"* (text: Matt. 13:3-9; 18-23); Sunday evening: *"AMOS: The Gospel of the Lion's Roar!"*