

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

September 29, 2013

Volume 33, # 40

Popularity without Principle

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26, KJ) "You are in trouble when everyone says good things about you. That is what your own people said about those prophets who told lies." (Luke 6:26, NIV)

People do not characteristically want unpleasant truths. They prefer comforting lies. The false prophet understands this, and like his political counterpart he seeks out that message he believes most people will approve. Politicians do it by polls. They actually pay people to take samples of what positions and platitudes people most want to hear, and then they go out and say those very things. It is shallow in substance but profound in effect. Preachers do the same thing, except that they do not need polls. Truth unsettles us. We may be comfortable and satisfied, and then truth rebukes us and "unsettles" us. A man of conscience will repent and change his life. But sin-loving, self-willed men will oppose that truth. However, they want to appear to love truth, so they seek out preachers who will preach what they like. As Paul said: "...after their

own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." (2 Tim. 4:3b)

It is a "self-feeding" process. There are plenty of preachers and politicians who want to say what people want to hear, and there are plenty of people who will reward the preachers and politicians who do it. So the reality of it is that they are actually looking for each other! It is therefore no compliment to a preacher or politician to be particularly popular, and certainly such should never be the goal. Consider Jeremiah's comment about his generation: "The prophets prophesy falsely and my people love to have it so ..." (Jeremiah 5:31)

The empowerment and credibility of the false prophet (and politician) is in the fact of his popularity. "Look at his following!" they say. "That many people cannot be wrong!" "He must surely be doing something, or a lot of things, right!" So it goes! It is once again a "self-feeding" situation where preacher, politician and people make each other feel good, all kinds of sin, corruption and abuses notwithstanding.

But do not altogether blame the preacher or the politician. It could not happen if the people did not "love to have it so." Or if it was not for the fact, as Jesus said, that "men love darkness rather than light." (John 3:19)

Whatever else is true, popularity is more of a sign of desertion of duty than a rendering of right. Remember, Jesus said, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you."

- Jere Frost

Homosexuality

There was a lot of publicity a few years ago about studies indicating a "genetic predisposition" to homosexuality, but there has never been anything near proof that homosexuality cannot be helped and is genetic. If someone contends that it is genetically driven, the burden of proof is on the one making that contention. It cannot be proven.

Some other thoughts:

1. Homosexuality is "conduct". We do not deny that someone may have homosexual thoughts or temptations. But what makes someone homosexual is committing homosexual acts. Most people confuse a "tendency" or a "temptation" with the act. I may be tempted to rob a bank, but that does not make me a bank robber. I am a bank robber only when I rob the bank. I would not dispute that someone may have "homosexual tendencies." That does not mean that they have no choice but to commit homosexual acts. People choose the kind of behavior they engage in. Someone with the temptation to commit homosexual acts must discipline themselves and work to overcome their temptation just as someone tempted to commit heterosexual fornication or someone tempted to steal.

2. The fact that a condition has a genetic background does not make it good. The very same genetic studies that have been used to justify homosexuality also produced information about a number of genetic defects such as Down's syndrome. If there

were a way to prevent or correct that genetic defect, we would do it. Should we be looking for a way to prevent or correct the "genetic defect" which supposedly causes homosexuality?

3. We know that there are "genetic predispositions" to certain behaviors. For example, there is evidence of a genetic predisposition to alcoholism. If someone knows they have such a genetic predisposition, they would be wise to avoid the behavior (drinking alcoholic beverages) that can cause them a serious problem. Furthermore, they have that choice! That person is not forced to drink, or to become a drunkard. He may have "predisposition" to alcoholism, but whether he ever takes a drink is a matter of choice and behavior.

4. If the person with whom you are discussing has regard for the Bible, I would point out that passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 teach that homosexuals (as well as drunkards, thieves, adulterers and idolaters) learned to cease that behavior. If they could learn to cease it, it must have been something they originally learned to do. Nevertheless, whether it was learned or inherited behavior, they still could stop the behavior, and had to do so to be right with God.

- Tom Moody

No Unfulfilled Land Promises

A basic tenet of premillennial theory is that certain land promises that God made to Abraham have not been fulfilled. Since God made these promises, and He cannot lie, then there must be some future time when Abraham's descendants - as a physical nation - will receive all of the land that was originally intended. What does the Bible say?

"The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18). A study of the conquest of the promised land in Joshua's day causes some to say that not all of this land was occupied by the Israelites.

Yet in Joshua 21:43-45 we read: *"So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it ... Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass."* Joshua repeated the same thing in his final address to the people: *"Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you, and not one word of them has failed"* (Joshua 23:14).

Note two things:

- 1 - Joshua, who was most qualified to speak on this matter, felt that God's promises had been kept.
- 2 - We should observe that the Israelites themselves failed to fully conquer all the native people (see Judges 1 & 2). This brought a

curse upon them (2:3) and may have contributed to the notion that the land was not completely occupied.

NO! There are no unfulfilled land promises.

- Greg Gwin

- > Raising children is more than helping them grow, it's also helping them get ready to go.
 - > Sin hath many tools - and a lie is the handle that fits them all.
 - > "The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat oneself. All sin is easy after that." - James Bailey
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"How Jesus Dealt With Rejection!"* (text: Luke 4:16-32); Sunday evening: *"JONAH: The Reluctant Missionary!"*