

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Sinners – Take Notice

Someone observed: "Every sinner must either be punished or pardoned." This is a true statement. It is also a sobering statement. Since all of us are sinners who "come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), we should take notice of the fact that there are only two alternatives awaiting us: pardon or punishment! It is up to each one of us to make the right decision.

Never plant a seed you are unwilling to reap. Do you not realize that as you plant, you will reap? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). How can we deceive ourselves in thinking that we are exempt from the truth thus stated? Are we exempt? Will we not have to stand before God in judgment? What verdict will be read then?

Sin brings shame to our lives, but confession of wrongs brings renewal of confidence and trust in our blessed hope. To those who have this assuring hope, the Savior will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you..." (Matt. 25:34). These have been pardoned. To the rest, He will

say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels..." (25:41). Truly, there shall be punishment or pardon. Which will it be?

- Louis J. Sharp

3 "R's" for the Young

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. (Eccl. 11:9)

If you follow the lusts of your heart to do any and every thing you desire, you better know that you will be judged for it! There are some who dare to tell the young to go ahead and sow their wild oats. But if you follow that advice, it will be to your destruction, because you will reap what you sow (Gal. 6:7, 8). So just remember young person, don't let your sinful pleasure condemn you at the judgment day! Is there one pleasure worth it?

Remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity. (Eccl. 11:10)

The world says to rejoice by doing whatever feels best. God shows the way to truly rejoice is to "remove sorrow from thy heart". This is how to truly rejoice and is contrasted with the empty and worthless carousing of a rebellious youngster. And the best way to remove sorrow from your heart is to remove the evil from your body. If you follow whatever your heart desires, it will bring you pain, sorrow and grief. Youth is fleeting, so use it wisely.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. (Eccl. 12:1)

Young person, you can be so useful for the Lord. Don't live your life for sinful pleasures, but live your life for God. If you have your pleasure now, you won't have pleasure remembering how much valuable time, enthusiasm, and energy was wasted to futility. As much as you might not like to think about it, the "evil days" of old age and loss of bodily functions will come. So remember God now, while there is time!

- Andrew Mitchell

The Sin of Murmuring

The word "murmur" is defined as "low, muttered complaints; grumbling." (Webster). It is condemned by God as being sinful. We are commended to "do all things without murmuring and disputings." (Philippians 2:16). The apostle Paul warned Christians against this sin in his letter to the Corinthians: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer" (1 Corinthians 10:10). The sinfulness of murmuring is vividly illustrated by God's severity of punishment toward the guilty Jews, as shown in the following account.

Korah, Dathan, Ahiram, fifty princes of the congregation and others rebelled and murmured against God's servants Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:1-11). "The earth opened her mouth, and

swallowed them up, they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation" (verses 32-33). "And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense" (verse 35). When the Jews murmured that Moses and Aaron were responsible for the deaths. God killed fourteen thousand, seven hundred of them by a plague (verses 41-49). This is written for our admonition and should cause all murmurers in the church to repent and reform, lest they suffer a "sorer punishment" (Hebrews 10:28-29).

A murmurer can do great harm and irreparable damage in a congregation by creating discontent, discouragement and apathy among members, by sowing discord among the brethren (which God hates - Proverbs 6:19), by undermining the work of preacher, teachers, deacons, and the rule of elders. This many times creates a general attitude of dissatisfaction and loss of interest, enthusiasm and zeal, resulting in decreased attendance, contribution and impairment of all work in general. The murmurer may then be the first to criticize the lack of growth, and may use the preacher or someone else as the scapegoat to bear the blame, not realizing or ignoring the fact that his own sin is responsible.

The murmurer does not truly love God and is not really interested in the welfare and growth of the church, but in his own selfish desires and opinions. He is either woefully ignorant of or willfully disregards God's word regarding his sin, and is a dangerous threat to the cause of Christ. He can and does destroy or greatly lessen the influence and work of those who happen to be the object of his disgruntled attack. It is difficult to deal with such a situation because often times the murmurer does not have the courage or character to honorably discuss his complaints with the proper ones, but whispers them in secret to others. Christians should not lend receptive ears nor endorsement to murmuring,

but exhort the guilty one to cease his sin. Remember, if one will murmur to you, he may murmur about you, because many times he is a pharisaical faultfinder, a chronic complainer with a hypercritical attitude who is usually never satisfied very long with any arrangement.

We earnestly exhort all murmurers everywhere in the name of Christ to repent of this sin, to cease and desist in tearing down the work of God, and to get busy in the kingdom to build it up. Those who truly love God and his church have no desire to be hypercritical faultfinders, wandering about murmuring to all who will listen. If anyone should persist in this sin after proper warnings and efforts to restore, then scriptural discipline should be brought about to protect the flock of God and its work. The work of our Lord is too important to allow murmurer to run and ruin the church.

- Earl Fly

Speaking As The Oracles Of God

"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11)

Speaking as the oracles of God is an important task, and it should be done by more people publicly and from house to house. It ought to be done by father to son. It ought to be done in private conversation with friends.

We should never tire in this worthy work. It is our opportunity to be useful in this world. The world can do without the work you are doing at the factory. Someone would like to have your job. Yet, there is another job more important than the one you are doing there.

The gospel message is to be proclaimed as God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). This should be done by factory workers, professional men, merchants, farmers, and all others.

Paul asked that Timothy teach faithful men the things he had learned from Paul (2 Tim. 2:2). They, in turn, could teach others. This chain is not to be broken. I wish I knew how to make each person feel his great obligation to help others come to know more of the right way of the Lord.

We need to be workmen who have no need to be ashamed of the way we handle the word of the Lord (2 Tim. 2:15). We need not wait for a B.A. degree from a modernistic seminary to begin preaching His law. The humblest man alive has authority to speak the truth.

- Irvin Lee

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"But God ...!"* (text: Eph. 2:4-7); Sunday evening: *"MICAH: Prophet of the Poor and Downtrodden!"*