

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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## What Does Preaching Accomplish?

The Old Testament prophet was the preacher of his day. He was inspired, but other than that, he served in the same role as preachers must serve today. There were all kinds: blunt Amos, noble Isaiah, austere Elijah. There were also different purposes served by the various prophets. Some of them made virtually no converts (Jeremiah). Some were very successful, even when they did not want to be (Jonah).

The prophets have messages which refresh us and encourage us. Sometimes they give us sober warning. Consider one of the lessons. Isaiah prophesied 740-700 B.C. He preached in Jerusalem but he saw the downfall of Israel to the north. He saw the terrible signs of decay in his own Judah. Although he had the sympathy and support of Hezekiah, the people of Judah gave little heed to his preaching. Also, some of the time, he dealt with a king such as Ahaz who had no sympathy for Isaiah's cause whatsoever. A situation like that makes us wonder, "If people will not listen, why preach? What good does it do?"

In Isaiah's commission (ch. 6), the Lord says, "I need someone to do a job." Isaiah volunteered. The job was: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes" (Isa. 6:10). How was Isaiah to do this? By telling them what God said. Isaiah wanted to know how long he

should do this. God answered, "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste" (6:11).

God knew the heart of His people. He knew that they would reject His word. God wanted Isaiah to know that He knew they would respond this way. Yet He told Isaiah to preach to them anyway. Why? Isaiah was to preach with all his heart because he might convert his people. If he could not accomplish this, then he was to leave them no defense when judgment came. Let them drive the nails in their own coffin as it were.

The preacher today is to preach with all his heart to win sinners from the clutches of this sinful generation. Preach with love and concern. But even when it seems that the effort is a failure, realize that this is not the case. We get preoccupied with numbers sometimes and forget that our objective is to do the bidding of God and leave the results in His almighty hand. God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). If, however, a generation turns away from God, then God wants them to have a witness against them that they were taught. He wants them taught again and again, so that their rejection of His will is complete. Whether they obey or whether they are lost, "yet they shall know that there hath been a prophet among them" (Ezek. 2:5).

This lesson is not to say that we should deaden our hearts to the fate of doomed men and women but to help us realize that when we have done our best to preach the word, and the world will not respond, we have not failed if we have faithfully taught the word.

-- Bob Waldron

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## **The Land of Beginning Again**

I wish that there were some wonderful place  
Called the Land of Beginning Again  
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches  
And all of our selfish grief

Could be dropped like a shabby old coat by the door  
And never be put on again.  
I wish we could come on it all unaware  
Like the hunter who finds a lost trail  
And I wish that the one whom our blindness has done  
The greatest injustice of all  
Could be at the gates like an old friend that waits  
For the comrade he's gladdest to hail.  
We would find all the things we intended to do  
But forgot, and remembered too late;  
Little praises unspoken, little promises broken  
And all of the thousand and one  
Little duties neglected that might have perfected  
The day for one less fortunate.  
It wouldn't be possible not to be kind  
In the Land of Beginning Again  
And the ones we misjudged and the ones whom we grudged  
Their moments of victory then  
Would find in the grasp of our loving handclasp  
More than penitent lips could explain.  
For what had been hardest we'd know had been best  
And what had seemed loss would be gain  
For there isn't a sting that will not take a wing  
When we've faced it and laughed it away,  
And I think that the laughter is most what we're after  
In the Land of Beginning Again.  
So I wish that there were some wondered place  
Called the Land of Beginning Again  
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches  
And all of our selfish grief  
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door  
And never be put on again.

- Louise Fletcher

Had the author known the Truth of God, she would have known that there is a Land of Beginning Again. That Land is the Land of New Testament Christianity. It is the Land of Redemption or Salvation. It is the Land wherein Newness of Life is realized. It is the Church, the Kingdom, the Vineyard, the Body of Christ. It is that place where lost men lay aside their sins like a shabby coat. It is a place where those sins are washed away by

the blood of Christ, never to be reckoned against us again. How we should thank God that there is such a Land!

Sin condemns us and separates us from God (Jn. 8:24; Isa. 59:1-2). Sin is the taskmaster of Satan with which he enslaves us to his devilish will (Rom. 6:16-18). Men commit sins of all kinds which cause the loss of the soul. Sins like: fornication, covetousness, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech, lying and a host of other things too numerous to mention (Col. 3:5-9).

But Paul said that Christians "have put off the old man and his deeds." Those deeds are that which we take off like an old coat and we are supposed to throw them away. We, and our abominable sins, are "buried" with the Lord in baptism (Rom. 6:4). The old man of sin, dead in those trespasses and sins (Eph. 2: 1), is buried in a watery grave. However, unlike every other "burial," we are said to be "raised up from the dead" to "walk in newness of life." This is the Land of Beginning Again! The apostle Paul once said, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). This is the realm where we are God's people, holy and beloved. It is a place where kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance and forgiving one another are bound together in perfect love (Col. 3:12-15). It is here that we begin all over again in innocence like that of a child. All the sins have been washed away and we stand before God without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:27).

Most importantly, everyone should (1) obey the Gospel and enter this Land of Beginning Again, and (2) strive with diligence to walk its glorious paths in a way which sustains this new beginning. We should know more than we did as a child so we should not be making as many mistakes as we made before. When we do sin, we should quickly correct them according to the Word (Acts 8:22). If we fail in this, we mar our garments again and waste the blessed opportunity we had of Beginning Again.

- Lewis Willis, Guardian of Truth, 02/01/1990 [edited]

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# **So Much Time to Read the Bible**

How much time does it take to read from Genesis to Revelation? If you would read the Bible at a standard pulpit speed (slow enough to be heard and understood), the reading time would be seventy-one (71) hours. If you would break that down into minutes and divide it into 365 days , you could read the entire Bible, cover to cover in only 12 minutes a day. Is this too much time to spend reading about God?

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## **What Makes a Pattern in Christianity?**

The sum total of what God has said about anything becomes the pattern for it. Examine the following statements. Are they true or false?

1. All that God has said about the plan of salvation is a pattern for salvation to every person.
2. All that God has said about the New Testament Church is a pattern by which it is identified.
3. All that God has said about becoming a member of the Lord's church is a pattern for everyone.
4. All that God has said about the acts of worship is a pattern.
5. All that God has said about the day to observe the Lord's Supper is a pattern for Christians.
6. All that God has said about the church and the support of preaching is a pattern to observe.
7. All that God has said about the church and helping the needy is a pattern for Christians today.

8. All that God has said about following Christ in Spirit, etc., is a pattern for us.

I count it safe to follow the information we have in the Bible. I commend what it says to everyone. James said, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10).

— B. G. Hope

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- > "It is a sickly faith that is shaken because some frail human being goes wrong!"
  - > "Remember, young lady, that the man attracted by cosmetics isn't worth attracting!"
  - > "The difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is the way in which you use them!"
  - > "Many people who buy on time, sure don't pay that way!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "Seven Wonders of Heaven!" (Text: 1 Pet. 1:3-4); Sunday evening: *Bi-monthly singing!*