

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Dusting One's Feet

"Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). This is an example of zealous Christians carrying out the Lord's command to preach the gospel to every creature in Jerusalem. This same work was carried out in the Gentile world. Paul disputed "daily in the school of Tyrannus. This continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:9,10). There is evidently a lack of this kind of zeal in America today.

The Master mentioned the sower as he went forth to sow. In this parable, the seed is the word of God. This parable is found in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8. It is heaven's desire that we know of this work and that we go forth with zeal sowing the seed. We have no way of knowing who will hear and believe.

Jesus found that those who sat in Moses' seat were not good listeners. The "publicans and the harlots" were much better listeners than the "chief priests and the elders of the people" (Matt. 21:23,32). Both John and the Savior could observe this. Some had ears that were dull of hearing, eyes that were closed, and hearts that were hardened (Matt. 13:13-16). Even the greatest Teacher of all times did not reach these people. "Never man spake like this man," but the self-righteous Pharisees were not benefitted (John 7:46). It was not the Teacher's fault. He taught and confirmed His message with signs. He went about doing good, but the god of this world has blinded their eyes (2 Cor. 4:4; Acts 10:38).

There are many passages that make it evident that it is not always the fault of the teacher when the word is rejected by some of the people. They cannot see if they are not looking, and they cannot hear if they are not listening. This fact and these passages are not meant to cause the servants of Christ to give up preaching, but these servants do have a right to realize that they are not required to do the impossible.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6). This, of course, is not talking about a brother who errs and needs to be corrected (Gal. 6: 1; James 5:19,20). It is speaking of those who refuse help. They sin willfully after knowing the truth. (Please read Heb. 10:24-31.) Some cannot be reached. God is willing, but they are not. The impossibility is in getting them to repent.

There were some spiritually blind people concerning whom our Lord said, "Let them alone" (Matt. 15:1-14). Our Lord tasted of death for every one, but not every one will do the will of the Father (Heb. 2:9; Matt. 7:21-27). He even wept over Jerusalem whom He had taught because they had rejected their only hope of life. Their house was left to them desolate (Luke 19:41; Matt. 23:37,39). This sorrow of heart was at the close of His diligent work among them. Some who say, "I will," do not; but we can be thankful that some who say, "I will not," do repent so we should preach the gospel to every creature.

We are not required to continue on and on and on working with people who will not obey. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the gentiles" (Acts 13:46). Should we be that bold after we have tried hard and miserably failed?

When the sower went forth to sow, some seed fell by the wayside, but there was no harvest there. These hearts were so hard that none could teach them. Some seed fell on shallow soil and for a time there seemed to be hope, but the plants withered. Converts of this type have been found in

all parts of the earth in all generations. Some seed fell among thorns and brought forth nothing. These people were too busy with trivial things and with this life to read the Bible, worship, or teach their children. Their children may turn out to be wayside soil (Luke 8).

Some seed fell on good soil and produced a good harvest. These were people with honest and good hearts. This type makes the efforts worthwhile. The people with good hearts may be compared with gold, silver, and precious stones (I Cor. 3:12,13). This precious material is in contrast to wood, hay, and stubble. The latter cannot stand the test of fire, and the test is sure to come to all.

When the twelve were sent out on the limited commission, they were told, "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matt. 10: 14). There is no necessity to cast "your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7:6).

Let the worthy teacher go among those who can be taught. Let none be too hasty to give up when there is still room for hope. Evidently there is still a time to dust one's feet and turn away from those who are unwilling to be taught. Even in a corrupt city like Corinth the Lord had many who could learn. They needed to be taught. (Read Acts 18:9-11).

There are some in the area where I live who seemingly will go to the judgment as people who have not done the will of the Father. Are there some near you who also have interests other than the righteousness and kingdom, of God? The Christ has been appointed to handle the matter of judgment for the obedient and the disobedient for the believers and the unbelievers (Acts 17:31).

- Irven Lee, via Guardian of Truth, 10/20/83

“The Way of Man Is Not In Himself”

God has not only revealed His will to man, but He has also revealed the exact attitude he is to have toward His Word. Man does not have God's

permission to possess any attitude toward His will that he desires. In every conceivable way, God, in the Bible, shows man he must try to keep God's word strictly and carefully, with the greatest reverence.

The question naturally arises, "Why is it necessary to seek such close adherence to the will of God?" The answer is simply given in the Bible, "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Man is such that truth does not originate inside of him. Indeed, it might be stated thusly: Everything man knows comes from outside himself. Since truth does not originate from any human being, the source of truth must be recognized as God. To forsake God's Word is to dwell in darkness. The only way to remain in the light is to walk in the light. The only way to avoid missing the path is to stay in the path. The path, or the way of God, is found in what He has said, not in what He has not said.

The result of man's following his own guidance is clearly set forth in the scriptures. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). We must understand that so far as the sensation one feels about it is concerned, there is no difference in being right and merely seeming to be right. When Jacob's sons brought Joseph's coat to him, torn and bloodied, he assumed that Joseph had been slain by a wild beast. Though it only seemed that Joseph had been slain, it felt exactly as if he really was dead. Merely how good one may feel about a thing is no indication as to whether it is true. The only way to know the truth is to turn away ourselves from ourselves to the Word of God. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

It should be obvious that if man cannot originate truth, then he should scrupulously avoid mixing his opinions with the Bible. Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel: only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, 'If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye have received, let him be anathema'" (Galatians 1:6-9).

- Bob Waldron

Tomorrow

“Tomorrow” is the great enemy of advancement. Boasting of tomorrow is the lazy man’s way of evading today’s duties.

“Tomorrow” leaves more tasks undone, more books unread, more house uncleaned, more programs unlaunched, more resolutions unkept than any other factor in life.

“Tomorrow” is the great enemy of the church. Our greatest liability is not our ignorance, or our unconcern, or our unwillingness, but “Tomorrow”. More absentees have been neglected, more lessons have gone unprepared, more prospects have gone unlisted, more lost people have gone unsaved because of “Tomorrow.” It is the great enemy of the soul. Where one man has died and gone to hell because he was an infidel, an agnostic, or an atheist, ten thousand have gone because they have counted on “Tomorrow.”

Tomorrow is Satan’s best scheme in keeping lost men lost. Yes, Satan knows he will never destroy your faith in the Bible or your belief in the love of God. He does not care when you realize that you are lost and need to be a Christian. He knows all of these things are of no avail to you if he can keep you waiting until “Tomorrow.”

- Jimmy Tuten

- “You cannot make a crab walk straight!”
- “If you live wrong, you can’t die right!”
- “The only way to get others to God is to first get to Him yourself!”
- “All that is Christ’s is ours now, if all that we possess and are is His now!”
- “The tongue weighs practically nothing, yet so few people can hold it!”

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*A Knock At Midnight!*" (Text: Luke 11:1-13); Sunday evening: "*Justice For All!*" (Psalm 7).