

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

February 01, 2015

Volume 35, # 06

Things That Are More Valuable Than Gold

In our troubled and uncertain economy, gold is seen by many people as a wise investment. We certainly want to be good stewards of the blessings we have received (cf. Matthew 25:14-30). This could lead us to obtain gold. Yet we must remember a couple of things. First, even a “safe” investment like gold is uncertain (cf. 1 Timothy 6:17). Second, as we will focus on in this article, there are some things that will always be more valuable than gold, regardless of how much this precious metal is worth in relation to our currency.

The Word of God

“The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces” (Psalm 119:72).

“They [the words of God] are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold” (Psalm 19:10).

Information is valuable. The information contained in the word of God is especially so for several reasons. First, it comes from God (2 Timothy 3:16) and God Himself is more valuable than gold (Job 22:24-25). Second, it addresses the biggest problem in the history

of man – sin (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Third, it provides the only solution to this problem (Acts 4:12). Fourth, it will never become outdated or irrelevant. God will not add to it (Jude 3) or change it (Galatians 1:8-9) because doing so is, and always will be, unnecessary.

Wisdom

“My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, and my yield better than choicest silver” (Proverbs 8:19).

“But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living. The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, nor can silver be weighed as its price” (Job 28:12-15).

Divine wisdom provides life and prosperity (Proverbs 3:13-18). If it is not always realized in this life, it certainly will be in the next [more on this point later]. Wisdom also keeps us from trouble. As wisdom enters one’s heart, the wise man says, “Discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil” (Proverbs 2:10-22).

The Blood of Christ

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Jesus offered a pure and perfect sacrifice of Himself on the cross (Hebrews 9:14,28; 7:26-27). The blood which He shed in His death provides forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22; 10:5,10; Ephesians 1:7). Jesus said this blood would be “poured out for

many for forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28). How many would this include? The whole world (John 3:16).

Faith

“So that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

Faith is a product of the word (Romans 10:17). Therefore, if the word is more precious than gold (Psalm 119:72; 19:10), our faith would be as well. Faith is valuable because it saves us (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 5:1). Not faith alone, of course (James 2:24), though many people believe this. True faith produces obedience (James 2:26). But we must not minimize the importance of faith – a belief and trust in God. Our faith will be tested (2 Timothy 3:12), just as gold is tested, but we must remain faithful no matter what challenges are placed before us (Revelation 2:10).

A Good Name

“A good name is to be more desirable than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1).

There is a great value in having a good reputation. A good name is made based upon our actions, not just our words. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works” (Matthew 5:16). We must lead a life in which we are consistently doing good. We must not “lose heart in doing good” (Galatians 6:9), but instead, we must be “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Heaven

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

Treasures on earth are temporal and uncertain (1 Timothy 6:17; Luke 12:20). They are among the things that will be “burned up” in the last day (2 Peter 3:10). In contrast, our treasures in heaven are “imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away” (1 Peter 1:4).

Your Soul

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

The soul is the only part of man that is eternal. Our bodies naturally decay (2 Corinthians 4:16). Paul tells us, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). When we die, our souls [spirits] will return to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7). We will then be judged according to what we have done (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10). To be found pleasing to Him, we must value the things of God more than the things of this world.

No matter how valuable gold is or will become, it can never compare with the spiritual blessings that God offers to us in Christ.

- Andy Sochor

True Greatness

Everyone wants to be great, but there are many opinions about what constitutes greatness. Children think the one who can run the fastest and jump the highest is the greatest. In the political world those who hold the highest offices are counted greatest.

In Mark 10: 35-45, James and John were seeking to be great by desiring high political offices. They wanted to sit, one on the right hand and one on the left in Jesus' kingdom. Jesus used this incident as an opportunity to teach a lesson on true greatness.

These disciples based their request for power on two major errors. They thought Jesus was going to establish an earthly kingdom, and that the standard of greatness would therefore be the same as in other earthly kingdoms. They had not learned that Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Since it is not of this world but is a spiritual kingdom, its standards are of course different. Even the weapons of our warfare are different. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.)" (2 Cor. 10:4).

In Jesus' kingdom, the great are those who minister most to the needs of their fellow men. The road to greatness leads through service. In Matthew 5:19 Jesus describes the great in His kingdom as those who do and teach the word of God. In Matthew 18:1-4 Jesus taught an object lesson on true greatness by placing before His disciples a little child and telling them that to be greatest one must become humble as a little child. In the sermon on the mount Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall

inherit the earth." (Matt. 5:5). Unlike the worldly standards of greatness, Jesus bases greatness on meekness, humility, and service. Doing and teaching Christ's commandments will not bring worldly glory and honor, but will win for us an eternal home in heaven.

- Elam B. Kuykendall

Frightening, Isn't It?

We are surrounded by little children. We have our own children around us, and then we have other people's children around us. It just occurred to me that this is a very frightening situation. Many times these children watch us that they might imitate us in word and deed.

Who knows how many times in a single day we may influence a child for good or for bad? Frequently I hear of a child who does or says something and says he did it or he said it because "brother Grider did it" or "brother Grider said it."

It goes without saying that children are "victims" as well as "products" of their environment. Many children would be better children but for the examples set before them by older people. Many children who are good have to be so in spite of the examples set by older people.

I believe if we could get all of the people to see the results of their examples on children, there would be some reforming of lives and some changes made in conduct. Just think, some child may wind

up in hell because of something we said or did in his presence. We might learn better and repent and get right. But we might not be able to get the child straightened out again.

I know children who are not Christians because their parents are not Christians. I've seen parents who obeyed the gospel after the children were grown, weep and mourn as they saw their children going on down the wrong road.

Take a look at the children around us. How sweet they are! How innocently they face life! How they watch us as they seek to learn to live here on this earth! Believe me we have a tremendous responsibility. We may not be aware of the fact that these children watch us. But they do, and they imitate us. They will say what we say, and they will do what we do. God help us to be worthy examples.

- A. C. Grider

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Are You A Child Of God?"* (Text: John 1:11-13); Sunday evening: *"The Ways of a Backslider!"* (Text: 2 Pet. 2:20-21).

GOSPEL MEETING 2015: Our Gospel Meeting is scheduled for July 19-24, with Jerry Crolius, of Conway, AR, preaching.