

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Intolerance and Lies of Open-Mindedness

We've all heard it: we don't accept a particular viewpoint so, therefore, we are closed-minded bigots trapped inside some blind faith and hope fostered by an ancient, cultish superstition. Those who make such charges are, of course, the open-minded, loving, tolerant, compassionate people who are willing to accept others for who they are and what they believe - except those who disagree with them.

Surely one who thinks things through can see the irony in this. The viewpoint isn't even subtle: open-mindedness is to be equated with the progressive, morally-liberated mindset. If you don't accept their way of thinking, you are closed-minded. It's okay for the open-minded, liberated, progressive thinkers to insult, call names, use vulgarities, and show obvious contempt and hatred for those who are more conservative than they are. Those stupid conservatives are the closed-minded ones, remember.

If open-mindedness is such a virtue, as is claimed by these self-proclaimed freethinkers, then why are they so intolerant toward

those who disagree with them? This just highlights the fact that the version of open-mindedness and tolerance they advocate is a lie. It's a sham, and it's geared more toward trying to shut up the opposition rather than actually demonstrate true open-mindedness and tolerance. No truly open-minded person would condemn others for believing in God and holding to a strong code of morality fostered by standards higher than themselves. Even if these liberated ones don't agree, they should still defend, with the same passion as they defend others, the more conservative person's right to believe, practice, and teach their views without demonstrating such malicious hatred. Their vehement opposition to those more conservative betrays their claim to open-minded tolerance.

Why is it more virtuous to show open-mindedness and tolerance toward one group of people (say, homosexuals) than it is another (say, Christians)? Why is it more appropriate to condemn Christians than it is to condemn those of another lifestyle? If we choose the morally-liberated, free-thinking path, and in the process turn around and condemn, judge, and vilify those more conservative, then we have bought into a lie and are no better than what we think we are opposing. Why is it better to be compassionate toward one group but not the other? Why is it morally acceptable to bash Christians while claiming the high ground of open-mindedness? The answers to these questions will likely not be forthcoming, especially from those who have essentially trashed any universal standards. They are open-minded only because they say they are. In reality? Not so much.

The fact is that everyone has drawn a line in the sand. I respect that. What I don't respect is the denial of a line, then the insulting intolerance of those who claim to be so compassionate. It doesn't work. And the sad part is, they just don't see it.

To those who disagree with me, I would say this: Be honest. If you hate Christians, then you are free to say so. I respect your free will and free speech. As a Christian, I'm even willing to take abuse for the cause of Christ. But don't turn around with some nonsense of being tolerant and bigot-free. That game is tiresome and demonstrates a lack of reason. The true motive, therefore, cannot be open-mindedness and tolerance, the very things you refuse to demonstrate toward those who disagree with you.

- Doy Moyer

“If I Had a Hammer”

Renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow has said that, “When the only tool you own is a hammer, every problem begins to resemble a nail.” It seems to me that some Christians only have a hammer, so all they do is hammer. Others only have a saw, so all they do is cut. Some only have a sander, so all they do is smooth things over. We as Christians have a tendency to deal with others and their problems in the way that is most comfortable for us, rather than in a way that is most beneficial for them.

We would be much better workmen and more helpful in building God's house if we would all learn to use a variety of tools (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:10). Every person with a spiritual problem is not to

be handled in exactly the same way. Sensitivity and discernment are required to know which tool is appropriate. We are to "warn the unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Yes, the unruly need warning, but the weak need something different; they need support! The fainthearted need comfort. Using the hammer of warning on the weak and fainthearted is not just poor carpentry, it's destructive! More than one weak, fainthearted Christian has been destroyed by the too stern rebuke of a well-meaning brother or sister who only knew how to use one tool. On the other hand, many an unruly Christian has found unneeded support from an overly sympathetic brother or sister who only knew how to use a floor jack.

We must learn to make distinctions. Everyone is not the same. On some we must "have compassion, making a distinction." But others we must "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

The words of an old folk song go something like this: "If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning, I'd hammer in the evening, all over this land...." As Christians our song should be, "If all I had was a hammer, I'd go and buy a sander."

- Steve Klein

On Being Neutral

"You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't let anyone persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going along with it.

I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that used it and churches that didn't.

I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who has passed through the college of the Bible. Yet I do not know of more than six of them who are preaching the truth today.

It won't work."

Brother J. W. McGarvey gave this advice to bro. J. P. Sewell in 1902, when brother Sewell was preaching for the Pearl and Bryan Streets church in Dallas. It is taken from brother Sewell's lecture, "Biographical Sketches of Restoration Preachers" given at Harding College in 1950. Referring to this advice, brother Sewell closed his lecture with the following words: *"This experience has been an inspiration to me, when I was ever tempted to turn aside and go along with error, to remember the warning of this great old man."*

- From an article by James E. Cooper, *The Proclaimer*, San Antonio, Dec., 1963.

About Jesus ...

"This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times."

- Philip Schaff

- "If you ever see a counterfeit dollar, are you going to throw away all of your good dollars? Why, then, would one want to reject Christianity because there are hypocrites or counterfeit Christians?
- "You will never win if you never begin."
- "Failing to plan means planning to fail. What are your goals?"

- "In order to realize the worth of the anchor, one must feel the stress of the storm."

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The King of the Jews!*" (Text: John 19:19-22); Sunday evening: "*Who Causes Death?*" [#1 of 3] (Heb. 2:14-15).

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