

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

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"Not Fit For the Kingdom"

In Luke 9:62, we find an interesting statement of the Lord. He said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

This indeed is quite a charge, to say that one is "not fit for the kingdom," and one could well involve himself in difficulty by making such a statement about some brethren. Nevertheless, it is true; and Jesus made no apology whatever for saying it. The inevitable conclusion then is that some are not fit (suitable) for the kingdom. It would do all of us well to do some soul searching, and determine whether or not the statement may apply to us.

There are not a few who fall into this category and will find themselves in it but too late, if they wait until judgment. Let us take note of a few who do not measure up to the Lord's requirements, and who would find themselves in this group:

Those who do not put the kingdom first. There are any number of people who have been immersed, and who claim membership in some local church, but have not attended a single worship period

for months, perhaps years. Is this putting the kingdom first? Not unless one starts at the bottom of the list! However, if and when such are asked about church membership, they very readily claim to be members of the Lord's church. Those who put the kingdom of the Lord, His church, so far down the line in importance, in their plans, their love, and concern, according to Jesus' statement and standard are "not fit for the kingdom." Such brethren have "erred from the truth," are "sinners," "dead spiritually," and need to be converted (James 5:19, 20). Peter says, in regard to such, ". . . the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness . . ." (2 Peter 2:20-22). They have gone weeks, months, and some for years, without assembling with the saints to worship God; thus, they have not commemorated His death, or communed with Christ, not given of their means toward the advancement of His Cause, and failed, not only to worship God, but to work in His kingdom. By no stretch of the imagination could one say that such are putting the kingdom first.

Those who engage in works of the flesh. Paul enumerates these (Gal. 5:19, 20), and this catalog of sins is repulsive even-to think about. Yet, we find brethren who have forsaken the Lord because of their love for such things, and are "not fit for the kingdom." It is not necessary to engage in all of these to be guilty of sin; one is enough, and is too many if we want to remain in fellowship with the Lord, and be of value in His service.

Those who have turned aside to a perverted gospel. Though it may sound strange, or seem so, to some to say that members of the body of Christ have committed such an act, it is true nevertheless. Even in the days of Paul, he said of the Galatian

brethren that they had fallen from grace. Too, in warning the Ephesian elders, he said, "Also of your ownelves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Some today, far too many, have rejected the wisdom of God revealed in the gospel, and are teaching and practicing a perverted gospel, one devised by their own wisdom. And, though it may not be a written creed, it is one just the same. To do so is to place oneself in the group of which the Lord said, are "not fit for the kingdom."

While others could be mentioned who are "not fit for the kingdom" by their own choice not to follow the teaching of Christ, and put Him first, it is hoped that these will prompt all to make a further application of such, and especially as such applies personally. When one finds himself failing in his service to God, he should not wait to make the necessary amends because his most valuable possession (the soul) is at stake.

It is heartening to know, however, that there are others, and the number seems to be growing, who indeed are "fit," suitable for the kingdom and the Master's use. These should be an encouragement to others to come out of their error, and work that which is right in the sight of God. It is also the duty of those who are faithful, and thus "fit," to teach others the error of their way and lead them out of sin back to righteousness. May we ever be mindful of this responsibility, and fail not to discharge it faithfully. To do so is to convert the sinner from the error of his way, save the soul from death, and to save oneself. Are you "fit for the kingdom?"

- Eugene Crawley, via Truth Magazine, 10/16/80

Seed and Soil

The productivity of seed is directly proportionate to the fertility of soil. It matters not how good the seed is, if it is planted in bad soil; either it will not germinate or, having germinated, it will produce a sickly plant. So it is with the word of God and human hearts.

In the parable of "The Sower," stress is laid, not on the power of the seed, but, on the kind of soil in which it is sown. Four kinds of soil are mentioned in which the seed is sown -- the wayside, rocky places, soil in which thorns are abundant, and good soil (Luke 8:1-15; Matt. 13:1-23). Each of these represents four different kinds of human hearts, while the seed is called "the word of God" (Luke 8:11).

The deficiencies of the first three kinds of soil do not, in any way, cast reflection upon the power of the seed to produce life. The problem is in the soil and not in the seed. Neither should men speak of the word of God as powerless to convert men -- the potential to produce new life and to change men is found in the word of God (see Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 1:22-25). So why doesn't it always bring forth an abundant harvest? -- Because the soil, the human heart, is not receptive or it is encumbered with the cares of the world. So, let's not blame God for our lack of productivity -- the kind of soil we are has been our choice.

What are the ingredients of fertile soil? Jesus defines it thusly: "... they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). I believe there are still human beings with good hearts that want the word of God. Is your soil good? Eternal bliss in His presence awaits.

- Jim R. Everett

So Many Will Be Lost Because:

- In youth, they are "too young."
 - In manhood, they are "too busy."
 - In maturity, they are "too worried."
 - When aged, they are "too old."
 - When sick, they are "too ill."
 - When dead, they are "too late."
 - Are you making excuses to God?
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> "It takes a strong person to say 'I'm sorry,' and an even stronger person to forgive."

> "The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of the arm!"

- > "Along with optimism, we need some hop-to-it-ism!"
- > "A gossip is a person who knows a great deal about very little and who goes along knowing more and more about less and less, until finally he (or she) knows practically everything about nothing!"
- > "It is alright to spend money to make character, but it is wrong to spend character to make money!"
- > "The most important work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home."

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Friends!*" (Text: John 15:13-15); Sunday evening: "*The Breaking of the Covenant!*" (Exodus 32).

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