

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

June 14, 2015

Volume 35, # 25

Were You Rejected?

If you have attempted to teach the gospel to your neighbors, co-workers, classmates and associates, then you are already acquainted with rejection. Maybe the words of Christ are remembered at those times: "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also." (John 15:20).

Jesus was rejected by people who should have been watching for Messiah's coming. He was rejected by people in His own hometown.

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; ... And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. ... And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way. (Luke 4:16a, 24, 28-30).

Have you considered how Jesus reacted to rejection? Notice from Mark's gospel:

“Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him. When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?’ And they took offense at Him. Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.’ And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching.” (Mark 6:1-6).

Jesus was fully aware that when He came to His own, many would not receive Him (cf. John 1:11). Isaiah had prophesied hundreds of years before that He would be “despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” (Isa. 53:3a). Rejection by many was no surprise. Truth challenges men (cf. Matt. 10:34-39).

Jesus certainly had the power to know how each individual would react to His message (cf. John 2:24-25), and could have avoided teaching the people who were not going to listen, but the Sower of seed didn't operate that way. He forced no man to listen to heaven's message, but He could have. There were still large crowds who “enjoyed listening to Him.” (Mark 12:37). He knew

that His words would “offend” some people, but He persisted, being faithful in repeating the message that His Father provided Him (John 14:24). Fortunately, Jesus did not let the unbelief of some people stand in His way of seeking “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24). When some rejected, He went to other places where hearing ears could be found. Rejection didn’t intimidate Jesus into quitting.

What about us? We cannot know for certain how one is going to react to the gospel. We can assume and guess, and sometimes we may guess correctly, at least initially. However, we must remember this about the gospel and teaching it: we are sowing seed, and seed takes time to germinate, grow and produce fruit (cf. the parable of the Sower, Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23). We can plant and water, but God causes the growth (1 Cor. 3:6-7). It may be that with regard to many people, all we can rehearse were their words of rejection. However, all they may be rehearsing could be words of the gospel. Their initial rejection may not be permanent.

Sowers of the gospel seed should take the lesson from Paul and Apollos in 1 Corinthians 3, and keep sowing the seed diligently and patiently. We should be “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15), with kindness, gentleness and compassion. We can never force anyone to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). People have to pursue that because they desire it. (cf. 1 John 4:19; Rev. 3:20). We should try our best to share the gospel with as many people as possible, just as Jesus did. Even the people who watched us grow up. I am convinced that the fields remain ready for harvest (John 4:35), and that there remain a great many with “honest and good” hearts (Luke 8:15)

who will listen to the gospel of Christ and obey. Let us be laborers who keep looking for them.

- Gary Smalley

Growing by Going Beyond

Introduction. We have all seen a toddler crawling around a room, eagerly eyeing furniture that can be used for leverage when the time comes for “pulling-up.” We have also seen, that toddler reach the pull-up stage and move to walking “with no holds.” We rightly praise and encourage such behavior. We know that growth is only achieved by going beyond present circumstances. What we sometimes forget is, that we (adults) need to grow also. That growth, though it may be imperceptible to the eye, is still real growth. Let us consider some things we need to move beyond in order for us to grow spiritually.

Beyond Our Own Expectations. Our achievements will only be as high as our highest goals. If we aspire to be pew-warmers only, that is all we will be. Our minds will not be engaged in the private study of the word of God and our faith will not be challenged by the word’s clash with the world in our daily life. We dare not be content with “just being religious.” Here is a challenge for us: “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1). That ought to raise our goal.

Beyond Our Hurts, Losses, and Failures. There is no doubt about it, in this world we will have tribulation (John 16:33), or trouble. Persecution is to be expected (2 Timothy 3:12). Further,

physical accidents and health failures occur regularly, as does death. Christians are not immune to any of these things. Therefore, when these occur in our lives, we must deal with them in a realistic, optimistic manner. This in no way minimizes the importance of our own health or the personhood of those we love. However, if we cannot accept the loss of something or someone that/who is truly gone from this life, we will suffer serious mental and spiritual consequences.

Beyond the Expectations of Others. We all have certain limitations. They may be in our physical makeup or circumstances. However we can move beyond some of those limitations. For example, we may hold a job that pays minimum wages. However, that does not mean that we, or the job, are insignificant. We can work enthusiastically at any job we may hold (Ecclesiastes 9:10). We can do the best we can with what God has given, and be satisfied in the realization that we have done so.

Conclusion. Growth, by its nature means moving beyond the present circumstance to even better circumstances. If we approach it in that manner, even the most disheartening of circumstances can be faced with courage and optimism. Let us go beyond...and grow.

- Lance Cordle

KEEP YOUR CHIN UP

Are you downcast? Do you ever feel like "What's the use?" Has someone wronged you? Have you lost confidence in a brother or sister? Do "hypocrites in the church" weigh you down? "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity." (Psa. 37:1).

If someone levels a criticism against you it may be evidence you have done something worthwhile. If someone opposes you, consider his objections; His opposition may be justified. If someone fails to speak to you, it could have been unintentional - maybe he didn't see you. If someone has defrauded you, remember that there are more than one hundred sixty million people in America who have never done you a wrong. If the burdens of the day seem unusually heavy, go to the Father in heaven; He can lighten your load. If you tried to do something worthwhile and failed, try again tomorrow: Maybe you can succeed. KEEP YOUR CHIN UP!

- Jesse Kelly

-
- > "If we had no failings ourselves we should not take so much pleasure in finding out those of others!"
 - > "Ideas are funny things - they won't work unless you do!"

- > "You can't push yourself forward by patting yourself on the back!"
 - > "Better save your soul - it's the only lasting possession you have!"
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Current Events: Transgender?*" (Text: Gen. 1:26-31); Sunday evening: "*Do Clothes Make the Person?*"

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