

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Thoughts on Father's Day

It seems all cultures have had holidays—holy days—in honor of their gods. The one true God gave his people Israel several annual holy days, always in remembrance of something he had done for them, whether it be deliverance from slavery, providential care, or the blessings of a harvest. I don't know if America was first in this trend, but somehow we have shifted the idea of holy-days to celebrate human relationships. We celebrate our mothers and fathers and even our romantic relationships (some day I'll have to look up how St. Valentine's Day became "Buy-your-sweetheart-some-chocolate Day.") I'm not saying this is a bad thing. "Honor your father and mother" can include a special day, as long as it isn't forced on anyone. However, I do seem some downsides to our human-based holidays.

Human relationships are fallible and temporary. Some people had excellent fathers, others never knew their dad, and sadly some had terrible fathers. Many who had good parents have lost them to age or disease. Still others are pained on these holidays because they've never been able to have children of their own, or

perhaps they don't have that special someone to celebrate Valentine's day with.

It becomes apparent that any holiday based on human relationships is bound to be bittersweet for many, and downright painful for some. Such is the nature of our flawed and mortal existence.

Contrast this with celebrating our relationship with our Heavenly Father. His is a love that never ends and never fails. No matter who you, where you've come from, or what you are going through, we can join Jeremiah in singing, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lam. 3:22-23, ESV). And if you long to share in something that leaves no one out, our weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is a participation in the greatest act of love the world has ever known, which can be shared by all who have accepted that sacrifice. The remembrance of Jesus' death is not just for a certain group of people who have been blessed with good relationships in this life. It is for everyone who has come to know the unfailing love of an eternal Father.

- Eric Reynolds

"I'm A Jenius"

The same fellow who wrote, "I'm a jenius," is probably the same one who posted a sign which said, "Before you mess it up-THIMK!"

Such things ought to remind us not to be proud and puffed up over the talents and abilities God has given us. ""For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).

When the carnal, conceited Corinthians were vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds because of the gifts God had given them, Paul asked them, "For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it" (1 Cor. 4:7)? Answer that question. What is it that is so great about you that you did not receive? Every beautiful woman, every person with a melodious voice, every great athlete, and every gifted individual, when he feels as though he is better than others because of his skills, ought to ask himself that question-"what do I have that I did not receive?"

Give God thanks for his blessings. They are to be used to his glory and to reflect his goodness (Matt. 5:16). A truly brilliant person realizes his inadequacies. A righteous man is aware and ashamed of his faults and failings before God. In other words, he that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Lk. 18:14). Though he does not think it true of himself, the one who knows that is a real genius.

- Larry Ray Hafley

Do You Act -- Or React

I walked with my friend, a Quaker, to the news-stand the other night, and he bought a paper, thanking the newsie politely. The newsie didn't even acknowledge it.

"A sullen fellow, isn't he?" I commented.

"Oh, he's that way every night," shrugged my friend.

"Then why do you continue to be so polite to him?" I asked.

"Why not?" inquired my friend. "Why should I let him decide how I'm going to act?"

As I thought about this incident later, it occurred to me that the important word was "act." My friend acts toward people; most of us react toward them.

He has a sense of inner balance which is lacking in most of us; he knows who he is, what he stands for, how he should behave. He refuses to return incivility for incivility, because then he would no longer be in command of his own conduct. When we are enjoined in the Bible to return good for evil, we look upon this as a moral injunction - which it is. But it is also a psychological prescription for our emotional health.

Nobody is unhappier than the perpetual reactor. His center of emotional gravity is not rooted within himself, where it belongs, but in the world outside him. His spiritual temperature is always being raised or lowered by the social climate around him, and he is a mere creature at the mercy of these elements.

Praise gives him a feeling of euphoria, which is false, because it does not last and it does not come from self-approval. Criticism depresses him more than it should, because it confirms his own secret shaky opinion of himself. Snubs hurt him, and the merest suspicion of unpopularity in any quarter rouses him to bitterness.

A serenity of spirit cannot be achieved until we become the masters of our own actions and attitudes. To let another determine whether we shall be rude or gracious, elated or depressed, is to relinquish control over our own personalities, which is ultimately all we possess....The only true possession is self-possession.

- Sydney J. Harris

NAIL IN THE FENCE

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there."

A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us."

Please forgive me if I have ever left a hole in your fence.

- Author Unknown

Does He Mean This Much To You?

Some people never grow too old, or too tired; nor do they live too far from the meeting house to be present for every service. The weather never gets too hot, nor too cold, as long as travel is possible. It is never too dry, never too wet, but that some people make arrangements to be at worship.

Do you think it is strange that people should act that way? Not at all. They attend services because of their relation to Christ. To them He is more than life or death, joys or sorrows; more than earthly comfort, entertainment or earthly gain. Christ is their all in all.

Such people do not have to tell their neighbors how much they love the Lord. Everyone knows that they do by the way they live. The apostle Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Phil. 1:21) "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

- Author Unknown

- > "Don't brag about your ignorance. It costs more in the long run than education!"
 - > "The tongue is but three inches long, but it can sometimes ruin a man six feet high!"
 - > "Those who think it is permissible to tell white lies soon grow color blind!"
 - > "Some strain at a drizzle at worship time and then swallow a shower at theater time!"
 - > "Modesty is not only an ornament, but also a guard to virtue!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*What Do You Smell?*" (Text: 2 Cor. 2:14-16); Sunday evening: "*Enthusiasm!*" (Gal. 1:14).

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