

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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August 23, 2015

Volume 35, # 35

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## EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE, I LEARNED FROM NOAH'S ARK

**One:** Don't miss the boat.

**Two:** Remember that we are all in the same boat.

**Three:** Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

**Four:** Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

**Five:** Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

**Six:** Build your future on high ground.

**Seven:** For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

**Eight:** Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

**Nine:** When you're stressed, float a while.

**Ten:** Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

**Eleven:** No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

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## **“No, Ma'am, I Won't Ever!”**

The following borrowed story is designed to make us “think” about how we as Christians should accept people different than ourselves into our assemblies. Brethren, let us never be guilty of the sin of partiality as illustrated in this story.

I saw him in the church building for the first time last Wednesday evening. He was in his mid 70's with silver hair and a neat brown suit. Many times in the past I had invited him to come. Several friends had talked to him about the Lord and had tried to share the Good News of Christ with him. He was a well-respected, honest man with so many characteristics a Christian should have, but he had never put on Christ in baptism. A few years ago, I asked him, after finishing a pleasant day of visiting and talking, “Have you ever been to a church service in your life?” He

hesitated, then with a bitter smile he told me of a childhood experience some sixty years ago.

He was one of many children in a large impoverished family. His parents had struggled to provide food, with little left for housing and clothing. When he was about ten, some neighbors invited him to worship with them. The Bible class had been very exciting. He had never heard such songs and stories before. He had never heard anyone read from the Bible before. After class was over, the teacher took him aside and said, "Son, please don't come again dressed as you are now. We want to look our best when we come worship the Lord." He stood in his ragged, unpatched overalls, looked at his bare, dirty feet and said, "No ma'am, I won't ever!" And he never did.

There must have been other factors to have hardened him so, but this one experience formed a significant part of the bitterness in his heart. I'm sure the Bible teacher meant well, but what if she had studied and accepted the teachings found in the second chapter of James? What if she had put her arms around that dirty, ragged little boy and said, "Son, I'm so glad you are here, and I hope you will come every chance you get to hear more about Jesus!" What a difference that statement would have made in this little boy's life!

I pray that I might ever be open to the tenderness of a child's heart, and that I might never fail to see beyond the appearance and behavior of a child to the eternal possibilities within. Yes, I saw him in the church house for the first time last Wednesday evening. As I looked at that immaculately dressed old gentleman

lying in his casket, I thought of the little boy of long ago. I could almost hear him saying, “No ma’am, I won’t ever!” .... and I wept.

James tells us, “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool’, have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (James 2:1-5 - NKJV)

- Mike Riley

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## **Placing Membership in a Local Church**

EDITOR’S NOTE: The letter was not written to the Old Hickory church, but I think it could have been. I want to share this with you. – GFS

It is a good practice to be identified with a local church. Paul wanted the fellowship of working with other Christians when he went from Damascus back to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26). I received the following from one family who identified with us not long ago and thought it good to pass it along to you. (Names withheld).

“Recommended by a minister from (former place of membership).

Visited several times before moving here and was received with Christian love, friendliness, and encouragement.

Received several cards from members thanking us for visiting here and encouraging us to worship here after our move.

Found the worship services, sermons, and classes to be Bible based.

Found the members to be friendly, helpful, encouraging, and sincere.

What impressed us the most was the Christian love that we found here. It was as though this love greeted us at the door and has not stopped. Whether we realize it or not this is a powerful first impression made on a visitor.

Cards, visits, or whatever means employed to increase membership would not have worked with us without the love for Christ and each other that we have found at this congregation.”

(Comment: There is love at this congregation. — love of God, love for his holy word, love for one another and love for non-members.)

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# A Definitive Quote

From several sources over the Internet, we extract the following quote. It is from Cal Thomas, a nationally syndicated columnist.

"People are always asking me if there are good leaders in Washington. There are. There are quite a few, but you don't often hear about them because many of them aren't engaging in scandalous or self-serving activities. One such good person is Attorney General John Ashcroft.

"I had the pleasure of interviewing him again this week for a column I'm writing.

During the interview, Ashcroft said something so profound, I wanted to share it with you. Listen ... this is good.

"The attorney general of the United States said: 'Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his Son to die for you.'"

Surely, we know that we might be called upon to die for the sake of Christ. Paul was "ready...to die...for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). However, that is not the point of comparison noted above. Muslims say that their God wants them to die while they kill others for him. There is a vast difference in being willing to die for the cause of Christ and in saying that I must commit suicide for my God and kill others in the process.

Consider that Jesus died for our sins "and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:2). Jesus died for the misguided Muslim murderers as surely as he died for you and me. Should that thought not make, if possible, the partaking of the Lord's supper even more memorable?

The nations of the world face crises of safety and security for their countrymen. The spiritual, "holy nation" of Christ faces the constant conflict between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between heaven and hell (Eph. 6:12). Therefore, let the nations of men, even our own, gird and guard themselves as best they can. Let the people of God, though, under the Captain of their salvation, tend to the spiritual warfare between good and evil. Let them wage war, not with bombs and bullets, but with "the sword of the Spirit." Let them be sheltered, not in bunkers, but behind the certain shield of faultless faith.

If that armor protects us not in this life, it will gently bear us up, at the summons of the last trump, to the plains and parade grounds of everlasting peace where we shall bask in the bliss and blessedness of the Prince of Peace forever and ever.

- Larry Ray Hafley

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## **Signing Without Reading**

On August 23, 1864, Abraham Lincoln wrote a resolution on a piece of paper which he then folded and asked his cabinet to endorse with their signatures without reading. They did so.

In the same way, God asks us to affix our signature to His will in our hearts. If it is necessary for us to understand what God has asked of us, or for us to see the end result of what He has planned in our future, we have no faith. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7).

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- > "Talent is *God's* gift to man! The *use of talent* is man's gift to God!"
  - > "We never get all of God until He gets all of us!"
  - > "Remember: you don't find out what you've learned until you've been tested!"
  - > "Happy people are those who are producing something!"
  - > "A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small package!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*For This Is Right!*" (Eph. 6:1-3); Sunday evening: "*Builders With The Lord!*" (text: Psa. 127:1; 2 Cor. 6:1).