

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Jackson, TN 38305

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May 29, 2016

Volume 36, # 22

To You Who Bring Small Children to Church

There you are sitting in worship or Bible study. Your child, or toddler, is restless. Perhaps they're even a little rowdy. You try to silence them, and nothing. You try to pacify them with food or toys, and nothing. Eventually, you resort to the last thing you wanted to do: you pick them up, and before a watching audience, you make the march out of the auditorium. All the while, you're feeling a little embarrassed. Maybe you're a little frustrated too. You might even think to yourself, "There's no point in coming to church. I get nothing out of it because I have to constantly care for my child."

I want you — you mothers and/or fathers — to know just how encouraging you are to so many! The little elderly woman who often feels alone beams with a smile at the sight of you wrestling with your little one. She's been there before. She knows how hard it can be, but she smiles because to hear that brings back precious memories. To see young parents and their small children brighten her day, and she may have just received bad news this week about her health, but seeing the vitality of young ones removes — if but for a moment — her fears.

The older man who always seems to be grouchy notices you too. He's always talking about how children in this day have no respect or sense of good. But, he sees you — a young family — in church, and you don't miss any gathering. Like clockwork, he can depend on the sight of you and your young family. You give him hope that maybe the church isn't doomed after

all, because there are still young parents who love God enough to bring their restless children to worship.

The family who's unable to have children notice you too. They'd love to be in your shoes, but for whatever reasons, they are unable to bear children. They've thought about adopting, but they're not sure if that's what they want to do or if they will keep on trying to have children of their own. They'd love to talk to you for a little while about the joys of your children. They need you!!

Then there's everybody else. Yes, some people will honestly become frustrated by noisy children in church. They have this WARPED idea and notion that reverence includes absolute silence. IT DOESN'T!!

When parents brought their children to Jesus, the disciples rebuked them (Matt. 19.13-15), but Jesus rebuked His disciples. He said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." The term translated "children" in Matthew and Mark is "paidon." The root of the word "pedagogue" is from this word. It defined children of either an infant state, or more particularly, it was with reference to those who were half-grown and could be either males or females.

When Luke wrote his account of this narrative, he used the word "brephos;" which means "infants." Luke wasn't contradicting Matthew and Mark's account, because Luke wrote that they brought the infants "also" (Luke 18.15-17). They would have squirmed, maybe even cried. This was likely why the disciples rebuked the parents; as well as that they might have thought that the children were too young to understand the blessing Christ pronounced over them.

Bring your children to church. IF YOU DON'T HEAR CRYING, THE CHURCH IS DYING!! As hard as it might be for you as a parent, keep on doing what you're doing!! I love you and your crying children! You are an encouragement, and you're starting off your children's lives as you should!

- Kim Buxton

He Didn't Fit the Picture

The First Century Jew was one who was completely aware of the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. The "Law and the Prophets" were constantly being read in the public places. He would have undoubtedly been longing for the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. With this in mind, it seems paradoxical that when Jesus came fulfilling all prophecies concerning the Messiah, that many Jewish people missed it or refused to accept Him. Why is that?

One reason that stands out is that Jesus did not fit the "mental picture" they had of the Messiah. They had certain ideas and wishes of the Messiah that were not scriptural. For instance, the apostles were constantly looking for an earthly kingdom. This is evident at times such as when they had scruples over who would be the greatest in His kingdom (Mark 8:35-45). Some may have been looking for the Messiah to make some "spectacular entrance," be more concerned with worldly things, or to overthrow their current rulers. Whatever the case was, He did not fit their preconceived mental images so they would not accept Him.

Many have the same problem today with His church that the Jews had with Jesus 2000 years ago. In spite of the Bible's descriptions of and instructions for the church, they have other preconceived desires for its organization, worship practices, and work. They seem to want its organization to be more complicated, fulfilling man's desire for offices. They want worship services to come across more spectacular, entertaining man's desires. They also want the church's work to go beyond the bounds that the Lord established so that it would appear that they are doing much more "good." Men go against the Lord's will when through their pride they insist on these "improvements."

Paul writes to Timothy and says, "... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they

will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables..." (2 Timothy 4:3-4). It does not matter how efficient it seems to make the church run, how entertaining it makes the services, or how much work seems to get done, if it is not done according to the word of God, it is not scriptural and must be stopped. One cannot perform certain "religious" practices because they sound good or satisfy any desire one might have.

There has been a great flow of people into the "Modern Mega Church Movement" as some have deemed it. These are churches that teach only what people want to hear. They build great structures that focus on entertaining man and feeding their stomachs. Their organization is complex with many offices and names not found in the Bible. People flock to these churches because they find them to be "fun and exciting." One does not have to ponder the situation very long to figure out why they are so large.

This is the picture that many people paint in their minds of the church, even though the one the Bible paints is nothing like it. The church that Jesus built was not designed to entertain or feed, in fact it was condemned at one point for this (1 Corinthians 11:17-22). The church Jesus built preached Jesus and drew in people with His gospel. Those who obeyed His will were added to the Lord, not some complex organization. Those people in turn went out and preached Jesus (Acts 11:19-26). The "power of God unto salvation" has never been such things that much of the modern religious practices endorse, but it is rather the "gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16). What a blessing it is when people put their pride and desires aside and are satisfied with enjoying serving God the way He has established.

- Aaron Beard

There Are No Barbers

A man visited his barber. As always, they struck up a conversation. As they talked, the discussion turned to religious matters.

The barber finally said, "I just don't believe in all that God nonsense. I'll prove it to you. Look outside. If God were really out there, would there be so many broken homes and abandoned children? If God were really out there, would there be so many people starving? If God were really out there, would there be so many people in pain and suffering? Nope. I say God doesn't exist. If He did, He would do something about all this."

The customer wasn't sure how to respond and sat there quietly. The barber finished and the man walked out. On the sidewalk, he saw a man with ragged long hair. He came back to the barber and said, "Barbers don't exist."

"But here I am to prove it."

"No, barbers don't exist. Look outside. If barbers were really there, would there be people with such long ragged hair?"

The barber replied, "Well, I exist, but not everyone comes to me. That is why there are people with long, ragged hair."

"Exactly," the Christian responded. "The same is true with God. He exists, but not everyone will come to Him. That is why there is so much sin, suffering and pain."

There was a time when no one suffered any pain. No one got sick. No one hurt. But then a serpent entered the garden and sin entered the world (Genesis 3). Since that time, Satan has continued his influential work. People have turned their backs on God, have committed sin and we have a world of suffering because of it.

Does suffering mean our God doesn't exist? Or does it merely mean everyone hasn't turned to the loving God?

Sadly, because our world is so governed by sin, even when a few of us do turn to God, we still suffer. Sometimes we suffer because we turned to God (2 Timothy 3:12). However, a time is coming when those who turned to God and still suffered will suffer no longer.

In that time, we will learn that all the suffering was worth it because the glory that will be revealed to us and through us will be worth it all (Romans 8:18). We will see God and we will be with Him for eternity. There we will be able to rejoice with exultation and glorify our God for eternity without fear of suffering.

But to ever enjoy that comfort, that peace, that joy, we have to turn to God. Have you?

- Edwin L. Crozier

- > "I must do something!" will always solve more problems than "Something must be done!"
 - > "We judge others by how true their word is and whether they keep their promises. God has never lied and kept all of His promises! How do you judge Him now?"
 - > "A pure mind is one that has been examined by the Sonlight!"
 - > "The heart is happiest when it beats for others!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Do Not Sin Against the Child!"* (Text: Gen. 42:21-22); Sunday evening: *"Lot's Family!"* (Gen. 13:2, 5-11).