

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Jackson, TN 38305

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March 06, 2016

Volume 36, # 10

Go, and Sin No More!

This is a true story, so far as I can reconstruct it from memory, with specifics changed only to make the account impersonal. It is taking place in one of our large cities, where hippies abound [written in 1970 - GFS].

A preacher made contact with a young couple, living common-law and enjoying (?) the freedoms (?) of this permissive age. They had no real aim in life, and no guide-lines for self-improvement or the building of character. They saw their friends ever seeking, never finding a meaning for life in drugs and dissipation. There was no hope, for there was no faith for its foundation; and religion had long ago been abandoned as organized irrelevance, shot through with hypocrisy. But they allowed the sky man to talk, out of sheer boredom.

Now this preacher was untrained in social studies. He had little formal education, and had not read up on the psychology of modern youth. He preached for a church which organized no youth Movements, had no social hall, and thought the gospel of

Christ, not pop-music parties, was the power of God unto salvation. All this out-of-date preacher knew to do for the hippies was to love them for Jesus sake, and point them to the Lord for the remission of their sins — and he called them sins too!

But something in his sincerity and the obvious rightness of his appeal touched them. He set before them the Bible — authoritative — commending itself by its very message. He showed them the unselfishness of God's love and pled with them to change their heart, life and state. They obtained a New Testament, and studied it. Soon they admitted their sinful condition, and showed a desire to correct their misspent life. They assured the preacher their love for one-another was genuine, so he urged them to marry. A quiet ceremony followed. A few weeks later they were baptized.

The withdrawal from unkempt hair and beard, extreme make-up, mini-mini skirts, etc., was slow — but members of the church were tactfully patient and understanding. And as former associates of this couple began to see the change in their life — the new hope, and radiant faith — they began to ask questions: “How did you do it?” and, “Could we escape too?”

While I was there for a meeting the preacher asked me, almost apologetically, if I would be hurt if he missed a service. It seems five or six others, in like circumstances, had asked him to come and talk with them. I said I would be very disappointed if he failed to go.

Several couples have now been converted to Christ, and their efforts have expanded the contacts for more of the same. There is no publicity given — no spectacular announcements made. There have been, and will continue to be failures. But I will not forget the gratitude of those faithful ones; how they listened to sermons and hungered for more.

I wish more of my brethren were converted hippies, or converted preachers, or converted anything!!!

- Robert F. Turner, *Plain Talk*, June 1970

What Is Gospel Preaching?

I am still a great believer in the power of gospel preaching. I am convinced that absolutely nothing will put God's true message across as well as a forceful lesson from a godly preacher or teacher. I say this because I firmly believe that we not only draw from the words of those who teach us, but from their lives and character.

While I was quite a young preacher I worked with an elder of the church, who I am sure did more to shape my future than any man. This godly man taught me a great deal, you may be sure. And yet, strange as it may seem, I cannot remember precisely as much of what he taught me as I can remember about him; his life, his character, and his attitude.

In (Acts 4:13) please notice what is said about Peter and John. “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” They took note that these men “had been with Jesus.” I grant that more was involved in this statement then than there is now, because miracles were involved, but the principle remains the same. The people could tell that these men “had been with Jesus.”

So, what we need today is not more gimmicks, not more novel plans, not more ingenious approaches, but more godly men who will set forth the unsearchable riches without fear or favor, and do so free of fanaticism. We need men, and women as well (within their limitations of teaching) who will demonstrate in word and deed that they have “been with Jesus.” We must remember, when people are called with “secular attractions” it takes bigger and more fascinating “attractions” to keep them. You cannot call people with the things of the flesh and expect them to walk after the things of the Spirit. When people are truly called by the plain and simple gospel that is all it takes to keep them. Jesus said to the woman at the well: “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

True gospel preachers and teachers never have to resort to anything except the word of God. I am never under pressure to come forward with some astounding thing that is bigger and better. As a preacher, I find that most comforting.

The “Social Gospel” influence upon us today has caused many to look with disdain upon “old fashioned gospel preaching.” The new idea is to get the message across with “puppet shows” and “Bible drama” and a host of other things which are designed to entertain and do a little teaching at the same time. I must confess, I just don’t believe a puppet or an actor could have much of a spiritual impact on me. But, that godly elder did! He didn’t entertain me, but he taught me, and let me freely observe that teaching in his life. I had the wonderful opportunity to see what it is really all about. When people listen to you and observe you, can they tell you have “been with Jesus”?

So, while the denominational world and the liberal-minded brethren give the world “puppet shows” and “Bible dramas” and all kind of presentations that obscure and water down the truth, let’s get on with the real work. Let’s give the lost and dying world the forceful, but simple gospel of Christ, falling from the lips of truly spiritual men. Not lessons that are shrouded in a lot of philosophical jargon, but lessons filled with a “thus saith the Lord.” We may not have the most listeners and we may not have the biggest crowds, but we will make people who do hear us “meet for the Master’s use” and prepared for eternity (2 Tim. 2:21). After all, that’s what it’s all about.

- W.R. Jones
via The Messenger, 02/01/98, Conroe, Texas

Check Your Tongue

For many years, doctors would take a close look at the tongue of a patient in order to determine his health. The ability of many doctors to diagnose various illnesses simply by checking the tongue is amazing. While physicians gauge the health of an individual by the tongue, the great Physician can gauge the health of the soul by the tongue. In relation to how the tongue speaks, Jesus said, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things” (Matthew 12:35). Often, we can get a good idea about a man’s character by the way he speaks. Our speech is very important. Not only does our tongue reflect the health of our soul, but the health of our soul influences the tongue. Paul spoke often about the proper use of the tongue, and James places a great deal of stress upon controlling the tongue (Eph. 4:25, 29-32; James 3:1-12). Not only can your corrupted soul defile your tongue, but your tongue can defile your clean soul. Oh, the importance of the tongue! So much so that Jesus stated, “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:37). So, while you are living day by day, don’t forget to check your tongue!

- Michael Pickford

Said the Robin to the sparrow,
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush around and worry so."

Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no Heavenly Father,
Such as cares for you and me."

-- Elizabeth Cheney

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- > "Life's gold mine is a pure heart and a clean life!"
 - > "He who has no inclination to learn more will be very apt to think that he knows enough!"
 - > "It is better to be despised for doing right than praised for doing wrong!"
 - > "Be sure you understand your opponent before you answer him!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Current Events: Immigration!"* (Text: Exod. 22:21); Sunday evening: *"Even Though I Walk Through The Valley!"* (Psa. 23:4).

GOSPEL MEETING 2016: Our Gospel Meeting is scheduled for July 24-29, with Josh Thornhill, of Wildersville, preaching.