

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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The Church Does Make a Difference!

A commonly accepted philosophy, relative to one's spiritual welfare, is that "the church doesn't make any difference," and so the conclusion is that one should just "join the church of his choice," or "you don't have to be a member of any church to be saved." But I submit to you that this is NOT what the Word of God teaches! Following are some plain, concrete reasons why we must conclude that the church to which one belongs DOES "make a difference!"

THE CHURCH WAS IN THE "ETERNAL PURPOSE" OF GOD! Read with me in Ephesians 3:8-11, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to His eternal purpose, which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,..." Does this not suggest that the church would "make a difference?!"

CHRIST BUILT HIS CHURCH! (Even the thought of that Scriptural Fact, should surely suggest that "The Church DOES Make A Difference!") After having asked His disciples about just Who did they consider Him to be; being answered by the apostle Peter "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God;" Jesus replied, "...upon this rock (Peter's confession) I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:14-18). Surely, no thoughtful person would conclude that HIS "church doesn't make any difference!"

JESUS PURCHASED THE CHURCH WITH HIS BLOOD! The apostle Paul urged the Ephesian Elders to "...take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28; cf. Ephesians 5:25). Can anyone even think that the Christ

would be required by God, the Father, to die that cruel death of the cross, shedding His blood for something that “Makes No Difference?”

CHRIST PUTS ALL OF THE SAVED INTO THE CHURCH! In Acts two we read of the first preaching of the gospel of Christ under the great commission, and the first offer of “Remission of Sins.” We are told that what was preached “pricked the hearts” of many of those who heard, and when they asked “...what shall we do?” they were told to “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins...” (v. 38), then in verse forty-one Inspiration tells us that “...As many as gladly received the Word were baptized, and there was added to them that day about three thousand souls.” Then in verse forty-seven we see “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Could we possibly conclude that the church into which all the “Saved” are admitted by God “makes no difference?”

ALL, IN BECOMING CHRISTIANS, ARE “BAPTIZED INTO THE ONE BODY.” “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13); and we read in Ephesians 1:22-ff that the “body is the church.”

THE CHURCH IS THE KINGDOM OF “KING OF KINGS!” In addition to the fact that in Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus used the terms “church” and “kingdom” synonymously, other Scriptures indicate the same. In Mark 9:31, Jesus assured His apostles that some of them would not die before His kingdom would “come with power.” In Acts 1:8, He promised that the “power” would come with the Holy Spirit, and in verse five He assured the apostles that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from the time of that statement. The apostles WERE baptized with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and we read of people being added to His church (as seen before) that day (Acts 2:1-47). In Hebrews 12:23 and verse 28, we see again the terms “church” and “kingdom used with reference to the same body of saved people! Indeed, can anyone say that the KINGDOM of “the King of Kings” (I Timothy 6:15), “makes no difference!?”

“CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER...!” (Eph. 5:25-26). How could something that Christ loved enough to die for, be considered to “make no difference?” And then add to that, as seen in verse 27 of that same chapter, that Christ will finally “PRESENT HER (THE CHURCH) TO HIMSELF...!” Do you think that at the end of time, the Lord will present to Himself something that “makes no difference?”

IN CONCLUSION, let it be understood that all the above Scriptures speak of THE LORD’S CHURCH; they have nothing to do with the many churches founded upon, and directed by the wisdom of men! THOSE CHURCHES, not only do not “make a difference,” in that they do not contribute to one’s salvation; but they believe, teach and practice doctrines

which are CONTRARY TO SALVATION! In light of that, please read carefully 2 John 9, Colossians 3:17 and Revelation 22:18-19!

- Charles G. Maples, Sr. [edited]

No Problem!

When a person is eager to learn the way of salvation and is willing to accept the word of God as the final authority, there is *no problem* in teaching him what to do to be saved.

When differences arise among brethren and all have a humble attitude, and there is a sincere desire for peace and unity, and all parties want to follow God's word, the settlement is *no problem*.

When a person genuinely believes that Jesus is the Son of God and wants to yield in submission to Christ, once he is shown the Lord commands baptism for the remission of sins, because he is honest and longs to go to heaven, there is *no problem* getting him to be baptized.

When a worshiper comes into the assembly with the right attitude of heart, there is *no problem* if the song leader misses the pitch on one of the hymns or if the building is too warm, or if the janitor has missed some cobwebs over the pulpit.

Many of the problems that arise are the bitter fruit of improper thinking.

– Irvin Himmel

Happiness Is An Attitude Not A Choice!

Attitude is defined in part as a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state. Attitudes can be classified as positive or negative, good or bad. An attitude can determine the course of one's life, whether it is a success or failure.

The apostle Paul's attitude is worthy of emulation. He says, "Rejoice in the Lord always," and "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content," (Philippians 4:4 & 11b).

We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married and have children. Then, we are frustrated that the children are young, and we will be content when they are

older. After that, we are frustrated because we have teenagers to deal with. We will be happy when they are out on their own.

We tell ourselves that life will be complete when we get a new car, and are able to go on a nice vacation. We will really be happy when we are able to retire.

Get real friend! There is no better time to be happy than right now. If not now, when? Life will always be filled with challenges. There will always be some obstacle in the way, something to go through first, some unfinished business, or debt to be paid before life really begins. These things are life. It is best to admit this and decide to be happy anyway. That is what Paul did.

Reality is that there is no way “to” happiness. Happiness “is the way!” We must learn to treasure every moment we have. Time is a precious commodity that waits for no one. Stop waiting until you finish school, or have children. Do not wait until you lose ten pounds or gain ten pounds to be happy. Quit waiting until summer or until fall. Decide that there is no better time than right now to be happy. Happiness is a journey, not a destination!

Be thankful for each new day of life. Today stretches ahead of us waiting to be shaped. We are the sculptor who gets to do the shaping. What our day will be like is up to us. We can choose what kind of day we will have.

This day, choose to “fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man,” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). “This is the day the Lord hath made; rejoice and be glad in it,” (Psalms 117:24).

You have a good day now, you hear!

- Wendell Ward

It Seems to be A Poor Joke:

When some woman blushes with embarrassment . . . When some heart carries away an ache . . . When something sacred is made to appear common . . . When a man’s weakness provides the cause of laughter . . . When a little child is brought to tears . . . When everyone can’t join in the laughter.

Gifts You Can Give the Year Long

The Gift of Praise — Appropriate mention — right in front of the fellow — of superior qualities or of jobs or deeds well done.

The Gift of Consideration — Putting yourself in the other fellow's shoes, and thus providing your genuine understanding of his side of the case.

The Gift of Concession — Humbly saying at just the right point, "Sorry, you're right and I'm wrong."

The Gift of Gratitude — Never forgetting to say "Thank you"—and never failing to mean it.

The Gift of Attention — When the other fellow speaks, listen attentively. If his words are directed to you personally, meet his eye squarely.

The Gift of Inspiration — Plant seeds of courage and action in the other fellow's heart. Help him to strive for greater accomplishment and lasting satisfaction.

The Gift of Your Personal Presence — In sickness, in trouble or in a day of great joy, there is nothing quite equal to your personal expression of sympathy or congratulation.

These are the gifts that all can bestow through the year and be richer for the giving.

- Author Unknown

> "Sometimes you can tell more about a person by what he says about others than you can by what others say about him!"

> "You can't do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth!"

> "Exercise daily. Walk with the Lord!"

> "We don't change the message, the message changes us!"

> "I would rather live my life as if there is a God, and die to find out there isn't, than live my life as if there isn't, and die to find out there is!"

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Gospel in America!*" (Text: Prov. 14:34); Sunday evening: "*Must We Lose It To Appreciate It?*" (Jer. 29:10).