

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### It's "All or None"

David Lloyd George once remarked, "The most dangerous thing in the world is to try to leap a chasm in two jumps." The story is told of the little boy who cut his puppy's tail off an inch at a time to keep from hurting it so badly by cutting the whole tail off at once. These two situations illustrate the tragic error of many persons with respect to Christ.

Accepting Christ is an all-or-none proposition. Trying to accept Christ without total commitment to Him as an obedient follower of His every command, is like trying to leap the chasm in two jumps. You leave one bank and miss the other. Jesus put it this way: "He that is not for me is against me." The Lord will not share a divided heart. In our hearts Jesus must be "before all" and "above all" or He is not "at all." Look to Christ and commit your life, your talents, your service, your all. Look not for a stone or island half-way. There is none.

One of the sad facts of life is that many people have not realized that commitment to one thing means forsaking other things. The word of God declares: "You cannot serve God and mammon." One cannot hold to God and the world. I fear there are many people who try to give up the world like the little boy cut off his puppy's tail - an inch at a time. The result is the same; the pain is multiplied. There is never a convenient time to accept Christ, nor an easy way to forsake sin.

It is imperative that we make clear decisions. We must turn away from the world and come all the way to Christ. You can't leap the chasm in two jumps or little by little. One must leave the shores of sin decisively, with finality, holding no moments of a sinful past. This journey from Satan to Christ begins with faith, "for without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6). This faith leads one to repent (Acts 17:30), and to confess Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37). This journey ends when by faith the sinner is baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38). If you have not done so, I urge you to commit your all to Christ, and do so soon!

- W.R. Jones, via *Grand Avenue Messenger*, 2/12/1964

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# I Am A Gambler

Yes, I am a gambler. Oh, not the kind that frequents places behind closed doors in some secluded spot or in the back room of some night club or den of iniquity. I'm not that kind of gambler. Neither do I play the ponies or bet on sporting events. Such gambling as this is "peanuts" to the gambling I do.

You see, I gamble with my soul as the stake. I am betting that I can live a life of "do nothing" indifference, a life of neglect of those things of God and still be saved.

I'm gambling with the souls of my children as the stake. I am betting their souls that I can let them miss Bible study classes, worship services --- that I will not influence them toward righteousness, toward becoming members of the Lord's church and they will have wisdom enough to guide their own lives unto the Lord.

I'm betting I can remain indifferent to the teaching of Christ on liberality, that I can fail to give as prospered and that Christ will still bless me eternally. I'm betting I can "wink" at sin, walk the borderline and not suffer from it.

I'm betting I can be "at ease in Zion" and drift into heaven. Yes, I'm a gambler -- the most reckless type. I'm gambling against impossible odds with my soul and the souls of my children at stake, for you see, I am a lukewarm Christian.

- Jack Frost, Jr.

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## Rebellion Will Ruin You!

Man is a "free moral agent," we say. No passage of Scripture uses those exact words, but the concept is everywhere in the Bible. Men were not made as slavish robots, unable to exercise personal will. God knew that giving us such freedom could result in our choosing to rebel against Him. Many have chosen to do so in the past, and their stories are often told in the Scriptures. Many will choose to rebel in the future, too.

Before we decide to rebel, however, we must become aware of this significant fact: Rebelling against the Lord is costly. The divine law of consequences is that a person reaps what he sows, more than he sows, and later than he sows (Gal. 6:7-9). And the principle is unchangeable whether you believe in God or not.

A prevailing attitude of our modern culture is that rules prevent people from having a good time. That is certainly not the Lord's intention. In fact, He offers true freedom through a relationship with Him. Our loving heavenly Father desires to keep His children growing in their faith and safe from the Devil's temptations and worldly influences. He does that by limiting our actions and commanding that we follow certain laws and principles, which He has designed for our good. Deuteronomy 6:24 informs us that God's statutes are "for our good always." There is no greater pleasure or source of contentment than serving Him.

On the other hand, rebellion is a form of slavery. By defying God's authority in some area of our life, we allow Satan to shackle us. We may not feel the constraint of his trap at first, but keep in mind that divine law of consequences. Eventually, we will be heavily burdened by our sin. Whether the penalty ends up being carried in the body, mind, heart, or spirit, we will find ourselves distracted from wholly serving the Lord (Mark 12:30).

Whether or not we see rebellion as serious, God takes disobedience seriously because the consequences are so grave. As the Sovereign of the universe and our loving Father, He has only our best interests at heart. He knows what is good for us and what is bad for us, yet He allows us to make the choices. So, rebelling against Him is foolish. It will ruin us! Wise men and women live by His Word and obey (Psa. 119:9).

- Mark White

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## NEVER ALONE

What sustained Moses during his difficult years as leader of the nation of Israel? It was not his Egyptian education or his own personal strength. In fact, more than once he almost broke under the load and tried to quit. No, Moses was sustained by a promise: "He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Deuteronomy 31:6).

When Moses died, Joshua took over the rule of the nation; and the Lord gave him the same sustaining promise! "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Joshua 1:5). Moses needed the promise for carrying his burdens, and Joshua needed the promise for fighting his battles. And the promise worked!

Today all of us have burdens to carry and battles to fight. God be thanked we have the same promise that they trusted: "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for He has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you'." (Hebrews 13:5).

Our Lord's last words to His disciples were "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:20).

We Christians are never alone. No matter what burdens we must carry or what battles we must fight, our Savior is at our side.

- Tom Kelton

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- > "Think of your own sins and you will be more understanding of the sins of others!"
  - > "I asked, 'Why doesn't somebody do something?' Then I realized I was somebody!"
  - > "A man is also known by the company he keeps out of!"
  - > "He who only samples the word of God never acquires much of a taste for it!"
  - > "The best tranquilizer is a clear conscience!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Live with Your Wives in An Understanding Way!"* (Text: 1 Pet. 3:7); Sunday evening: *"The Failure to Arrest Jesus!"* (John 7:45-53).