

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Giving Account for Every Careless Word

"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:36-37).

Well, that's not good. How many careless words have I spoken in my lifetime? Dozens? Hundreds? Thousands? Maybe I talk too much.

A "careless word" in this context is a word spoken rashly or carelessly without thought as to whether it is pleasing to the Lord or not. It may have been spoken in anger, or excitement, or exasperation, or under pressure, or in ignorance. The Scriptures warn, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20).

So, there have been many such words come from our mouths in a lifetime, and Jesus says that they each one will be considered at the judgment and we will either be justified by them or condemned by them. Well, the gospel is not "good news" for nothing. It is the answer to our dilemma. It is what is going to get us out of this mess we got ourselves into.

The Accumulation of Character

Why is God so particular about every minute thing we may have ever uttered? There are probably many reasons, including His absolute righteous holiness. But there is also the fact that each day, with each decision and each action, we are molding a character. We have free will and we are responsible for the decisions we make, and therefore responsible for the characters we develop in making our decisions. How many careless words must we utter before it becomes a habit and a character trait?

A distressful circumstance can be handled with grace and wisdom, or mishandled by engaging in intemperate or extreme behavior. And how we handle a major crises often depends on how we have handled the little ones. The Lord expects us to build strong characters, and permitting “careless words” or “little faults” to rule our days does not do it.

A good illustration of this is the way Saul and David each handled crises. Saul carelessly disobeyed the Lord's commandment concerning sacrifice, and for that he was to lose his kingdom. The Bible says, “Samuel said to Saul, 'You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.'” (1 Samuel 13:13, 14).

But Saul evidently still does not make the connection between his carelessness and his losing his kingdom. Instead, he blames David, the man God chooses to replace Saul, for his troubles. During the remainder of Saul's life, he would spend much energy in trying to kill David, continuing to exercise carelessness with respect to his life and decisions. David, however would exercise great caution in his decisions, wisely seeking to make them out of respect for God and His will. Though Saul was trying to kill David, when David had opportunity to kill Saul, he would not because God had made Saul king. God would give the kingdom to David on His terms. David would wait for that. As David said to Saul, “Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.’” (1 Samuel 24:10).

The contrast between Saul's carelessness and David's high regard for the Lord's will is very stark. It was true then, and is true today, that judgment will consist of reaping what we have sown: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:7-8). Do not be careless in how you handle the word of God!

All Is Not Lost

Well, what do we do? There are untold awkward moments in each of our lives where we uttered a careless word that we ought not to have spoken, or done some “small” thing that wasn't exactly proper. At the judgment, am I going to hear recited all those things I

have ever done, most of which I have probably forgotten about a long time ago? Will I be held accountable and condemned by every one of them?

Yes.

Or no.

It depends.

“Yes” if I must face the consequences of the choices and decisions I have made as I developed a character that was prone to carelessness with respect to God and His will, not considering obeying Him as Lord as a very high priority in my life. The outcome of those things is eternal, spiritual death. “Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.” (Romans 6:21).

But perhaps you are more interested in the “no” side of the question. Yes, we can avoid the disastrous, eternal outcome of those things. There is a way to avoid having to give an account for any and every careless word we have ever uttered. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23). This is what the sixth chapter of Romans is all about. It is about overcoming sin. It is about being buried with Christ when we are baptized into His death. It is about coming up from baptism to walk in newness of life. It is about dying to sin and living unto righteousness. It is about obeying God from the heart.

Our sins, including “every careless word” are taken away by Christ. They are ‘washed away’ (Acts 22:16) and “forgiven” (Acts 2:38). It is by obedient faith in Christ and His sacrifice on the cross that we receive this hope. “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:23-26). Or, as David put it, and as the New Testament quotes: “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.” (Romans 4:7, 8).

- Jon W. Quinn, via The Bradley Banner 1/11/2004, Bradley, IL

The Name “Christian”

Henry Ward Beecher: “Let me speak in the language of heaven and call you Christians.”

Albert Barnes: “These divisions should be merged into the holy name Christian.”

Martin Luther: “I pray you leave my name alone. Do not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians.”

John Wesley: “I wish the name Methodist might never be mentioned again, but lost in eternal oblivion.”

Charles Spurgeon: “I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ’s name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living.”

Peter, the Apostle: “but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” (1 Pet. 4:16).

Paul, the Apostle: “Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.” Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1:12-13).

Luke, the writer of Acts: “... and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26).

- compiler unknown

Sins That Cripple The Church

ABSENTEEISM—“Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together...” Heb. 10:25.

INDIFFERENCE—“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot...” Rev. 3:15.

WORLDLINESS—“Love not the world neither the things that are in the world...” 1 John 2:15.

UNFAITHFULNESS—“thou hast left thy first love” Rev. 2:4.

SELFISHNESS—“...Not looking each of you to his own things, but to the things of others...” Phil. 2:4

NEGLECT—“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...” Heb. 2:3.

COMPROMISE—“come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” 2 Cor. 6:17.

CONTENTION—“That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you” 1 Cor. 1:10.

IGNORANCE—“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent”. Acts 17:30.

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- > “Some of life's biggest disappointments come from getting what we insisted on having!”
 - > “The man who does things makes many mistakes, but he never makes the biggest mistake of all - doing nothing!” - Ben Franklin
 - > “Some people raise their voice when they should reinforce their argument!”
 - > “A great oak is only a little nut that held its ground!”
 - > “When saving for old age, be sure to put away a few pleasant thoughts!”

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*The Great Supper!*” (Text: Luke 14:16-24);
Sunday evening: “*Safe In The Shepherd's Hands!*” (Part 2, John 10:22-42).