

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **THE EYES OF JESUS**

“His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns.” (Revelation 19:12).

I would ask everyone who reads this article to consider how the Holy Spirit of God tells us about the eyes of Jesus. In the book of Revelation, the apostle John shows us the eyes of Jesus (Revelation 1:14, 2:18, and 19:12). Each time we are told that His eyes are like a flame of fire. This is a powerful picture of our Lord and Savior as we see Him in eternal victory. “... He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” (Revelation 19:15).

The Spirit of God shows us what He sees and how He feels throughout the New Testament. Look into the eyes of Jesus when He saw the multitudes in all the cities and villages where He preached the gospel of the kingdom and healed every sickness and every disease among the people? Was it not with the eyes of devoted care and love? “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36).

Watch Jesus restore a man’s withered hand on the Sabbath while the Jews look for an opportunity to accuse Him. He will pose a simple question to all who are in the synagogue that day. “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” No one answered Him. “And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, ‘stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.” (Mark 3:1-6).

We know what the Jews were looking for on that day, but what did the man who was healed see? He was blessed to see the only One who could help his sad condition. Jesus healed him... We knew that He would. What a Savior!

Remember the poor woman in Luke 13 who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years? She could in no way raise herself up. "But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, 'Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.'" (Luke 13:12). This woman who was crippled for 18 years was probably subjected to many eyes that held her in disdain. She wasn't normal and that will cause people to look away or maybe even stare for all the wrong reasons. She has come to the synagogue on the Sabbath once again, because she is a daughter of Abraham. (Luke 13:16). When Jesus sees her, He sees her for who she really is, and He loves her. Rest assured, dear reader that Jesus sees you, He knows who you are, and He loves you. What a Savior!

Consider the compassionate and loving eyes of Jesus on the night of His betrayal. As the disciples sat down, He took Peter, James, and John with Him to pray. It was at this time that He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. He told these three men, "Stay here and watch with Me." (Matthew 26:37-38). The Spirit of God tells us more about this moment in the book of Hebrews. "Jesus, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Jesus cried out to God! Tears were shed from His own eyes, knowing that the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6). On that same night, with these same eyes, Jesus turned and looked at Peter while the rooster crowed. Peter went out and wept bitterly while Jesus stood alone to bear our griefs. (Luke 22:61-62).

Even on the cross, we see Jesus looking to the needs of His mother. "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home." (John 19:26-27).

Oh, to be like Him and to have His vision! Let us turn our eyes away from evil (Psalm 101:3), Let us seek peace and pursue it (James 3:18), for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous (1 Peter 3:12).

- Danny Simmons

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## Before Hearing

Proverbs 18:13 says, "He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him." The International Children's Bible has this: "A person who answers without listening is foolish and disgraceful." Frankly, the misconduct is to answer a matter before we hear it.

Solomon, no doubt, saw this Proverb verified over and over in public life, and a consistent habit it is with very many today. Men fail to listen to completeness things that are unacceptable to them. No doubt you have heard many a listener interrupt a speaker before they have fully and fairly heard him. Any answer they give comes as one that has been little weighed and defectively understood. How can a more experienced and wiser person offer any effectively significant help to another person by not wishing to receive any additional facts or perspectives that would contribute to a maximum benefit for the troubled soul? Rather, it is "folly" and "shame;" silliness, because we, unlike God, cannot read hearts, and disgrace because of the unfair way we have treated another person. When we reject careful listening we treat the other person as inferior, somewhat less of a person, or somewhat less intelligent than we are. We are disgraced because we have assumed that we know what another person is going to say before they say it. We have shown ourselves insensitive and ignorant by refusing to carefully listen. It seems that Job's friends stumbled in this way (Job 20:1-3; 21:1-3). But apparently, Elihu considerably restrained himself from answering until he had thoroughly heard Job's words (Job 32:4, 10, 11).

This impatient spirit does not testify of one's prudence, nor humility, but rather folly and shame. Is not the judge in a court of law expected to carefully hear and weigh both sides of a dispute in order to render a just verdict? The chief priests and Pharisees were rebuked by the wise Nicodemus for this very folly and shame: "Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" (John 7:45-52). Potiphar showed his folly and shame in the exact same way, calling for no statement from the defendant, Joseph (Gen. 39:17-20), before wrongfully sending him to prison.

Proverbs 18:17 will complete the point: "The first to plead his case *seems* right, *Until* another comes and examines him." In any legal context, the first to speak presents a case that seems credible and righteous. But when the second to speak submits additional facts in his side of the story, the "judges" then must revise their initial opinion in view of what has been further revealed. That is the way of justice and righteousness. Understanding human biases and wrongful prejudices, we seldom arrive at the truth of an issue without hearing all sides.

- Gary Smalley

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## DISCIPLESHIP

"Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples," (John 9:28). So spoke the Pharisees to the man who had been born blind, and had received sight through the miraculous power of Jesus. By this they meant "we have followed

Moses; we have learned of Moses." In contrast "you have begun to follow this Christ." A disciple is a learner; a follower.

**Discipleship has privileges.** These are too numerous to mention here, but simply put, the greatest privilege that a disciple of Jesus has is that he has communion with Christ; he has fellowship with the Son of God himself. Discipleship means that one is following Jesus, and in so doing, enjoys "all spiritual blessings in Christ," (Ephesians 1:3). He may pray to God through Jesus, and may be sure that Jesus will intercede and mediate for him. Jesus once told his disciples to "come, learn of me." (Matthew 11:28).

**Discipleship has conditions.** One of these is putting all else in a secondary place to Christ. Jesus once taught that his disciples must put family, and even their own lives secondary to him, (Luke 14:26). He even referred to this attitude as one of hating all else but him! Obviously, it is a "hatred" not born of bitterness toward others but implies that others must be rejected, if necessary, to be his disciple. Another condition is that a disciple of Christ must learn to bear a cross. Unless we do, we cannot be Jesus' disciple. (Luke 14:27). A "cross-less disciple" is really no disciple at all! Another condition is a faithful dedication to follow the word of God. Jesus said "if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed," (John 8:32). A condition of discipleship is fruit-bearing, (John 15:8). The disciples in Philippi were "filled with the fruits of righteousness." (Phil. 1:11).

**Discipleship must be known to others.** There is a way that men may know this, for Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35). Certainly, disciples may differ, but they differ in love. When disciples show that they do not love one another, they also show that the love of God is not in them, (1 John 4:20). Brethren who act like brethren one to another are showing a mark of discipleship.

But back to the blind man. The reason he was reviled was a simple question he asked of the Pharisees in John 9:27. He simply asked: "Will ye also be his disciples?" All faithful Christians should ask this question of others. You say you want to be a disciple? Good - but note this: "A man had better not attempt this discipleship who is not satisfied with everything which promotes it." (Bengel).

- Bill Moseley, via *The Instructor*, Jan., 1982

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> "Name the friends who can prick your balloon when you are full of hot air!"

> "Some folks are like the old mule - awfully backward about going forward!"

- "If it is to be, it is up to me!"
  - "We still cannot understand how rumors without a leg to stand on get around so fast!"
  - "Don't speak unless you can improve on the silence!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Put Anger Away!"* (Eph. 4:30-31); Sunday evening: Bible class: *Calvinism* (Lesson 13, pp. 76-80).