

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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CONFESS YOUR SINS

We should always seek to walk by faith. We are to be in harmony with the will of God in every aspect of our work and worship for His ways are high above our ways. We need to follow Bible principles, commands, or examples in all that we do. It pays to walk circumspectly (Eph. 5:15) or to be very careful where we put our feet when we take a step. Let any devout saint feel free to advise me freely on the things stated in this article.

In the matter of confessing our sins we look two ways. We confess to God, and there are times when we confess to men. To which men do we confess our sins? The questions of when, where, and why may also enter into the matter of confessing our sins to men.

In fighting the grace-faith-unity doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ to each baptized believer, some may have gone past Jerusalem and on down to Jericho. The idea seems to be around that man must confess every sin to God explicitly and repent of it to be forgiven. I have made some grievous mistakes (sins) that I did not realize until years after the mistakes (sins) were made. For example, I worked to help some new congregations get started in the decade of the forties. In those years, my relationship with the brethren at those places was very pleasant. I was happy to see the new works begin and grow, and my conscience was clear. I did not teach some things that were sorely needed. The brethren would almost certainly have listened if I had taught them earnestly, carefully, and patiently. In my failure some of these churches became what we usually call liberal. It hurts to realize this fact. The sin was a classic example of failure to teach the whole counsel. My ignorance was the occasion of my sin.

Would I have perished in my sins if I had died in the decade of much unselfish work in seeing these new churches begin and grow? If I am saved it will be by the grace of God. I do now see my mistake and confess it to God and men. When the mentioned work was being done I was aware of my need of mercy and prayed for forgiveness, but I did not know how to list my sins one by one. I do not claim that ignorance will cover any and every sin, but I see no way short of mercy for my salvation because I do not have perfect

knowledge. That perfect knowledge will never be mine. All of us have room to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (See 2 Peter 3:18). Any time I preach, I may find myself wondering if I have selected the appropriate lesson for the occasion and if I have said the proper things in the right way. May the Lord have mercy. We may sin by omitting some things that should be said and done.

In preaching we try to help people have a stronger faith (Rom. 10:17). We also seek to persuade them to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). These things are essential as parts of God's plan for our redemption. When we plead for people to repent we are not telling them that they must recall every sin and confess each to God as they turn from their sins in repentance. Repentance leads to a new life, and the old man of sin is crucified. We do not go to heaven by ignorance, but if we do go it will be in spite of some ignorance. As the newborn babe takes the milk of the word that he may grow thereby, he learns more and more of the errors of the past.

The Philippian jailor could not have written out a complete list of all his errors in thoughts and deeds on the morning after his baptism (Acts 16:23-34). The Lord has left this story as an example of conversion.

The jailor knew of his change of mind, and his repentance was accepted as genuine, but he still needed to be taught more of the things Christ had commanded. He could not have learned everything in one night in one sermon (Matt. 28:18-20). His faith, repentance and baptism led to the remission of his sins.

There is no doubt in my mind about my forgiveness in October, 1928, when I obeyed the gospel, but there was much growing for me to do. I was a babe indeed. I can claim in all good conscience that for fifty years I have preached, thought, learned, and stumbled along the way in trying to walk by faith. My confession of sin and my plea for forgiveness today are just as earnest as in my youth. I need help and I know it. I am not a thief, alcoholic, or fornicator, but I work with the minds and hearts of people, and that requires skill.

Errors on my part are serious. You and I must walk in the light to have forgiveness, and we must remember our littleness and our need of help. We are to confess our sins even though we are walking in the light. We should read 1 John 1:5-10 again and again because we find instruction as to what we as servants of the Lord are to do that we may be cleansed from all sin. We also need to read this passage that we may be reassured that there is power in the blood. The blood cleanses as we give ourselves to the Lord in humble obedience. The best people need forgiveness since we all sin, but we can count on the cleansing as promised.

I could not give the Lord an itemized list of all my sins this month, but I can realize that I am weak and can correct blunders as completely as possible when I realize them. The Lord knows if I really want to go to heaven. Repentance here would be parallel to repentance at the time of baptism.

There have been many pages written on 1 John 1:5-10 in the last several months, and more should be written. Some of the things written have been in error. In some cases people who believe the same things may have thought they were arguing with one another. The erroneous teaching can make it harder to teach the truth. More teaching will finally help us to find the sharp line between truth and error.

Some who would object to our insisting that repentance and confession are necessary to forgiveness have sarcastically talked of one's falling in and out of grace every thirty minutes. The Lord knows us so He is fully aware if we are giving the proper diligence to make our calling and election sure (1 Peter 1:10; 1 Cor. 10:12; Phil. 2:12). Paul could at three or four o'clock in the day have written about the crown of righteousness which was awaiting him (2 Tim. 4:8). The Holy Spirit used him to remind us that we all sin and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). He knew that he was saved by grace, but he was just as aware as was the beloved John that we must walk in the light and confess our sins.

- Irven Lee, via *Guardian of Truth*, 09/24/81

The Parable of the Proud and the Humble

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the” assembly to hear the word of God; the one a proud man, and the other a humble man. As the men both listened to the truth being preached, they realized, each one, his failure to measure up to the high standard of God.

The proud man became angry with the preacher because his toes were stepped upon. He came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which the preacher had spoken to him: for he had said, there are improvements you should make. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would text no message, nor make any call. Further, he determined to send no further mail, thus closing all communication with his brother.

The humble man certainly felt the discomfort of having his toes stepped upon. By the time he came into his house, he had recalled the Lord's charge to the preacher: to hold fast the form of sound words, to instruct those that oppose themselves, to preach the word, being instant in season and out of season, and to endure afflictions in so doing. After reminding himself, he became thankful for the love of a brother in helping him to understand that every man has improvements to make. Further, he determined that he would not allow the devil to prevent him from receiving benefit, no matter who the person who stepped upon his toes. He laid him down upon his bed and prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Think!

- Gary Smalley

On Family Worship

A study once disclosed that if both Mom and Dad attend church regularly, 72 percent of their children remain faithful. It also showed that:

- If only Dad attends regularly, 55 percent remain faithful.
- If only Mom attends regularly, 15 percent remain faithful.
- If neither attend regularly, only 6 percent remain faithful.

The statistics speak for themselves. The example of parents and adults is more important than all the efforts of the worship assembly and the Bible class. If we believe that spiritual knowledge and faithful service to Christ is important for our children, then we must demonstrate that it is important to us. Family worship with the saints on the first day of the week will make a lasting and powerful impression on our children as they grow to maturity.

- Gary Smalley (statistics via Warren Mueller)

> "Kind words don't wear out the tongue!"

> "Character is exhibited, not made in a crisis!"

> "Prosperity begets friends; adversity reveals them!"

- "Men do not give authority to the truth; truth gives authority to men!"
 - "If you, a child of God, marry a child of the devil, you may expect trouble from your father-in-law!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Divine Remedy For Sin!*" (Text: Zech. 13:1, 9); Sunday evening: "*The Longest Prayer!*" (John 17:1-11).