

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **God's Mighty Power**

“and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” (Ephesians 1:19)

In this context we have the first of two prayers recorded in this letter. The apostle is praying that his listeners may know the working of God's surpassing power in their lives. The same theme is repeated in at least two other places in this letter (Ephesians 3:20; Ephesians 6:10).

Paul uses strong modifiers to magnify the power of God. The word “power” speaks of strength and ability. Added to this power is God's “working” (energia). Thus, Paul pictures a power that is active. Then, the apostle adds “mighty” (kratos) which denotes the presence and significance of force. Paul heaps up words as though the idea of God's power is too great for expression.

The resurrection of Christ illustrates God's power. The same power behind this marvelous event now works in the hearts of God's disciples. This image is often used by the same author (Romans 6:1-13; Colossians 2:10-13; Galatians 2:20) to illustrate the spiritual renewal that takes place when one is committed to Christ. The child of God, once dead in sin, has been made alive and made to sit with Jesus in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5).

God's power was first exerted at the beginning of the Christian's life. The gospel is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). By God's power, the sinner is translated from darkness into the kingdom of God's Dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

As disciples persevere in this relationship, God's power continues to work in their lives. The disciples are kept for salvation by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5). “Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the

good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power.” (2 Thessalonians 1:11). God’s power is everywhere at work in the disciple’s life.

God is determined to use his power to fulfill his Divine purpose. The progress of each disciple can be an experience of this exceeding great power. Dear reader, if you will allow, the heavenly Father is able to do wonders in your life.

- George Slover

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## Choose To Trust

“It is better to be trusted than loved” (George MacDonald). I would say it is hard to love if we cannot trust. Trust is the foundation of any relationship.

Trust is not something that just happens. It happens deliberately. Trust is a byproduct. It is a by-product of truth, honor and integrity. Trust is not something we set out to accomplish. It comes in beside who we are in our hearts. It is seen by how we respond to others, by how we respond to circumstances, by what we say to others and about others. It comes because we have been transparent and sincere. It is built over time by consistency; consistently being genuine and doing what is right.

We all know what it is like to distrust someone. Distrust too, is a by-product. When someone lies to us, cheats us and deceives us there is no respect and no trust. When a person is “putting on airs” we can tell. We can tell when someone is disingenuous. We may say, “I always keep one hand on my back pocket when I am around him.” In others words, we know there is no trust.

If we boil it down, any relationship depends on trust. If there is no trust there will be no relationship. Trust is not something acquired, it must be earned. Developing trust is like constructing a building. It takes time and it must be done one piece at a time. It is much easier to tear down than build up.

Trust must first begin with me. Self-deception is an enemy of self and all relationships. Looking at ourselves honestly is essential to building trust. If I lie to myself, I will lie to others and others will see it. In fact, they will see it before I do. It is not easy to take a hard look at ourselves. It is not easy to ask, “Am I being honest with myself. Am I building trustworthy character? Do I keep my word? Do I follow through with the commitments I make?”

We have all been hurt at some time in our lives. We have all been disappointed in one whom we placed our trust. Once we get burned it is hard to open ourselves to the possibility of being hurt again. So we put up self-protective devices. We build walls to protect ourselves. As a result we do not build relationships. We pull back. The person we hurt, however, is not the other one, but ourselves. Once we close down we can become cynical, bitter and filled with hate. We may see it as protecting ourselves when in reality we are doing more harm.

No one will live long among other people without being hurt in some way. Trust is the casualty. Consider the alternative to isolating our self. As opposed to loneliness there will be companionship. As opposed to being loveless there will be mutuality. I get to choose to trust or not. Either way there is a price to pay. One builds, the other destroys. It is my choice.

- Rickie Jenkins

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## **What One Tolerates, The Next Accepts**

John Wesley once wrote, "What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace." Both sacred and secular history have proven the truth of this assessment time and time again.

Everything from dancing to drinking, from abortion to mercy-killing, has gone from toleration to acceptance. In the home and in the church, everything from immodesty to immorality has been first allowed and then endorsed. Adulterous marriages, gambling, and other similar sins, have gone from being permitted to being sponsored. Remember when wearing shorts and attending dances were generally condemned as sinful? Now, in some places shorts are being worn to church services and dances are sometimes held in church buildings! Truly, "what one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace."

One generation tolerated sprinkling for baptism if a person were seriously ill. The next generation accepted sprinkling for baptism as an option for everyone. One generation approved a "head" elder. The next generation appointed some elders "bishops." One generation introduced instruments of music as an aid to poor singing. The next generation demanded we worship with instruments. One generation accepted the "fellowship hall" (which, at first, was just a few tables in the basement for social meals). The next generation built gymnasiums and "Family Life Centers." One generation apologized for "hard preachers" who opposed denominationalism. The next generation saw their sons and daughters joining those denominations. One generation spoke of the need to reach

out in a "non-judgmental" way to our Catholic and Protestant friends. The next generation welcomed Presbyterians into "our fellowship" with only a handshake. One generation spoke of congregational singing as "one of our traditions." The next generation defended choruses and choirs. One generation applauded preachers who closed their sermons without an appeal for sinners to be baptized for the remission of sins. The next generation denied the gospel plan of salvation in general and baptism in particular.

What does this say to us? What is our responsibility? "You shall observe to do therefore as the Lord... hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 5:32). "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13). "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3:14). "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

The next time we are tempted to deviate from the word of God, let us remember that what we tolerate, our children will embrace!

- Mark White

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## **“Healthy Zeal”**

A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies - whether he has health, or whether he has sickness - whether he is rich, or whether he is poor - whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offense - whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish - whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise - whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame - for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it - he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such a one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, work, and give money, he will cry, and sigh, and pray ... If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua, he will do the work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill (Exodus 17:9-13). If he is cut off from working himself, he will give the Lord no rest till help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done.

- J.C. Ryle

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- > "The direction we are facing has a lot to do with our destination!"
  - > "The greatest of all arts is the art of living together!"
  - > "Live each day so that you will neither be afraid of tomorrow nor ashamed of yesterday!"
  - > "Anger: The fire you kindle for your enemy very often burns you instead!"
  - > "A Christian is one who does not have to look at the bank book to see how wealthy he is!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*Peace In Society!*" (Text: Gen. 13:5-8);  
Sunday evening: "*The Beginning of an Avalanche!*" (John 18:12-27).