

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
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oldhickorycofc.com

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SINCERITY

The word SINCERITY suggests purity or ingenuousness; hence free from double-mindedness, deceit or hypocrisy. One who is sincere is honest or genuine. Sincerity is a trait that many do not possess, but all of us should possess it. Many do not know the value of this virtue. Today, we need to emphasize sincerity and its importance. Sincerity is not a tangible thing that we may physically see, but we can certainly see the actions produced by it. In Phil. 1:9-10, the inspired writer said, "And this I pray ... that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ".

In what be sincere?

Our service to God must be in sincerity and truth. In Joshua 24:14 Joshua commanded Israel to "fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth". We learn from Matt. 4:10 that we are to worship the Lord our God and serve him only. In view of the fact that "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24), we must serve God with singleness of heart. Our service must be prompted by the proper motives. Pride, ambition, fleshly wisdom, popularity and material wealth are not the proper motives.

Our daily manner of life should be characterized by sincerity. The apostle Paul rejoiced because he and Timothy had behaved themselves "in simplicity and godly sincerity". (2 Cor. 1:12). The inspired apostle suggested in 1 Cor. 5:8 that we should "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth". Let us endeavor daily to manifest our sincerity by our actions. Unfairness, malice and duplicity should be mortified. Business transactions should be characterized by honesty.

In Titus 2:7 Paul, in writing to Titus said, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity". We must be concerned about the purity of the doctrine we believe and teach. In doctrine we should show uncorruptness. Not all who teach are sincere. (See Phil. 1:16). Some even preach the

truth prompted by evil motives. Are you careful to receive and teach only the truth and do that with sincerity?

Our love for God, our families, our brethren and others generally, must be in sincerity. The Scripture mentions "the sincerity of your love". (2 Cor. 8:8). Sincere love seeks not her own, is not easily provoked and thinketh no evil. It does not envy, is not rash, but is kind and suffers long. It does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth! John said, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous". (1 John 5:2-3). Paul said, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity". (Eph. 6:24).

Are you sincere?

Only those who are sincere will be saved eternally. Let not a double-minded man think that he will receive anything of the Lord. Hypocrites cannot escape the damnation of hell! (See Matt. 23:15-33). Are you sincere? Do you thirst after righteousness? Are you hungry for the bread of life? Are you willing to obey whatever God commands through his Word? If you are lost, you must obey the gospel in order to be saved. (See 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 6:17-18). True sincerity will prompt you to prepare for the judgment!

If you are a Christian, do you sing with sincerity? Is your giving of your money to the Lord's cause genuine? What about your praying and breaking bread? If you are unfaithful as a child of God, repent and pray for forgiveness!

- Carrol R. Sutton, via *The Instructor*, April, 1964

THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Death always casts a shadow. Never a morning dawned bright enough to dispel it; night's darkness never gathered heavy enough to conceal it. Its path is marked by the falling sparrow and the withering of fair flowers in the field. Yet the eye cannot see the spectre of its form for this shadow plays not upon the hillside or meadow, but rather casts its chill into and across the human heart. And so man spends his short earthly day fully knowing that someday he must walk through the Psalmist's "valley of the shadow".

How sobering! I shall die! The spirit will slip away from this fleshly tabernacle and my old home will occupy a place in the silent city; there to return to the dust that once nourished it. There is no escape. The grim reaper even now rides astride the pale horse, invading

every land. Inspiration said all of this in a single, simple statement: "It is appointed unto men once to die".

But more sobering than death itself, and equally certain, is that which is beyond, for the inspired scribe not only said that we are appointed to die; "but after that - the judgement". And God gave us assurance thereof when "he raised him (Christ) from the dead". (Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27).

Judgment! I shall be judged! My eternal destiny is at stake; my fate is to either dwell with God within the walls of that heavenly city, or to be consigned forever to the insufferable agonies of hell. Death now assumes significance far beyond physical values; the loss of earthly life itself now becomes but a small part of its character. Death ends not life, but prepares for life. Death – now, no more can be done before judgment. The book is closed!

The gospel, God's power unto salvation, will then be employed by the Judge as the standard. (Romans 1:16; 2:16). "The word that I have spoken", said Jesus, "the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Judgement is for eternity; whatever preparation you may have made for earthly life and security, multiply it ten thousand times for the judgement. Make your calling and election sure. Quibble not at God's commandments, nor reason them away. Obedience will purify your soul; disobedience and refusal of the gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction. (1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). And remember, all of this preparation must be made before death. It includes being baptized into Christ, where redemption is, and requires walking in the light. (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7).

But what if death should come before I have done the former, or when I am walking contrary to the latter? And beneath this shadow we live, knowing that ere long our day of preparation will be forever passed.

God is not willing that we perish, but solemnly and gently admonishes: "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation". (2 Cor. 6:2). Seeing that life is short and death is sure, and that judgment awaits us all, prepare today, while you may; be ready for your call.

- Jere Frost

An Appeal To You

Are you tired of the doctrines of men? Do you see inconsistencies in what many preachers teach and what the Bible says? For instance, many preachers say we can pick the church

of our choice. The Bible tells us Jesus came to build His church, not the church of our choice (Matt. 16:18). His church is described as His bride (Eph. 5:22-33; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2). May we present many brides to the Lord? His church is also referred to as His body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24). The Spirit revealed there is only one body (Eph. 4:4). May we give Jesus a choice of bodies? So, are we allowed to have the church, bride or body of our choice? No. So, why do so many preachers say we can have the church of our choice?

We appeal to you to look at the Bible and see what it says. If what it says contradicts what men say, accept it and reject the doctrines of men (cf. 2 Jn. 9-11). You will not regret it.

Further, we ask you to give us an opportunity to study with you. We will sit down with an open Bible and show you why we believe what we believe. If we are wrong, we invite you to correct us.

- Steven F. Deaton

The Lord's Supper

Don't we love to remind ourselves of past joys we experienced with dear loved ones who have gone? We treasure surviving photographs, maybe we have an occasional opportunity to pass by the old home place where we grew up, or the cemetery plots that are so vivid in our memories. The headstones weather all storms and serve as a lasting reminder that a dear relative lived and was loved, died and is fondly remembered.

Today, faith in Jesus Christ defines our lives. We continuously return to His life-giving word, nourishing our spiritual lives, strengthening our faith, longing to see our beloved Savior. But there are no tattered photos that survive, no home place to contemplate His growing up, no tomb standing as a lasting reminder that our Lord lived and was loved, died and was raised, ascended and reigns, intercedes and is lovingly remembered by all of His brethren. No personal relics belonging to Jesus survive. However, He did leave a memorial.

On the very night in which He was betrayed, he gave His closest, specially-chosen apostles the one memorial, divinely established, defined by the Lord Himself, with the intent that it would survive any storm and be the lasting reminder that our dear Savior lived and was loved, died for our sins, and continues to be with us until time is no more. By His own commanded memorial observance, all of His disciples fondly remember (1 Cor. 11:24-25), yes, even PROCLAIM the Lord's death until the living Savior comes again (1 Cor. 11:26).

Jesus gave His disciples the Lord's Supper, the memorial, spiritual feast that continuously, because of repetition in regular observance (cf. Acts 20:7), reminds His disciples that Jesus suffered and died for our sins. The wisdom of heaven appointed this supper to keep the memory of His great sacrifice alive in our hearts. It was divinely designed so that forgetful man would *never* forget. No greater tragedy could befall a Christian than to forget what Christ has done for us on the cross. The one who forgets the death of Christ will also forget to live by His words.

The Lord's Supper is the divinely conceived memorial that reminds us of the atoning, sacrificial death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:23-25). His death on the cross was the greatest sacrifice in human history. The Lord's Supper is the world's greatest memorial to the world's greatest event.

Friend, are you assembling with Christians on the first day of the week *because* you remember that the Lord Jesus Christ died in order that you would be forgiven of your sins?

- Gary Smalley

- > "It's not true that nice guys finish last. Nice guys are winners before the game even starts!"
 - > "Keep an open mind, but don't keep it too open or people will throw a lot of rubbish into it!"
 - > "There is something fishy going on when churches are not fishing for men!"
 - > "Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off the goal!"
 - > "What are you doing while the Lord's work goes undone?"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"The Testimony of the Lord's Supper!"* (Text: 1 John 5:5-10); Sunday evening: Class: Hebrews 11:39-40, page 128.