

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Trust in the Lord!

God asks us to “wait” on Him (Psa. 27:14; 37:9, 34). That is, He says, “Trust Me!” Really, at the heart of trust is confidence...absolute faith in an undeniable fact. But waiting is hard; learning to trust the Lord with the events of our lives over which we have no control is difficult, especially for those of us who think we can fix everything. But remember, “without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). Simply put, there is no substitute for trusting God. If we are to “walk by faith” in this life in order that we might “live in hope” for the life to come, I suggest three essentials with regard to God:

#### 1. We must SEEK TO KNOW HIM.

When suffering comes and we're most susceptible to our sensation to quit, we should lean on what we know about God (i.e. – God is faithful, just, all-wise, all-powerful; God is good). But you can't trust in a God you don't know. That's why getting to know God better is the key to trusting Him more. But trust is something that develops more fully over time. Those great men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 walked with God and grew in their relationship with God. They knew that God's character was such that His word could be trusted. When we truly know God, we will learn to trust His wisdom and accept His timing. We believe God, so we are confident that what God foresees, He can furnish! And so Jesus admonishes us, “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:31-33). What we know about God gives us the assurance that God will do right at just the right time. While we cannot control the future, we are confident in God's sovereignty. “Those who know your name put their trust in You” (Psa. 9:10). We can trust an unknown future to a known God.

#### 2. We must SPEAK OFTEN WITH HIM.

Trust in the Lord. Can you guess what happens when we doubt the most? That's right...we neglect communion with God. We stop letting Him speak to us (through His

word) and we cease speaking to Him in prayer. But isn't prayer an act of faith? After all, why would anyone speak to one in whom he had no confidence? Why would anyone take a burden before someone he felt didn't really care or if he did, wasn't able to provide help? Yet, because of our knowledge of God, we believe that He not only cares (1 Pet. 5:7), but has the power to do all things that align with His will (Jas. 5:17; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). Maybe that's why we need to be preaching more on prayer. Paul exhorts us, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). Prayer enables us to wait without worry. Have you ever found yourself in bondage to the "what if" way of thinking? I'm talking about those ulcer-causing, mental monsters we allow into our minds and take to bed with us at night. "What if I never get better?" "What if he never comes home?" "What if I lose my job?" "What if I never find the right person to marry?" "What if the cancer comes back?" "What if..." – and on and on we go. Isn't it emotionally exhausting? Isn't it true we can "what if" ourselves to death (both figuratively and literally)? Rather than imagining the worst and being ruled by worry, the psalmist says, "Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you..." (Psa. 55:22).

### 3. We must STAY LOYAL BEFORE HIM.

"Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward" (Heb. 10:35). Like those Hebrew Christians long ago, we too need to "listen to this word of exhortation" (Heb. 13:22). Staying loyal to God is not possible apart from trust, and so we are reminded, "the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38). But aren't we tempted at times to lose trust (confidence) when it appears that heaven is silent to our request? We know God has the power to act the moment we ask. Yet, we often wonder why He doesn't prove His power and provide relief now? May I suggest that perhaps what God wants to perfect in us while we wait is as important as what it is we are waiting for. James puts it like this, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4). Trials will strengthen us only when properly endured. Such demands an element of trust in the wisdom and working of God. Now, as we encounter various trials, we will no doubt need a measure of wisdom in order to respond and react appropriately. Therefore, James admonishes us, "ask in faith, with no doubting" (Jas. 1:5-6). Do we see why trust is so essential? Without such we become and will remain "unstable in all our ways." Yes, we will have honest doubts, and life is really hard at times. But one thing is certain...God is, and He rewards those who "diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). We must hold on in faith without wavering. We must "wait on the Lord, and keep His way" (Psa. 37:34).

With hearts filled with sorrow, anxiety, and fear in regards to the future, Jesus said to His disciples "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (Jn.

14:1). And while Jesus knew the present reality was troubling, He spoke of a future that was full of glory (vss. 2-3). Why does Jesus use such language of “believe, believe, and never stop believing?” Because where there is no faith in the future there is no power in the present. Followers of Jesus have always been asked to trust Him. Let us therefore, with one mind and mouth sing, “My heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay; Tho’ some may dwell where these abound, my prayer, my aim is higher ground.”

Let’s look toward higher ground. Let’s lean on Him who is our help and our hope. Let’s trust!

-Paul White

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## **Hate Your Father and Mother!**

Why do you attend the church of which you are a member? Is it because your father and mother before you were members of that church? Is it because your husband or wife belongs to that particular religious body? What if Christ, through His Word, the New Testament, demanded one thing, and the church of your family said to do something else? Whom would you follow?

Jesus declared: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Does this mean I must literally despise the father who provided my needs when I was helpless and gave me the teaching and guidance to become a Christian? Must I turn against my mother who endangered her own life to bring me into this world and selflessly nursed and cared for me in childhood? Must I forsake my own wife who left a secure home to be my companion and bear my children? Must I loathe my little ones, any one of whom I would readily lay down my own life to protect? Must I hate my very own brother in the flesh who was my constant companion as a child? Of course the Bible demands the exact opposite attitude toward my own family. In fact, no son ever demonstrated greater love for his mother than did the Son of Mary, Who, while in the agony of impending death, made provision for the care of His mother after He was gone (John 19:26, 27).

What, then, is the meaning of this condition of discipleship? In Genesis 29:30 the inspired writer Moses observed of Jacob, "he loved also Rachel more than Leah." Moses then declared, "the Lord saw that Leah was hated" (verse 31). Leah was "hated" in that she was loved less than was Rachel. This is precisely the sense in which we are to hate our families. As Jesus warned: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy

of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37).

When John F. Kennedy was running for President, he stated that his religion was a part of his family heritage and that he could no more give up Roman Catholicism than he could his Irish ancestry. But Jesus Christ warned that if you do not love Him more than you love father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, you cannot be His disciple. One proves his love for Christ by obeying Him (John 14:15). If you follow the religion of your family in disregard to the Word of Christ, you are not a disciple of Christ.

- Keith Sharp, via *Truth Magazine*, March 21, 1974

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- > "There is no greater freedom than that enjoyed by a *bond slave of Jesus Christ!*"
  - > "Sinners who imagine they are hard-boiled are really only half-baked!"
  - > "It wasn't because you didn't run fast enough," a boy said to a man who missed his train. "It was because you didn't start soon enough!"
  - > "No life can ever be a masterpiece without, until it is a masterpiece within!"
  - > "People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair!" - Gen. Douglas MacArthur
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*Identifying the Lord's Church!*" #3 (Text: Matt. 16:13-19); Sunday evening: Hebrews Class: Lesson 25, p. 145: "Imitate Those Who Rule Over You, 13:7).