

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

August 04, 2019

Volume 39, # 32

Uphold The Truth, No Matter What Our Son Does

My wife and I recently discussed Sewell Hall's article "Deal Gently With the Young Man" (Christianity Magazine, October 1987, p. 293). The Halls have been dear friends of ours for a number of years and we appreciate the tender appeal of this article for consideration to be given toward our children who may err. Donna and I have talked at times about the possible prospect of facing a time when one or more of our children might not be faithful to the Lord, a sadness that invades the homes of preachers as well as other Christians. We appreciate the good job the Halls have done raising their children and especially the fact that their son Gardner has been faithfully laboring in the gospel. May God raise up many more such faithful laborers from such godly homes! If and when such young men stray, may God help us all to show the love and patience that restores such an one with meekness (Gal. 6:1). I am thankful to have known faithful preachers of the gospel who have followed that very course of action, as we are always admonished to do in 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

As brother Hall observed, "Some young men who start on a course of error cannot be saved regardless of approach. . . ." As Donna and I discussed the possibility of such an apostasy in our own family, we conclude that an additional plea is needed with the one made by brother Hall, and we believe he will agree with us in making this plea to our brethren. Our plea is: Uphold the truth, no matter what our son does.

David mourned for his son Absalom who died in apostasy, as any godly parent would have done. Absalom had been guilty of treachery against his own father and had betrayed the love of his family, not to mention the love of God. David cried, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son" (2 Sam. 18:33).

A father cannot forget that he is a father; and the more holy and generous his nature, the more powerfully will the fatherly feeling assert itself. As seen in our Savior's case, when he wept over Jerusalem already doomed because of sin against him, equal to, yea, worse

even than that of Absalom, the natural feelings of the heart may flow forth in most touching strains, while there is in the soul a most perfect accord with the righteous judgment of God. ... There is no complaint against the wisdom or justice of God, no trace of a spirit of discontent with the administration of divine love; it was pure sorrow for a ruined life. David's humanity was not lost in his kingly office. The love of a father's heart is not eradicated by a son's ingratitude. The parable of the prodigal son is evidence of this and also of its divine counterpart. And in the case of David, the remembrance of his own sad fall having possibly exercised a detrimental influence over Absalom, just in the most critical period of his life, could not but render both just and natural this great lamentation (Pulpit Commentary: 2 Samuel, p. 449).

In spite of David's sorrow and in spite of his love for Absalom, he never wavered in his love for the Lord and for the truth. We as parents need that vital lesson today.

If the plea of parents and others does not bring my child to godly sorrow and repentance, if he is going into apostasy and sowing the seeds of digression in the hearts of others, what should be the reaction of those who are my friends and brethren? There is the danger of their failing to expose error and to uphold the truth as they should because our friendship blinds them to the reality of the dangers unfolding. There may be the conscious or unconscious fear of offending the young man or his parents when it involves the children of our own dear friends. We need to be reminded at such times of Matthew 10:34-39, where Christ said,

Think not that I came to send peace of the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 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. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

My own love and loyalty toward Christ would be tested if Sewell's son went into apostasy, because of my deep love and respect for the Hall family and their children. I have friends who love me and my family so much that it would test those friends' love of the Lord and truth if my children went into apostasy.

For the sake of my friends and even my children who will read this, should such a time of apostasy and testing come to our family (God forbid!), please "deal gently with the young man." But, then, what if he does not repent and correct his course? If he dodges the truth, covers his apostasy with double talk, works undercover to lead others away from the truth,

casts aspersions on those who question his teaching, and seeks sympathy for error by playing the martyr, please do not aid and abet his sin by defending him and criticizing those who suffer the agony of exposing the apostasy. Please do not do so because it will harden my son in error and apostasy, it will result in the precious sons of other brethren being led away from the truth, it will damage the cause and church of our Lord by fostering an atmosphere of softness and compromise, and it will manifest the sin of thinking of men "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). Such a course may be mistaken for love, mercy, peace, and unity, but it is not upright "according to the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14).

If necessary, face my son in the public arena and withstand him. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet" (Isa. 58:1). There will be pain and tears in your heart, and some who ought to help and encourage you will charge you with meanness and with "driving" my son deeper into error - I speak from experience. Do not cease or desist in the face of these charges. Please love the Lord above my son! Recall the incident of Peter's compromise in Galatians 2. Had you been Peter's father, whom would you have appreciated: Barnabas, who also was carried away and loathed to challenge his dear brother, or Paul, who withstood Peter to the face? Who contributed to Peter's error: Barnabas or Paul? Who understood true love both for Christ and Peter: Barnabas or Paul? Who followed the course which turned Peter from the error of his way and so saved a soul from death: Barnabas or Paul?

Dear brother and friend, if you find my son in Peter's place, please, please be a true friend to Christ, to the truth, to the church, to my son, to other sons, and to my wife and myself - be a Paul and not a Barnabas! I will thank you and love you through all eternity for your efforts, whether it produces the desired result or not. Do not imagine that you can be wiser or more gentle than God who directed the beloved apostle Paul. Warn and plead with our son in the words of John, the apostle of love:

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not his teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works (2 Jn. 9-11).

May God help us all to use wisdom and love as we seek to save the erring and to protect the church from apostasy. "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

- Ron Halbrook, via Guardian of Truth, 2/18/1988

POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS

1. Mary Magdalene, John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9-11
 2. To The Other Women, Matt. 28:9-10
 3. Cleopas and Companion on Road to Emmaus, Lk. 24:13-25; Mk. 16:12-13
 4. Simon Peter, Lk. 24:33-35; 1 Cor. 15:5
 5. Disciples, Except Thomas, John 20:19-23; Lk. 24:36-43; Mk. 16:14
 6. Disciples, With Thomas (One Week Later) John 20:24-29
 7. Seven Disciples At Sea Of Tiberius, John 21:1-14
 8. On A Mountain (Great Commission Given), Matt. 28:16-20
 9. 500 Brethren At Once, 1 Cor. 15:6
 10. James, 1 Cor. 15:7
 11. All of The Apostles, 1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:4-12; Lk. 24:50-51
 12. Paul, 1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:3-7; 22; 26 (Perhaps, Many Other Times, Acts 1:3)
-

- "If we claim God as our Father, we should act as God's children!"
 - "Never miss an opportunity to make others happy. It will do something for you as well as for them!"
 - "The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism!"
 - "An optimist makes opportunities out of his calamities. A pessimist makes calamities out of his opportunities!"
 - "Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president, called the Bible "the best gift God has ever given to man But for it we could not know right from wrong!"
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Three Philosophies of Life!"* (Text: Eph. 4:28); Sunday evening: *"The Lord Makes Good His Promised Meeting!"* (John 21:1-14).