

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **The High Cost of Ignorance**

The first sermon this scribe ever attempted to preach was entitled, "Sins That Crucified Jesus." One of those sins was ignorance. On Solomon's porch of the temple area Peter said, "And now, brethren I wot (know-ASV) that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts 3:17). The context shows that the crucifixion of the Prince of Life was the topic of Peter's discourse (Acts 3:13-15). In his first recorded sermon proclaimed at Antioch in Pisidia Paul said, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." (Acts 13:27). Years later the same apostle wrote, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2:8). Ignorance nailed God's Son to the cross on that gloomy Friday. Israel chose a murderer in preference to their long awaited Messiah because they did not know. The capital crime of the centuries, the crucifixion of Christ, was executed in the framework of glaring ignorance. For it, Israel has paid dearly.

From a number of standpoints Saul of Tarsus was a brilliant young Pharisee. The finest of teaching had molded him in youth and the most zealous of ardent interest for the perpetuation of cherished Judaism spurred him on in his relentless determination to destroy the newly begun cause of the man from Nazareth. He led the forces of Pharisaical persecution which were aimed at the quick and total extermination of the infant cause of the despised Nazarene. Yet Saul was ignorant of the most important fact in all the world - the Deity of this very Jesus whom he bitterly hated and zealously persecuted. He did not even know the simple plan of salvation at the time Christ appeared to him on the Syrian road, yet apostolic preachers had filled Jerusalem with the doctrine of Christ (Acts 5:28). He sought answer from Jesus as to what he should do (Acts 9:6). Ananias came and instructed him concerning the completion of his primary obedience to the gospel of Christ (Acts 22:16). Saul was ignorant about the church, feeling that he was performing Jehovah a service by his bitter persecutions. He was ignorant as touching the fulfillment of hundreds of Old Testament scriptures as they met, merged and enjoyed minute fulfillment in Christ and His church. He was ignorant of his own best interest. Like the proverbial ox who kicked against the goad and only harmed himself, Saul was bringing

deep harm to himself with each persecution assignment carried out (Acts 9:5). He was harming himself far more than he was the church. In one of his last epistles he alludes to this ignorant period of his past life: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. 1:13). Though the guilt of this painful period of his past was removed by gospel obedience, he never forgot his days as a persecutor. Frequently he made allusion to this sad period of his earlier life (Acts 22:4-5; 22:20; 26:9-11; Phil. 3:6; 1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:13-15). Even when ignorance has been replaced by knowledge, deep seated regrets yet linger of the foul deeds and distasteful actions performed while under the dominion of ignorance even as in Paul's case. Truly, ignorance extracts a high price.

Paul's longest chapter is 1 Corinthians 15. His monumental defense of the "Bible Doctrine of the Resurrection" was prompted by certain Corinthians who denied this fundamental facet of holy gospel. Their unbelief toward the bodily resurrection was directly linked to their ignorance. The inspired scribe wrote, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." (1 Cor. 15:34). Shameful ignorance darkened their minds and kept them from reaping the sunlit joys of a firm belief in a future resurrection of the body and the glorious events which will be subsequent to this. What a high price ignorance demands.

Ignorance was a glaring sin among the recipients of the Hebrew epistle. They should have been teachers of the word; instead they needed a refresher course on the plan of salvation (Heb. 5:12-14)! It was difficult for the sacred penman to proceed to the meaty themes on his inspired agenda because they were "dull of hearing." (Heb. 5:11). Is there likewise not a rather significant connection between the glaring nature of their willful ignorance and the brink of Christian apostasy toward which they were rapidly approaching? We think definitely there was.

Someone has said, "Ignorance is the greatest curse of humanity." We fully concur with this statement. A constantly increasing knowledge of God's word is the only answer to the spiritual blight of sinful ignorance. We live far too late for this knowledge to come by inspiration. Therefore it can only come by perspiration (Psalm 1:1-3).

- Robert Taylor, Jr., *The Christian Courier*, Vol. V, No. 10, February, 1970, pp. 38-39 [edited].

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## **The Danger Of Having Been Here Longer**

"Better a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more." (Ecclesiastes 4:13)

Just as there are special challenges for those who are young in the faith, there are also some for the older. One of these is the pride that comes from comparing ourselves to those who are our juniors, spiritually speaking. "May God help us to avoid thoughts such as these: "But I have been here the longest. I have worked harder. Someone else is being favored."

Pride is especially dangerous because of its subtlety. It can take many different forms, some of which are extremely hard to see when we are the ones who are guilty. If we think only of blatant egotism and arrogance, we may judge ourselves to be free of pride, but we need to think twice. It may be that some of the attitudes we classify as "spiritual maturity" are actually forms of pride, nicely disguised as the virtues of strength and wisdom.

For example, it's hard for experienced Christians to keep satisfaction with their experience from sliding off into the swamp of smugness. Perhaps we would never say so, and perhaps we're clever enough to keep others from knowing we think this way, but inwardly we may feel a warm, condescending glow of ever-so-subtle superiority when we think how little others have suffered. "When they've been around as long as we have, they'll see things differently," we sigh, congratulating ourselves for being older.

If you think you're not troubled by this particular malady, ask yourself this question: how willing am I to be corrected by someone with far less experience than I? The patronizing, "mature" smile with which you listen to criticism from your juniors is probably a sign of pride, and you may need to listen to Solomon: "Better a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more." Hasn't pride closed many an older ear?

Whether we're young or old in the faith, it's a good idea to minimize the amount of time we spend making comparisons. It really doesn't matter whether we are ahead of or behind someone else in life's experience. We won't have been in heaven for five seconds before we realize how absolutely silly such comparisons are. The only gap that matters is the gap between us and God!

- Gary Henry

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## I Am a Christian

- I am a Christian when I go to work/school; I am a Christian at home.
- I am a Christian when I am with my family or friends; I am a Christian when I am alone.

- I am a Christian when I interact with friends online; I am a Christian when I am browsing the internet alone.
- I am a Christian when I assemble with the saints on Sunday morning; I am a Christian when I eat at a restaurant on Sunday afternoon.
- I am a Christians when studying my Bible; I am a Christian when I choose non-religious reading material.
- I am a Christian when I pay my taxes; I am Christian when I vote.
- I am a Christian when I talk to my neighbor about Jesus; I am a Christian when my neighbor sees me working or playing in my yard.
- I am a Christian when I am tempted; I am a Christian when I pray.
- I am a Christian when I am sick; I am a Christian when I am well.
- I am a Christian when people like me: I am a Christian when people mistreat me.
- I am a Christian when I go to sleep; I am a Christian when I wake up.
- I am a Christian when my day is “good;” I am a Christian when my day is “bad.”

“Or, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

(1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because of the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.” (1 Peter 4:12-16).

- Lance Cordle

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## Comparing

If you compare yourself with someone who is smarter, more talented, or more physically attractive, you look inferior. If you compare yourself with someone who is less intelligent, less talented and less attractive, you feel superior.

If you compare yourself with yourself, you feel good. Yet you are the same person in all of the comparisons.

If you want to have a true measure of yourself, measure yourself by the true standard: the Word of God.

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 4:1-4).

“For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.” (2 Corinthians 10:12).

- Ron Adams

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> “Everyone has his burden; what counts is how you carry it!”

> “Assumptions are the termites of relationships!” - Henry Winkler

> “Dive into the sea of Scripture, and find there pearls beyond price!”

> “Cherish all your happy moments: they make a fine cushion for old age!” -  
Christopher Morley

> “Always hold your head up, but be careful to keep your nose at a friendly level!” -  
Max L. Forman

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: Greg Needham; Sunday evening: Greg Needham