

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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We Give No Offense in Anything

Paul's life epitomized the declaration, "we give no offense in anything" (2 Corinthians 6:3). A study of the life of Paul is a study in self-denial and sacrifice. He sacrificed a great deal to become a Christian (Philippians 3:4-7). He gave up even more to preach the gospel (Acts 26:19-21; 2 Timothy 1:8-12). In all this he followed the example of Christ, who gave most of all (Philippians 2:5-8).

Paul expressed his willingness to sacrifice his rights in many ways. He said that he would be willing to forego the eating of meats if such eating would cause his brother to stumble (1 Corinthians 8:13). He subjected himself as a servant to others (2 Corinthians 4:5). He then taught us not to do anything that would offend or cause our brother to stumble (Romans 14:21).

What would motivate Paul to live his life in such a way? Why be so willing to forego your rights? Let's look at Paul's life of self-denial and the motivation behind it.

First things first. Paul could willingly forego his rights because he had his priorities properly ordered. Paul was ready to sacrifice only those things that were of lesser importance. If he had been materialistic, worldly, and selfish, he would not have been willing to sacrifice for anyone or anything else.

The rich young ruler went away without the security of salvation because he wasn't willing to sacrifice. Paul exemplified a different attitude -- an attitude of sacrifice. We will never be able to live up to Paul's and Christ's example until we learn to live without whatever we may be called upon to sacrifice. Self-denial and sacrifice becomes possible and even easy once we develop the proper estimation of ourselves, our rights and our belongings.

Serving God and preaching the gospel were foremost to Paul. Having his priorities ordered, Paul knew what was of utmost importance. It wasn't himself and his rights. It was the gospel. Paul was not willing that anything should impede the progress of the

gospel. He knew that it was the gospel that saved man and not his personality or style (cf. Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5), but he also knew that he could, by his conduct, discredit the gospel and his preaching of it. Too many have been offended and turned away, not by the truth of the gospel, but by the attitude or conduct of the one preaching it. Would to God that every gospel preacher would mimic Paul and do nothing to discredit the gospel or give offense.

There are times when the truth, even compassionately presented, will offend someone. But this does not mean that it must offend. It seems that some preachers don't think they have done their job unless someone is offended by their preaching. Never water down or change the truth to keep from offending someone. Yet neither preach it in an attempt to offend. Be kind, be compassionate, be gentle and mild (Galatians 6:1), if the gospel is rejected then you will know that it wasn't you that kept them from salvation, but themselves.

We must be careful that our presentation of the gospel is not offensive. We must give equal diligence to insure that our lives are not offensive. Paul made it his aim to not allow anything to offend so as to hinder the spread of the gospel or the spiritual growth of his brethren. How sad to think that one thoughtless action might cancel all the many positive efforts put forth in the cause of Christ. How tragic when a man preaches the gospel in a place for many years, leads souls to Christ, strengthens the brethren, yet when asked to leave raise such a fuss that all his good work is destroyed. Other such thoughtless actions have done much damage to the cause of Christ.

Paul loved his brethren more than himself. The "I'm number one, I've got my rights" mentality has no place in the church. There is also no place for the "I don't have to; What's in it for me" attitude. Paul was willing to forego anything and give up everything for his brethren's sake. He viewed himself as their servant (1 Corinthians 9:19). He did not seek his own best interests, but theirs (1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:4). Paul's attitude must be ours: "Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble" (1 Corinthians 8:13).

- Ken Chapman

What a Sight!

A few years ago a young mother, Jessica Sinclair of Bridgetown, Ohio, noticed that her 10-month-old daughter, Piper, was having issues reaching her milestone of crawling. She brought this to the attention of Piper's pediatrician. "At her regular pediatric check,"

Jessica reports, "they did an eye screening and saw that she might have had a slight astigmatism."

An appointment was made with Dr. Josiah Young of Opticare Vision Centers. Dr. Young discovered the problem. "Her eyes checked out healthy, but come to find out she didn't have an astigmatism; [she was] extremely farsighted," said Jessica. "Her one eye was +7.00 and the other is +9.00. So we got her glasses made and the Opticare team helped with the choosing and fit of the glasses."

A week later, they went back to Opticare to pick up Piper's glasses. The technicians put the glasses on to Piper's face only for a second to make sure they fit properly. A little later, they would find out if the glasses really helped Piper's vision.

After leaving the Opticare center, Piper and her parents decided to go out to eat. While sitting at the table at the restaurant, they decided to put the glasses on Piper to see her reaction. They made a video and posted it onto Facebook. The video has gone viral with millions of viewers. Here is a link to the video with commentary by Lester Holt of NBC Nightly News: <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/babys-adorable-reaction-to-seeing-clearly-for-first-time-483679811629>

The video shows Piper initially offering resistance as her mother places the glasses on her face. But when Piper looks through the lenses and is able to see clearly for the first time, she stops squirming and starts beaming with smiles as she looks carefully, back and forth, to her mother and daddy!

In John 9, we read how Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth. This miracle caused quite a stir among the religious leaders because it was done on the Sabbath day. The religious leaders viewed Jesus' actions as a violation of the Law of Moses. The formerly-blind man was amazed that they were so biased against the One who had clearly demonstrated that He was "from God" (vs. 30-33).

Jesus later found the healed man and asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him (John 9:35-38).

Do you "see" Jesus? Do you believe that He is the Son of God?

Examine His claims, His teachings, and His works. Start by reading the book of John.

Then, if your heart is open, you will “see” through the eyes of faith that Jesus IS the Son of God. You will also “see” that God sent Jesus to this world to die on the cross for your sins and for mine, so that we can be saved and live eternally with Him in heaven (John 3:16).

Do YOU believe that Jesus is the Son of God? If so, then place your faith and trust in Him (Acts 16:30-31), turn from your sin in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Him before men (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). Then, follow Him all the way to heaven by walking in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7).

There are none so blind as those who will not see.

- David A. Sargent

A Catholic Blunder

An embarrassing incident which any Catholic, conversant with his own history, is well aware of is "the Babylonian Captivity of the Roman Catholic church." From the years 1309 to 1377 (nearly 70 years, the same length of the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews in Old Testament days), the Pope did not live in Rome. He lived in Avignon, France, and thus the Pope was in captivity outside of his own homeland, away from the Vatican. Following this Babylonian Captivity, came the great schisms from 1378 to 1418 in which there was not one Pope, nor two, nor three -- but four at one time. Four Popes at one time! Which one was infallible? Which one was the voice of the living Church? Which one of the four was the Vicar of Christ upon earth? These are problems they must resolve. This is embarrassing history for those who pay allegiance to the Vatican.

These people believe the Pope is infallible only when he speaks “ex cathedra,” from the papal throne, when he speaks on matters of faith and morals. Most people do not know that it was not until July 18th, 1870, that the Roman Catholic Church pronounced officially this doctrine of infallibility. It had been discussed for some time; there had been those in the 13th century who affirmed that the Pope was infallible. However, most Romanists in that era agreed with William Occam who violently and logically opposed such a theory. But less than a hundred years ago, 764 bishops came to Rome to vote on this issue of papal infallibility. Of this number 231 voted against it, 533 voted for it. In fact, 229 of them fled Rome, lest they have to place an official "No" upon the ballot. And so, only 533 out of 764 bishops voted. On July 18th, 1870, 533 admittedly fallible men voted infallibility upon another man. That is an impossibility in itself. How can fallible human beings vote

on the infallibility of someone else? It just cannot be done. The very inception of this decree is absurd in the absolute.

- Johnny Ramsey, *The Christian Courier*, Vol. V, No. 2, June, 1969, p. 8.

> "When you're through changing, you're through!"

> "Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power!" - Seneca

> "One's dignity may be assaulted, vandalized and cruelly mocked, but cannot be taken away unless it is surrendered!" - Michael J. Fox

> "He who postpones the hour of living rightly is like the rustic who waits for the river to run out before he crosses!" - Horace

> "No pressure, no diamonds!" - Mary Case

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*What Has Happened to My Zeal?*" (Text: Titus 2:11-15); Sunday evening: "*How Good Is Your Word?*" (Num. 6:1-8).