

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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"Ye Which Are Spiritual"

Once a member of a congregation was reported to have been drinking, and seen in public under the influence of alcohol. I was privileged to be present when the elders discussed the problem, and how they might act in keeping with their obligations as shepherds, and to save the wavering brother's soul.

One elder, with great humility, said, "I believe I am the one who should go and talk with him. You see, there was a time, some years ago, when we drank together."

This bishop saw with clarity what many of us never see; or seeing, ignore. To reach a sinner, to correct an error, understanding is necessary. Understanding of the truth — of course — but also understanding of the one in error. This doesn't warrant the conclusion that only former drunkards should be elders; but it does suggest the need for all who would correct others to "feel" with and for them. Sympathy and empathy are not synonymous with condoning.

Christ was "made like unto his brethren" -- "suffered being tempted" -- and therefore encourages us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace." He did not need to sin, but to understand man's frailties. (Heb. 2: 11-18; 4:15-16) Concern and compassion are written between every line of the account of the woman taken in adultery, although the sin itself must have been repulsive to the pure Son of God. (John 8:3-11) ("Go, and sin no more.")

"Hate sin, but love the sinner." It's trite, abused; but Oh, so needed!

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, July, 1968

Dealing with Shame

Rayden Overbay is a 12-year-old with special needs from Yukon, Oklahoma. He became somewhat famous not long ago because of the way he was treated. A video of him being

bullied went viral. He was bullied to such a degree—he felt such shame—that he had written, “I want to kill myself” on his arm.

What can be done in such a situation? How can we help someone recover? What is the remedy for the shame that they feel?

Being from Oklahoma, the Sooners football team took it upon themselves to try and make things right. They made him a special guest at one of their home games. Rayden was given a game ball.

He was put in front of the entire team and he was made to feel that he was important and special. Even Jalen Hurts told Rayden that they were brothers and that he always had his back. The young man who had been teased, taunted, and torn down was now praised and elevated.

This is what we are told that we need to properly process and deal with our shame: (1) to be given kind words of praise and (2) to be restored or elevated to a new standing.

Now, consider what the Lord Jesus does for repentant sinners who continue to deal with their shame: “Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your master” (Matt. 25:21). “The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5; cf. Heb. 2:11; 11:16; Zeph. 3:19). We are lifted up out of our shameful state. We are praised as part of God’s family. We are placed in a position of glory!

Our submission and obedience to Jesus the Christ is the remedy. The blood of Jesus cleanses, washes, makes new and thus is the remedy for sin and shame!

- Bart Warren

John Lennon & Jesus

Just as my parents can so vividly recall the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, so I remember December 8, 1980, the night John Lennon was murdered. I was loading my U-Haul in the rain for my return from Dallas to my home in San Diego. Though I was anxious to see my folks, the enthusiasm of going home for the holidays was tempered by the sorrow of leaving behind so many good friends. Some of those friends had taught me of Jesus Christ. A wonderful new beginning to my life had begun in Dallas. I was sad to leave.

As I drove I turned on the radio. To my pleasant surprise, a Beatles song was playing. I was feeling much better now. Ever since I was a child the Beatles had been my favorite group. I had grown up with them and their music, knew all the words by heart and collected every record they released in this country. For a few moments my mind was relieved of the sadness of leaving Dallas as I happily sang along with the Beatles.

Then came the news. John Lennon had been shot to death earlier that evening in New York City. It was as if part of my youth had been destroyed. Lennon's music wielded such a profound influence upon me, not because I approved of every facet of his personal life, but because his music had so precisely spoken to my concerns, even as a child. "Living is easy with eyes closed, misunderstanding all you seek, it's getting hard to be someone . . . life is very short and there's no time for fussing and fighting my friends . . . just gimme some truth. . ." were some of his lyrics I identified with while growing up. His quest was my quest, and that quest led me finally and decisively to Jesus Christ. I remember weeping as I drove and considered both the debt I owed Lennon and the irony that my life was only beginning while his had so abruptly ended.

Last October 9, I turned on the radio to hear it was Lennon's 50th birthday. To honor him, radio stations around the world simultaneously played his song, "Imagine." I was struck with the paradox that was John Lennon. "Imagine," a song many believe to be his crowning achievement, simultaneously expresses both the genius and tragedy of Lennon: "No need for greed or hunger, a brotherhood of man, imagine all the people, living life in peace. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope some day you will join us, and the world will live as one." Again, Lennon had articulated the right ideals - peace on earth, good will toward men. But tragically, he relied solely on man's wisdom and imagination. While pleading in one song, "give peace a chance," he had apparently never given God a chance: "God is a concept . . . I don't believe in Jesus . . . I just believe in me." He sang: "Imagine there's no heaven . . . no religion too" was his impotent answer to finding peace on earth.

Lennon's hopes and dreams are not only mine, but those of millions of people around the world. But so many of us, like Lennon, look for it in the wrong place. Lennon asks man to imagine, but God, through the apostle Paul says, ". . . eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9-10). I wish Lennon were alive so I could tell him the things my Dallas friends first told me: that Christ died that men might have peace with each other by first making their own peace with God. Man could never imagine the wonderful story of the cross. The world Lennon could only dream of can be a reality only when each of us lets Christ rule in his heart as Lord. "For ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been

baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26-28). Lennon died before he learned that God alone could give him the lasting peace he longed for. His death warns us of the dangers of putting off the active pursuit of our ideals. Peace on earth is nothing more than the aggregate effect of the individual finding peace with God, multiplied millions of times the world over. All we are saying is, give God a chance.

- Doug Clevenger, via Guardian of Truth, July 2, 1992

- > Ask your preacher where the Bible says we ought not to point out to others that they are wrong in what they believe. Compare his answer with James 5:19-20!
 - > "Resolutions come easiest following indulgence!"
 - > "Judging others to condemn them with no thought of my own sins is gross spiritual blindness!"
 - > "New converts deserve more than a dry towel and a handshake!"
 - > "The best ammunition misses the mark if the aim is bad!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*God's Regrets!*" (Text: Genesis 6:5-8 and 1 Samuel 15:10-11); Sunday evening: Why Believe the Bible? *The Problem of Unbelief*, p. 68.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)