

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Cosmetic Religion

In the seven "woes" pronounced by Jesus in Matt. 23 are to be found the most severe and scathing rebukes recorded in the entire Bible. In His condemnation of these hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, Jesus likens them unto whited sepulchers, "...which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Then He continues, "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (V.27, 28).

Because men are impressed and influenced by outward appearances (1 Sam. 16:7), and because we all like the approval of others, we must be very careful not to play the role of the hypocrite. Our righteousness must be more than appearance, it must be a way of life. We must develop a consistency of character that is not altered by circumstance or companions. We must avoid the mistake of these scribes and Pharisees and not allow ours to become a cosmetic religion—the kind that is seasonal and superficial and dependent on appearances. And the place to begin cultivating Christ-like character is in the heart and in the home.

Let's face it! What a person is at home is what he is! Nowhere is true character more obvious—no pretense, no false airs here. And nowhere is a demonstration of spiritual character more needed! Every wife needs the kind of husband who will heed God's admonition to love her "as Christ also loved the church" (Eph. 5:25); who will have regard for her needs, her interests and her feelings. Many neglected and mistreated wives wish their husbands were at home what they appear to be in public.

Likewise, men have few earthly blessings to enrich their lives more than a godly wife; one who manifests respect and subjection "as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:24, 33). Her chaste behavior, shamefastness, sobriety; her meek and quiet spirit and other such qualities reflect an inward adornment highly valued by the Lord (1 Pet. 3; 1 Tim. 2)—and by the discerning husband! How regrettable that some women have neglected such adornment in favor of the outward. Regardless of what wives seem to be in public, when they cease

to be "keepers at home," they cease to please the Lord (Titus 2:5). When women become indifferent to God given responsibilities to husband and home, their religion merely becomes a part of their outward adornment—and the entire family suffers for it.

Consequently, children are hurt immeasurably by parents who practice cosmetic religion. Even little ones recognize the disparity between home and "church-building" conduct—and, in later years will not likely forget it. Parents would do well to begin every day with a vivid and fresh recollection that God wants them to rear their children for heaven! None helps or hinders their eternal welfare more than mother and daddy. But mark it well! Bringing up a child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" is impossible!—for parents who do not live for the Lord. We must put away religious hypocrisy! Let us make a start—from the heart—beginning at home—today.

- Dan S. Shipley, via *Plain Talk*, Sept., 1982

The Majority is Always Right?

Gary Kerr made a comment about this in the Sunday morning sermon, commenting that the majority is ALMOST always wrong, at least in the scriptures.

The book of Genesis records the history of a man named Noah, a righteous man who God instructed to build an ark because of a coming flood [no record of rain at this time]. Noah began building the ark and preaching repentance for more than 100 years. Noah and his family entered the ark as God instructed, saving themselves only because the majority would not repent and serve God. The majority was wrong and were destroyed Luke 17:25-26.

Moses was instructed to send 12 men to spy out the land of Canaan, 10 spies lack faith in God, while Joshua and Caleb understood the power of God and His ability to carry out His promises. There were 603,250 men, soldiers among an estimated 1 million plus people who died in the wilderness, only Joshua and Caleb entered the Land of promise. The majority were wrong and were destroyed.

Matthew 7:13, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (NASB95)

Jesus teaches that the gate is narrow, small that leads to life, and not many are willing to give up their fleshly interests, but the majority will find the broad easy way, but it leads to destruction.

Recorded in Acts chapter 2 there were 3,000 that obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentecost. A remarkable event, however, scholars estimate that over a million people were in Jerusalem on that day, so once again the majority was wrong leading to destruction.

Many other examples can be found in the scriptures that make the point, that following God's word will seldom put you in the majority. Hebrews 13:6 - so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?" (NASB95)

- Louis Cook

SPIN

In order to get her grandmother's spinning wheel, my friend had to buy it at her estate auction. It was very old, but in great condition, and it was such a treasured family heirloom. This prompted a personal interest in these devices that produced thread or yarn from the spinning of fibers. I don't think anyone knows for certain when they originated, but they have been around a very long time. Before the Industrial Revolution, they were fundamental to the cotton textile industry, and as you would expect, the concept upon which they operated became the basis for numerous inventions to mechanically produce greater quantities and higher quality yarns.

The spinning of fibers, such as cotton or wool, twists these fibers into a string shape. As the spinning continues, the twisted fibers are pulled in order to control the length and thickness of the yarn. Tons of cloth and clothing were made by weaving and knitting as a result of spinning this yarn.

I recall one of my grammar school teachers reading us a story about a young boy who was scolded by some authoritarian adult for "spinning a yarn." He had nothing to do with a spinning wheel and certainly had no knowledge of how to operate one. He had been telling an imaginative story that was not true, a "tall tale."

If you have lived very long you probably can recall a number of incidents where someone was describing the behavior of another person with less than accurate details, erroneous quotes and evil motives. You knew this to be the case because you were there as a witness to hear what was actually said and observe what was really done. You knew this was an attempt to "spin" the incident in a favorable way toward the one who was relating it and in a detrimental way toward the other person.

There are no surprises when we hear people of the world spinning such fabricated yarns. They do not know the God of the Bible, nor the walk of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, it is appalling to hear one who claims to be a Christian spinning any story that is based upon hearsay, half-truths or blatant falsehood. When anyone misuses details in order to misrepresent, when anyone changes, adds to or takes away from someone's words in order to misrepresent, and when anyone assigns unrighteous motives to someone to make them appear to be an evil person, thus misrepresenting them, this spinner is in dire need of repentance. Such "spin" is ungodly and certainly unbecoming of one claiming to be a Christian.

If you are the person who spins an incident or circumstance into something that deflects guilt from yourself and onto another, you need to repent toward the Lord you are claiming to follow. If you are spinning a yarn to hide your sins and deflect the blame onto someone else, what works of the flesh have you indulged in and allowed to become habit such that you are not bothered by what you do to another person? How long has it been about saving face with you in order to preserve your good reputation among the brethren? Humility will lead you out of it, but pride will capture you and preserve your blindness to your own faults. I am praying for you and begging you to make it right with the Lord and your brethren, in the name of Christ. Think!

- Gary Smalley

Quote from the Past ...

"What is the use of wasting years of weary life in just trying to keep up appearances before men and women and before God? Oh, how full this old world is of those who spend their time and energy in fashioning parades of unreality and hypocrisy and emptiness, not one of which is looked on by God, not one of which is respected by men. And this, too, to the neglect of the heart, upon which are grounded the decisions of present favour and future destiny. What disappointments at the day of final reckoning there will be for men and women who have fought for a title, a star, or a ribbon, in the vain hope of being looked upon because of it! What disclosures of folly, what revelations of surprise! How ignoble their aims, how empty their achievements, how absurd their ambitions, how fierce their rivalries, how useless their victories, how unimportant even their worst defeats! The call of God does not confer on any one the privilege of pride or the indulgence of haughtiness; it calls a servant to service, and kingship comes further on. It only makes a true soul more knightly and more humble to know that he has been summoned in secret into the grand purposes of God."

- C. S. Robinson (1829-1899), via *The Biblical Illustrator*

- * “When you have given yourself to Christ, leave yourself there, and go about your work as a child in His household!” – C.S. Robinson
 - * “Character is not made in crisis, it is only exhibited!”
 - * “Success is not to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed!”
 - * “Give your best to God and His best will be given back to you again and again and again!”
 - * “Too many who are otherwise good men will go to hell for rationalizing hatred and vengeance!”
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THIS WEEK’S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: *A Person of Good Influence!*
(Text: 1 Samuel 25:32-33).

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)