

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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November 01, 2020

Volume 40, # 44

The Power of Love

“And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Reading this reminds me once again of the most important thing. We strive for accomplishment. We strive for recognition. We strive for education. But none of these mean anything if we do not have love.

Love is not milk-toast. It is demanding. It requires selflessness. Love demands long-suffering and proper behavior toward others. Love does not abide evil surmising. Love expects us to endure, believe all things, and hope all things. Love stands for right and hates what is wrong. Bottom line is, love never fails.

The one attribute of character that changed the world is love. It is not hate. It is not criticism. It is not getting the other told. It is not even getting even. Love is not mushy, goeey, or sticky. It is a reasoned choice that says, “I chose to love you.” I chose to give what is not deserved. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” I did not deserve that from Him. He chose to love me.

Notice God’s love was proven by action and measured by sacrifice. Look at it — proven by action, that is, “He gave.” He gave that which was dearest to Him and cost Him the most. He chose to. His love, further, is measured by sacrifice. Look again – He gave “His only begotten Son.” He gave Him for who? Sinners, those who were estranged from Him and who were His enemies. (Rom. 5:8). We are most like God when we love like He did.

Loving like God may require some action on my part toward someone I would rather not be kind to. But because I want to be like Him, I will speak well of that person. I will do that one good. I will pray for that one. Loving like God may require sacrifice on my part, too. I may be asked to give something that is costly to me. I may be asked to give of myself to

someone I might rather not like a whole lot. Maybe even to someone who has done me harm.

Maybe I'm living in a dream land. I wonder how our world would change if we had leaders who demonstrated this kind of love for the people of this great nation? If for once they would just set aside partisanship? If both and all sides out of love for the nation sacrifice something that would benefit the nation? Again, what if leaders in the church would lead out of love? Lead by giving themselves and sacrificing pride for the good of the church? What if husbands really did love their wives as Christ loved the church? Would we have the abuse, vitriol in speech that often occurs in marriages by husbands toward their wives? What if brethren, even in disagreements, really sacrificed for the good of the other? Most disagreements are not about truth but about me and what I like or don't like.

I think I have figured something out. Love makes us like God. Love will heal all. Let love be in abundance.

- Rickie Jenkins

Personalities

Have you ever heard some observer commenting upon certain difficulties that churches and individuals experience as the problem being a matter of personalities? Those who are aware of certain situations must admit that the expression or its counterpart is often the summation that some have. Just what does a person mean by the expression "a matter of personalities"? Unless I fail to understand their meaning, they are saying that the problem or problems are due to the feelings that persons have toward one another. Factors such as envy, revenge, or resentment are responsible for their actions. In accrediting the problem to personalities, they are eliminating doctrinal issues or making it quite evident that doctrine is not involved.

For a good while, certain thoughts have been in my mind regarding this subject which I believe all who desire to be right before God should seriously meditate upon. Consider the following:

Personalities Involved Do Not Eliminate the Possibility of Doctrine Also Being Involved. For an example, in Galatians 2:11-13, one reads of Paul standing before Peter to his face and telling him that he was to be blamed. Peter had eaten with the Gentiles when the Jews were not present; but when the Jews were present, Peter declined to do so. Here were persons definitely involved, as in most all matters of religion, but the matter also involved doctrine. At a very crucial time in the church

regarding some matters, Peter was evidencing respect of persons and committing dissimulation, and as a follower of the doctrine of Christ, Paul was obligated to rebuke him. How easy it might have been for an observer, or particularly one hearing the matter second or third handed, to say that Paul was acting upon the basis of personalities or personal feeling toward Peter rather than his being motivated by doctrine. It is a serious and unjust thing to accredit any rebuke or problem that arises to it being a matter of personalities with no consideration for higher motives being involved-namely, following the doctrine of Christ. Friends of Peter might have suggested to Peter that Paul was a little jealous of him and was just endeavoring to find fault. It happens in our time! Some make it a matter of personalities!

One Should Not Attempt to Evade Responsibilities By Conveniently Crying Personalities. It is understood by those who respect the word of God that a man of faith is definitely to declare himself in matters of faith, but such is not so regarding personalities. This is the out for some! They render the problem as a matter of personalities and ignore what they call doctrinal matters to keep from having to be either/or. Elders have been known to find this convenient to save face without having to take a stand. Why should they be involved when it is only a matter of personalities? So they go on their merry way still as great stalwarts of the faith. Preachers have relied upon "personalities" to relieve them of dealing with some congregational problems. A matter of personalities doesn't keep them from holding meetings anywhere or endorsing any congregation. See how convenient this thing works! It's a great help in evading responsibilities and saving face!

Fairness Should Be Manifested When Advocating Personalities. I know of a situation existing in a congregation where the elders said that the problem was a matter of personalities between the preacher and certain members. The preacher denied such and contended that, at least on his part, it was over the teaching of Christ that some members would not accept. To evade really dealing with the contentious members and upholding the preacher, they persisted in saying that it was a question of personalities, let them smooth it out themselves. A short time later, the elders had a run in with some of the same members. You guessed it - the matter then was no longer over personalities, but doctrine. What had changed? Not the issues, but simply the shoes. They were on the elders' feet this time rather than on the preacher's.

Matters of personalities do at times exist and even these must be properly dealt with. It is certainly sinful for envy, jealousy, and resentment to exist among members and congregations. However, we need to be careful and use caution in advocating that something is solely a matter of personalities. It could be that we are simply making a cowardly approach rather than a scriptural evaluation of the situation. When you are on the battle line of truth and doing all in your power to contend for the faith, would you

appreciate someone saying that your actions were matters of personal dislike toward some individuals with whom you were dealing? Think brethren and be careful!

- Bobby K. Thompson

Can a Good Man Be Saved and Not Be a Member of the Church?

In the title of this article, I am not using the word “church” in a denominational sense. The Bible knows nothing about a denomination. Our question for discussion is: “Can a man be saved and not be a member of the church the Lord had in mind when He said, ‘Upon this rock I will build My church’ (Matt. 16:18).”

I believe the Bible teaches that a man must be a member of the church described in the New Testament. Notice the following reasons:

1. There is an example of a good man having to obey the gospel (Acts 10). In verse 2 it is said that he was a devout man, a God-fearing man. In Acts 11:14 it is said he had to hear words whereby he and his household could be saved. He is an example that a man cannot depend on his moral goodness. He obeyed the commands and was added to the church (Acts 2:47).

2. Redemption is in Christ (Eph. 1:7). One cannot be in Christ without being in the body of Christ. The church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23); so one cannot be in Christ without being in the church. A penitent believer is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). He is also baptized into the body (1 Cor. 12:13). This shows that to be in the body is the same as being in Christ. If one is saved out of the body of Christ, he is saved without being connected with the head. Christ is the head (Col. 1:18).

3. Reconciliation to God is necessary to be saved. One is reconciled to God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:18). It is said that one is reconciled in the body of Christ (Eph. 2:16). So if one is saved outside of the body, which is the church, he is saved without being reconciled to God. Who can believe it?

4. Those outside of the body are aliens (Eph. 2:12). He is without God, a stranger, no hope, and without Christ. Can that kind of person be saved? Paul said that those in the body of Christ are fellow-citizens with the saints (Eph. 2:19).

5. Finally, the church, which is His body, is the family of God (1 Tim. 3:15). Members of His church are heirs (Rom. 8:16-17). They are God's children. Will God save any other than His children? Does God have children outside of His family?

- B.G. Hope

* "Can't sleep? Don't count sheep - talk to the shepherd!"

* "If you must publish someone's faults, then why not publish your own!"

* "Put your will in neutral so the Lord can shift you!"

* "Some people conduct their lives on the 'cafeteria plan' — self-service only!"

* "The real measure of a person's worth is: How much would they be worth if they lost everything?"

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: *"The Christian and Patriotism!"*
(Text: Proverbs 14:34).

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)