

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

November 29, 2020

Volume 40, # 48

Looking For Gold

Would you go into the deserts and mountains to look for gold without first learning to identify gold ore? "This is a pretty rock!" "Let's stake this area, because it is so easy to reach!" "I know all about iron ore so this must be gold!" None but fools would search for gold on such bases.

Every serious prospector must know the characteristics of the ore for which he seeks. He knows how it looks, feels, responds to heat, acid, etc. He knows if it is malleable, and to what extent. If he is searching for gold he knows the features of gold. He may, or may not know much about iron, lead, silver, or other metals; but he knows gold.

But many are looking for the right church, having not the slightest idea of its true characteristics. They "visit around" -- and think they are displaying great wisdom in so doing -- with no definite standard by which to identify the Lord's church, should they meet it in the middle of the road.

This church is nice, but we do not like the mannerisms of the preacher. That one is located in the wrong part of town. Another has a friendly group of people, but they are too strict for our taste. Yet another seems okay, but none of our friends go there. We either continue to drift -- and avoid the obligations of church ties -- or we find a friendly group, whose building is conveniently located, and the preacher goes to the football game with us -- so we confidently affirm that this is the "right church."

If we are really serious about serving God shouldn't we look for the church of HIS choice, rather than the one of OUR choice? And can we really know HIS choice without going to His word, and reading the characteristics of the church that bears His name?

Before you set out to examine the various religious organizations in the world, shouldn't you consider the (1) Name, the Lord gave His people; (2) Terms of Admission stipulated, by which people became a part of His church in the first century; (3) the divinely ordained

organizational structure, by which God's people work as one; (4) the Work assigned Christ's church; (5) the pattern of N.T. Worship; including (6) the means of support of church work; (7) the standard of Authority, by which all questions must be determined and settled? These things, and other like things you must know in order to recognize the Lord's church should you find it.

Some say this is all too complicated for them. Well, it takes some time, some study of God's word; but people genuinely interested in serving God do not object to that. They expect anything so vital, so related to their eternal well-being, to require effort and dedication. Anyhow, time, effort, etc., are not the big obstacles to finding the true church. The really big problem is getting folk to subject their own will to the authority of God.

Once we are willing to let God have His way with us -- we give ourselves -- then the search for truth is a happy, rewarding experience.

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, November, 1966

Signs of Decay!

WHEN the way to the meeting house SEEMS TOO FAR,
WHEN it seems TOO MUCH TROUBLE to get ready or to get out in the weather to go to
the service,
WHEN the singing comes HARD and SEEMS DREARY,
WHEN the sermon seems much TOO LONG,
WHEN you see much you DISLIKE in the brethren,
WHEN the preacher's or teacher's lessons make you MAD,
WHEN the members frequently say things that OFFEND you,
WHEN PRAYER is a BURDEN,
WHEN the reading of the BIBLE is DULL and puts you to sleep,
WHEN it FRETS you to be called on to GIVE more,
WHEN you try to make EXCUSES FOR YOUR SINS and try to persuade yourself that
God will NOT PUNISH or Judge,
WHEN you feel you are being SLIGHTLY NEGLECTED,
THEN: WATCH OUT!! SPIRITUAL DECAY!!!

- Unknown

NEUTRALITY?

In Matthew chapter 12, Jesus defended Himself from the attacking statements of the Pharisees with regard to proper observance of the Sabbath day and the authority behind His performing miraculous signs. In their challenge of His authority they attributed His irrefutably obvious signs as arising from the power of Satan. They did so in order to discredit Him and destroy His good reputation and acceptance among the people. After exposing the folly of their conclusions that they had intended to promote among the people (vss.25-29), Jesus stated a far-reaching general truth with broad application: "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters." (12:30).

When it comes to Jesus of Nazareth, His life and deeds, His origin and deity, His authority and teaching, His designs and accomplishments, [listen carefully] neutrality is impossible! One either serves Christ in the kingdom He established, or one serves Satan in the kingdom of the world. There is no third kingdom; there is no middle ground. There is no such thing as "no-man's-land" to occupy. There are no riders on the fence. There is a deliberate choice (follow Christ, His teaching and His example), or there is a default (and with some, a deliberate opposing choice) in following the world (and hence, its prince, John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

At the very instant that these Pharisees chose to oppose Him, they chose to agree with man's spiritual Adversary (Satan). As a result of their choice to oppose, they became destroyers: fighters against Christ and dispersers who scatter those whom Jesus was attempting to gather (cf. John 11:52; Luke 13:34).

The force of this self-evident pronouncement by Jesus has not diminished over time. Either Jesus performed miraculous signs by the power of God, or He did them by the power of Satan. Jesus was either the Son of God, as He claimed, or He was a fraudulent deceiver, one of countless deceivers and false prophets who have arisen among men. One either stands for Christ, or one stands against Him. It's that simple.

Friend, where do you stand? Do you serve the Lord in all things, or do you scatter? One must entirely embrace His teachings (all of them) and follow His doctrine and example (2 John 9; 1 Peter 2:21), thus having Him add you to His church (Acts 2:47), His body, which He purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28), or one stands against Him, scattering what He seeks to gather, dividing what He seeks to unite and tearing down what He seeks to build up. Stand with Jesus Christ!

- Gary Smalley

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!

*** **For Truth: John 8:30-31.** We need more and more good people who are willing to stand for what Jesus revealed in the gospel.

*** **For Justice: Luke 11:42.** The world is full of people grabbing for greater wealth and ignoring the plight of people around them. People are hungering and thirsting for righteousness and we are simply ignoring them.

*** **For Holiness: 2 Corinthians 7:1.** Sin and immorality are abounding in America, and we need to stand up to the temptations of the flesh. Otherwise, Satan will win the victory over the people of this country.

*** **For Faith: Romans 5:1.** Modern man sees faith as a weakness to be avoided. Yet, all men must have some kind of faith to continue in life. Which is more reasonable: Faith in God or Faith in man's ability to discover scientifically all the mysteries of life. I vote for faith in God.

*** **For Jesus Christ: Hebrews 13:5-8.** When all of modern society has failed us, there is always Jesus Christ to turn to. Mankind cannot have any greater assurance than through the death and resurrection of Christ. He died that our sins might be forgiven. He was raised from the dead that we might live eternally.

- Lynn Trapp

SILENT SERMON

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the preacher decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The preacher found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for his preacher's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The preacher made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs.

After some minutes, the preacher took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more.

Soon it was cold and dead. Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The preacher glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave, he slowly stood up, picked

up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the preacher reached the door to leave, his host said with a tear running down his cheek, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

- Author Unknown

- > "We ought to live as if Christ died yesterday, arose this morning, and is coming again tomorrow!"
 - > "Even if you are on the right track, you may get run over if you sit there long enough!"
 - > "The surest path to happiness is in losing yourself in a cause greater than yourself!"
 - > "There's one thing to be said about ignorance — it gives rise to almost 90 percent of the world's conversations!"
 - > "A Christian must get on his knees before he can get on his feet!"
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: "*Jesus Christ Is The Way!*" (Text: John 14:6).

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)