

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The All-sufficiency of God's Arrangements

To fulfill the needs of man, all of the arrangements that have been provided by God are adequate, enough, completely sufficient. There is nothing that man can do to improve them. They cannot be improved either by adding to them or taking from them. They are perfect, complete, and nothing else is needed.

Certainly, Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient Savior. He has done all that was necessary to make the redemption from sin available to man. No other Savior is needed. Further, the Word of the Lord is an all-sufficient book --- in the realm for which it was designed --- as a book that would guide man from earth to heaven. In every area in which man needs to know things which pertain to life and godliness, the Bible provides the information. No other book is needed.

The church is an all-sufficient spiritual arrangement that God has made for man. This does not include those bodies which find their origin with man, but rather the church established by Christ about which we read in the pages of the New Testament. The church which our Lord established is all-sufficient in the field in which it was designed to operate.

As individuals, we live and operate in different fields or realms in order to do the will of God. One area in which we live and operate might be referred to as the "social field." It is within this field or realm that we find our family, economic and social relationships. Another area in which we live and operate might be referred to as the "civil field." It is within this realm that we find our relationships to the civil government. A third area in which we live and operate might be referred to as the "spiritual field." It is within this realm that the church operates.

The church is all-sufficient only in the area for which it was designed to operate. It is not sufficient to regulate this country so far as laws are concerned, or the arrest of violators and their punishment. It wasn't designed to judge the world. "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who

are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." (1 Corinthians 5:12-13). The church is not sufficient in the area of providing recreation and entertainment for us or for our children. It wasn't designed to do so. That is the responsibility of the home! But it IS sufficient, however, to do everything that the Lord ordained for it --- that for which there is book, chapter and verse! The Bible teaches us that the church is to preach the gospel, edify the saints, provide benevolence for the poor among the saints and worship God. This is all that the Lord has given the church to do.

Let me suggest to you just a few of the reasons that the church is all-sufficient. First of all, it has been fully equipped to do all that the Lord gave it to do. Our Lord has given to His church the necessary "gifts" to equip it to do that for which it was designed. (Ephesians 4:7-16). The church is also all-sufficient because it is provided for by the perfect pattern --- the New Testament. (James 1:25). The church is all-sufficient because it has a perfect head --- the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23). The church is all-sufficient because it has the perfect builder --- the Son of God. (Matthew 16:18). It is all-sufficient because it has a perfect foundation --- the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the corner stone. (Ephesians 2:20-22). The church of Christ is all-sufficient because it was purchased by the greatest price ever paid --- the blood of Jesus Christ. (Acts 20: 28).

The church of our Lord is complete and all-sufficient to do all that the Lord has given it. It does not need any other organization to do the work which God has given it. It does not need to be involved in any work other than that which it has been given. To say that it does need these other non-specified things, is to say that we think that we can do a better job than God did!

- Bob Sarrett [slightly edited – GFS]

"NOT NOW, BUT I WILL SOME DAY."

Many people have been encouraged by Christians to obey the gospel, but have refused the opportunity, and have said, "I cannot be a Christian right now.", or, "I will be a Christian someday." Some who have these sentiments are trying to put off making a decision until some future time. The fact is that their decision has already been made. When one chooses to not be a Christian today he is affirming that there is something good about his choice.

The rejection of Christ is disaster: "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much

less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven." (Heb. 12:25; cf. Matt. 22:1-8; 24:42-51; 25:1-12; Acts 3:23; Heb. 2:1-3).

One is foolish to refuse salvation while it is offered. "Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Corinthians 6:2b). The prophet Isaiah stated long ago, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near." (Isaiah 55:6). To one who says he will obey Christ someday, we ask, "Can you show that day on your calendar? Can you reveal other things that are yet future?"

Others say, "I will obey the gospel before I die." Can this person determine the hour of his death? The Scriptures warn of this evil:

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." (James 4:13-17).

Presumptuous one, why not rather listen to the voice of wisdom?

"Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD. They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil." (Proverbs 1:24-33).

For us to believe that we have plenty of time is for us to play into the hand of Satan, our chief Adversary. We need to learn from the sins of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21). When we persist in sin we become deceived thereby, and our hearts become hardened (Hebrews 3:13), so that the word of God does not penetrate. As a result, we will be lost because we do not obey the Lord God.

Another person wants to make a living first, and afterwards become a Christian. He says, "I will become a Christian after I get my business established." Which blessings are greatest, temporal blessings or eternal blessings? Why do we allow our own selfishness and greed to cheat us out of the blessings of heaven? We should never allow our work of providing for family to destroy the privilege of being a Christian. "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36). Remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.'" (Luke 16:25).

Those who prefer membership in civic organizations (Jaycees, Lions Club, Rotary Club, etc.) rather than membership in the body of Christ are in need of the same admonitions. Do you have "too much to give up?" Is your soul not important to you? Christ thought it was! He died that we might be saved (Rom. 5:6-11). Would we give up anything rather than lose the soul?

Am I "making too big a fuss about these things?" Was God making too big a fuss about the disobedience of Adam and Eve when He drove them out of the Garden of Eden? Was God making too big a fuss about wickedness when He destroyed the world in a great flood, sparing eight righteous souls in the ark? Was God making too big a fuss about wickedness when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? Was God making too big a fuss about man's need of salvation when He allowed His only begotten Son to be crucified? Are Christians making too big a fuss when they warn the disobedient to flee from the wrath to come (Rom. 2:4-13)?

If you have shunned opportunities to become a Christian by obeying the gospel, we urge you: "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;" (Acts 3:19). May we assist you?

- Gary Smalley, via *The Edifier*, West Rogersville church of Christ, 10/4/1981

- * "Suffering with truth decay? Brush up on your Bible!"
 - * "Don't put a question mark where God put a period!"
 - * "God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage!"
 - * "A man's action is only a picture book of his creed!"
 - * "Worry is the darkroom in which negatives can develop!"
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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)