

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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What Those "Steps" Mean

It was less than 150 years ago that Walter Scott devised a simple way to impress his hearers with the relation of obedient faith to the blessings in Christ. He taught children to count on their fingers: Believe, Repent, be Baptized, Remission of Sins, Gift of Holy Spirit. Then, and now, it is obvious that children and adults could learn those "steps" without understanding salvation in Jesus Christ. How sad that some have made this almost the whole of the gospel of Christ.

Although believing (trusting) in Christ can have meaning only when it follows an intelligent grasp of divine testimony (Romans 10:17), it is far more than an acceptance of historic facts. The learning must have become a part of us, so that we make decisions upon its base. We not only "believe that He is" but also that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). The heart purified by faith (Acts 15:9) is the center of ones thoughts, emotions, and will cleansed from its previous self-centeredness and now given unreservedly to Christ. We act, seeing the unseen. Our sinful condition before God and the certainty of judgment are so real to us that we recoil from them. We are so convinced that Christ is the sole and gracious solution for our condition that our heart leaps with joy as we reach out for Him.

In the process of arriving at such a faith we realize that our former ways were our downfall, separating us from God. We are humbled in shame, overwhelmed by sorrow (Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 2:7), and we turn about, changing the direction of our lives. This is repentance (Matt. 21:28-f). It is "toward God" in that it recognizes that our old lives were an affront to our Maker; and it involves a genuine determination to "sin no more." Now, and only now, are we ready to be "buried with Him" no more to live as before.

And that burial of the former life with the subsequent rising to walk in a new life is the spiritual significance of baptism (Romans 6:3-18). Beautifully recalling the death, burial and resurrection of Him who became a curse for us, immersion in water has been commanded by our Lord (Acts 10:48; 2:38), and those who would come to Him submit to

this figure; in fact, cannot have a good conscience without it if they have been properly instructed in His will (1 Peter 3:21).

Baptism is neither a church ordinance nor a "sacrament" that, per se, dispenses grace. It is only for believers (Mark 16:16, Acts 8:36-37), so that the burial of an infant in baptism — and certainly the bogus act of sprinkling a few drops upon its head — can have no religious significance whatsoever. Submission to baptism is the conscious act of a penitent believer, and it marks the point at which such are promised forgiveness and blessing.

The faith that saves does not stop here — in fact, this is the beginning of the life of service in the Lord's vineyard, growing in grace and knowledge (Acts 2:41-47, 1 Peter 2:2). Gentle reader, can you be serious about heaven, and ignore God's word (John 12:48)?

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, October, 1980

Some Unusual Things for Which to Be Thankful

- Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire. If you did, what would there be to look forward to?
- Be thankful when you don't know; it gives you the opportunity to learn.
- Be thankful for the difficult times; during those times, you grow.
- Be thankful for your own limitations; they give opportunities for improvement.
- Be thankful for a new challenge; it will build strength and character.
- Be thankful for your mistakes; they will teach valuable lessons.
- Be thankful when you're weary from work; it means you've made a difference.
- Be thankful for the mess after a party; it means you have friends.
- Be thankful for the income taxes you pay; it means you are employed.
- Be thankful for clothes that fit a little snugly; it means you have plenty to eat.
- Be thankful for a shadow while you work; it means you are out in the sunshine.
- Be thankful for a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing; it means you have a house.
- Be thankful for the spot you find at the far end of the parking lot; it means you are capable of walking.
- Be thankful for all the complaining you hear about our government; it means we have freedom of speech.
- Be thankful for a huge heating bill; it means you are warm.
- Be thankful for the lady behind you in church service who sings off key; it means that you can hear.
- Be thankful for the piles of laundry and ironing; it means your loved ones are nearby.

- Be thankful for the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours; it means that you're alive.
- Be thankful for weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day; it means you have been productive.
- It's easy to be thankful for the good things. A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are also thankful for the setbacks.

"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" Ephesians 5:20

- Submitted, from *House to House/Heart to Heart*, Vol. 24, No. 10.

Share a Quote...

This deceitfulness of sin should serve as a strong inducement to make us doubly watchful against it, and that because of our foolish disposition and proneness of nature to yield to every temptation. Sin presents itself in another dress than its own. It lyingly offers fair advantages. It insensibly bewitches our mind. It accommodates itself to each individual's particular temperament and circumstances. It clothes its hideousness by assuming an attractive garb. It deludes us into a false estimate of ourselves. One great reason why God has mercifully given us His Word is to expose the real character of sin.

- Pink, A.W., *An Exposition of Hebrews*

DON'T LEAVE OUT THE WATER

You became an American citizen by birth, but that didn't make you a citizen of God's kingdom. The Lord's kingdom is spiritual, and it takes a spiritual birth to get into it. How is one born again? Peter tells us we are "born again ... of seed ... by the word of God." The whole process starts with hearing God's word. This produces the faith. The Holy Spirit inspired the word that produces the faith. This is how we are begotten by the Spirit, but there is more to the new birth -- water. Jesus says we must "be born of water and of the Spirit." The Bible teaches that you should be "baptized into Christ," "baptized, and wash away thy sins," "baptized ... for the remission of sins." You can't be born again if you leave out the water. (John 18:36; 1 Peter 1:22-23; Romans 10:17; John 3:3-7; Galatians 3:27; Acts 22:16; 2:38).

- Marvin A. Noble

To Stand Alone

It has never been an easy course to follow, to stand alone. It takes little courage to wet the finger and hold it up to see how the breeze of popular opinion blows, and then to follow the will of the masses. To turn your face to the winds of opposition and stand, even alone, this takes true courage.

J. G. Holland has well set forth this matter when he wrote: "There is a contemptibly quiet path for all those who are afraid of the blows and clamor of opposing forces. There is no honorable fighting for a man who is not ready to forget that he has a head to be battered. Truth wants no champion who is not as ready to be struck as to strike for her."

Listen not, my brethren to the voice of the multitude, nor the opinions of the hour, nor the traditions of the past, but listen to the voice of God as it speaks to us in His word!

- John L. Clark

'Nuff Said ...

The Apostle Peter wrote: "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; ..." (1 Peter 4:11). Upon reaching the point of faith in Christ, the Apostle Peter's listeners inquired concerning what they must do. Christ's representative commanded: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; ..." Peter fulfilled his charge to speak "the utterances of God"!

Todd Brady, V.P. for university ministries at Union University, wrote a column for the opinion page of the local newspaper. His subject was baptism, but not one passage of scripture was cited! You decide if he was "speaking the utterances of God" when he wrote: "After God's work of reconciliation, believers are called to then witness to His work in their lives by being baptized." [*The Jackson Sun*, 02/23/2022, p. 7A.]

So, who spoke the utterances of God with regard to the reason given for believers to be baptized? The Apostle Peter: "for the forgiveness of your sins" -- or, Mr. Brady: "to ... witness to His work in their lives." If the statements were equivalent, Mr. Brady should have provided the scripture reference quoting an inspired writer.

When you speak to others on the subject of baptism and they ask you the reason for it, will YOU speak as THE ORACLES OF GOD?

- Gary Smalley

- * "Beware of the tranquilizers of the devil!"
 - * "Christianity is letting Christ live in and through us!"
 - * "Let us not look to psychiatry as the answer to our spiritual problems, but to the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 20:32; cf. Acts 9:26-31)!"
 - * "Daily prayer will diminish your cares!"
 - * "Ever been between a rock and a hard place? It's good to be next to the Rock when you are in a hard place!"
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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)