

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **Remember Mrs. Kemp!**

It's been over twenty years since I held a meeting in Estevan, Saskatchewan, Canada. While there I became acquainted with a sturdy old soul, a Mrs. Kemp. She and her husband had toiled long hard years on a farm. One night Mrs. Kemp awakened with a stomach ache, and not wanting to wake her husband, didn't bother to turn on the light, groped her way to the sink and proceeded to take a dose of Epsom salts -- only it wasn't Epsom salts. She had gotten hold of the wrong can, the Drano can. Now, a dose of Drano would probably kill most people, and it nearly finished her; but even as sick as it made her, she didn't want to disturb her husband's sleep. When he awoke, she let him know what happened, and he quickly rushed her in to the hospital. They pumped out her stomach, and she lived to tell about it.

Now you are probably ready to make all kinds of comments like: "Husband or not, I would have had enough sense to turn on the light"; or "She shouldn't have had the Drano sitting out there in the first place"; or "She ought to have woke him immediately even if he did have a hard day's work ahead." Maybe you're right, but I want you to think about something else.

Since Mrs. Kemp was sincere, honestly mistaken, should she have to worry about the Drano hurting her? But you respond, "The graveyard is full of conscientious fools." You say that simply being conscientious is not enough and that some good sense needs to accompany fine intentions. I'll have to agree with you, but be careful that you're not like a lot of people who try to act wisely in worldly matters, but abandon good sense when they come to the most important issue -- our soul's salvation. Have you ever heard anybody say, "It doesn't make a lick of difference what you believe and practice in religion, just as long as you're honest and sincere"? Now they may not realize it, but what they are saying is that good sense does not need to be exercised in religion, but that sincerity is all that matters.

Paul shows us the folly of relying on good intentions alone. He affirms that he had been a conscientious man even when he had persecuted Christians. Being conscientious didn't keep him from being the "chief" of sinners (Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:13-15). What else was needed? Paul had to trust the Lord and follow His directions before he could be saved (Acts 22:10, 16). Then he was acting wisely; for when it comes to religion, the only really good sense is God's good sense (1 Corinthians 1:20-31; 2:5-16; Isaiah 55:8-9). Just as being sincere did not keep Mrs. Kemp from burning herself with Drano, so being conscientious did not guarantee Paul's salvation. He had to act in accordance with God's wisdom.

For the same reason, I want to encourage you to disregard the foolish and dangerous notion that it makes no difference what you believe and practice in religion just as long as you are sincere. Instead, I want to urge you to follow God's wisdom: All of His wisdom for us is revealed right in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-3). Follow His inspired truth with all of your heart. Wisdom with a good conscience is a great combination. Remember Mrs. Kemp!

- Marvin A. Noble

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## *Share a Quote ...*

**Prejudice is a robber** which many of us entertain in our hearts. It robs us of generous feelings which we should have for others, and leaves us the tormentings of hate; by shutting our eyes and stopping our ears it robs us of many precious truths, and leaves us the dross of our distorted opinions; it robs of light, and shuts us up in the darkness of our own ignorance. No other robber can leave us so poor.

- Robertson L. Whiteside, via *Mooreville Memo*, March 6, 1964

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## **The Good Confession**

The apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he "made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:12). He was encouraged to "Fight the good fight of faith" because he had made the good confession. The phrase represents something very specific, which is further confirmed in the next sentence, where Paul stated that Christ Jesus "testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate." Confession is taken to mean a verbal acknowledgement of the truth, and the vital truth Jesus confessed before Pilate was in answer to the question, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "It is as you say." (Luke 23:3).

John records some additional words of Jesus' affirmation: "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:37). It is difficult to determine the exact nature of Pilate's question to Jesus, but there is no difficulty in the clarity of the answer, the good confession. Here the Son of Man is saying the same thing as His heavenly Father, He is voicing agreement with the Lord God, acknowledging (confessing) that the purpose of His life is inseparably connected with truth (cf. John 14:6), that He came to bear witness and thus to direct men to the truth, and that this truth necessarily elicits a response from those who embrace it (cf. John 10:3, 16). Upon the belief, agreement, acknowledgement and saying the same from men, the King acquires subjects (citizens) in His kingdom, and this becomes the fruition of heaven's intent: "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18).

As genuine faith in Christ is required from men who embrace the truth of the gospel, the King requires an affirmation of their faith in Him. This was introduced to His earliest disciples in Matthew 16, notice:

"He was asking His disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.'" (Matthew 16:13-18).

The magnificent fundamental truth thus avowed by Peter is the "rock" on which Jesus declared He would build His church. Every person who seeks admission to this kingdom to be a citizen thereof takes his stand upon the same indestructible foundation regarding this King: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! There is not a more noble, praiseworthy or beautiful expression that will ever cross a person's lips!

Peter voiced his faith, confidently and boldly. Timothy voiced his faith "in the presence of many witnesses." There is no surprise to the Bible student to notice that such is not some minor detail or a mere step of going through a form, but rather it is vitally connected with one's pursuit of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The proper candidate for baptism must believe in Christ (Acts 8:12, 35-38; 10:43-48; 16:14-15, 30-34), and to remove all doubt, the believer must express his faith. It is essential to one's salvation! Notice: "... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10).

The nature of this confession is a strong affirmation that the person making it enthrones Christ in his heart as King of his life, and he is fully intending to diligently follow Him, obeying His every command. This is the significance of inner faith being outwardly verbalized regarding the King. The Lord Himself said, "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33). The Lord God requires the good confession!

The cost of making such a confession was clearly understood by the King's disciples: "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next;" (Matthew 10:22-23). The cost is high for making and living that confession, for speaking as Christ has spoken. But the cost of not doing so is much higher.

Why would anyone hesitate to confess their faith in the mighty name of Jesus Christ? Some refused because they were afraid of what men would say and do; "they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." (John 12:42-43). But one day, all mankind "will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11).

Friend, out of conviction have you confessed your faith in Christ? You can confess the King now as you dedicate your life to serving Him, in which case He will save you from the consequences of your sins, and you will live eternally with Him; or you can turn from Him in unbelief, refusing to confess Him. But a failure to meet His conditions for salvation has a horrible consequence: "the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power," (2 Thessalonians 1:9). If we have not in gladness confessed Him here, we will in sadness confess Him there.

- Gary Smalley

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\* "Carry a grudge and it becomes heavier with every step!"

\* "Daily prayers lessen daily cares!"

\* "Children brought up in the assembly of the church are seldom brought up in court!"

\* "Breathe in God's Word, exhale God's love!"

\* "The Holy Scriptures should be a steering wheel, not a spare tire!"

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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)