

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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No Man Left Behind!

Desmond Doss was determined to serve his country during WWII. His conscience, however, would not allow him to carry a weapon. The Army did all it could to get him to quit. He endured cruelties that would have caused a lesser man to walk away, but he remained steadfast. Assigned to the medical unit of the 77th Infantry Division, Private Doss was sent to the front lines of the war in Okinawa. He was surrounded by atrocities on a daily basis. He would not carry a gun but he lived by the creed of the Armed Services, "No man left behind." He is credited with rescuing over 75 men on the field of a single battle. Mr. Doss is the only conscientious objector to receive the Medal of Honor in WWII.

"No man left behind." Quite simply, our service-men will not leave a fallen comrade in the hands of the enemy on the field of battle. And neither should we.

In Ephesians 6, Paul argues that we too, are engaged in warfare. We may not see flag-covered coffins or have funerals for those who die spiritually, but there are casualties, none-the-less. The battle takes place in our hearts. The loss of life is not just physical, but a soul ... a soul lost for eternity.

What a difference it would make if we would determine that "No one will be left behind." It would cause elders to shepherd differently, preachers to preach differently, Christians to look at others differently.

The fact is, there are people who are discouraged who need to be encouraged, lonely who need company, weak who need to be strengthened, and wayward who need to be corrected. And too, there are those who are doing well who need to be appreciated, sacrificial who need to be esteemed.

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest," said Jesus. Do you pray for the church of which you are a member when outside the assembly? Do you pray for members who are young and particularly vulnerable? People who are in a distressing

family relationship? People who are older and struggling with the debilitation of age?
People who have left the Lord and placed their soul in eternal jeopardy?

And then, after we say "Amen", we need to do what we can. Maybe that means befriending a young person who needs encouragement, or an older person who needs company. Maybe it means taking the risk to go behind enemy lines to try to rescue a Christian who has been felled by enemy fire. Paul was right, "We who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength..."

- Don Truex

Making Bricks of Mud

Paul was set upon by a mob, then dragged from their hands by police. Falsely charged, he spent approximately 2 years in Jewish prisons, and was then sent to Rome to appear before Caesar. His traveling days ended, and threatened with death by savage beasts (2 Timothy 4:17), we could understand his being depressed and feeling "all is lost." Instead, he wrote to the Philippians: "the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (1:12-21). He could write, "I rejoice!"

Discounting his personal discomforts, he saw the good side of the bad — saw victory in defeat. I know his selflessness, his trust in the Lord, is the key. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Paul had to learn this attitude; but I am impressed that he learned it so well it seems to have become a part of him. He "learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (4:11); and this kind of thinking spawned hope instead of despair. Throw mud at Paul and he made bricks of it, and built a house. Send him lemons, and he would enjoy the lemonade, and thank you for them. It is hard to defeat a person with such an attitude as that. We do not refer to an artificial Pollyannaish attitude [irrepressible optimism; finding good in everything, in Merriam-Webster - GFS], out of touch with reality. Paul sought relief from his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:8) but when this was denied him he could "glory in my infirmities" making the most of them in defending his apostleship (vs. 7-11). He did not enjoy being forsaken by his brethren any more than do we, but he could "pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Timothy 4:16-17). He was confident that the Lord would save him.

Nor is this simply the SELF reliance, "indomitable ego" that is so highly recommended by psychotherapists. Human philosophies "plug in" to no higher source than man himself, and when society fails (as it does repeatedly) the individual despairs sometimes end it all in suicide. But the "look up" attitude of a true believer in God removes fear of the future,

his soul is anchored (Hebrews 6:18-20), and he "shall not be moved." As one rancher friend of mine put it: "Things are going to pick up!"

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, March, 1981

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

The SOCIAL GOSPEL is a philosophy in religion that the church should concern itself with worldly problems, rather than with spiritual ones. It is more concerned about preserving the whooping crane, and the alligator than about preaching Christ the emancipator. It spends more time fighting earthly pollution that may damage the body than with fighting spiritual plagues that will surely damn the soul.

The SOCIAL GOSPEL is more interested in feeding the body than in nurturing the soul. Its goal is education, not salvation; recreation, not sanctification; fraternity, instead of eternity. It concerns itself with the "new morality" rather than self-control; ministering to the "inner city" rather than seeking the heavenly city; slum clearance rather than with spiritual perseverance.

The SOCIAL GOSPEL philosophy is more interested in helping men make a living than helping them make a life. It is more concerned with civil rights than with spiritual rights; civil laws rather than spiritual obedience; communism rather than conversion (faith, repentance and baptism).

The SOCIAL GOSPEL is a lame duck spiritually, because it is without the power to fulfill the lasting needs of the human race. It preaches Christ as a great social reformer, rather than as a spiritual Savior. It limits His work to earthly benefits for mankind, and Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Corinthians 15:19). Social gospel-ism can only leave man spiritually naked!

- James P. Needham, via *The Edifier*, Rogersville, AL, 08/29/1982 [slightly edited - GFS]

PRECIOUS

Precious things are valuable, highly esteemed things; they are dearly cherished because of their great cost or extreme worth. People and things are quite often said to be precious to us. We contemplate people we esteem and cherish; there are possessions that are appreciated and dear to us. But much more than all these treasures are the spiritual

blessings described in the Holy Bible! Let us take note of these "precious" riches as Peter often did in his brief epistles.

1. Precious Results of Trials — "so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;" (1 Peter 1:7). Enduring faith that had been tried and tested in the crucible of fire by manifold trials is genuine and precious because of its stated result.

2. Precious Blood — "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18-19). Especially dear to the Christian is this perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the purpose of which is to forgive sins, thus providing redemption and salvation from dead works (cf. Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14).

3. Precious Corner Stone — "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ... For this is contained in Scripture: 'BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.'" (1 Peter 2:4, 6). Christ was despised and rejected by men (cf. Isaiah 53:3), but selected and honored by God as the living foundation of God's spiritual house (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:11).

4. Precious Lord Jesus Christ — "This precious value, then, is for you who believe; ..." (1 Peter 2:7). There is a marked contrast between believers in Christ and rebels against Him. Believers enjoy the spiritual riches reserved for them in Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:3-14).

5. Precious Faith — "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:" (KJV – 2 Peter 1:1). The readers of Peter's epistle had the same kind of faith, equal in value, equally privileged, precious, honored and esteemed as Peter and the other apostles.

6. Precious Promises — "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2Peter 1:4). These especially valuable promises are honored by all Christians because of their ultimate benefit both now and hereafter (cf. John 10:10; 6:47).

7. Precious Death — "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones." (Psalms 116:15). The death of God's faithful servants is an extremely important matter to Him (cf. John 10:27-28).

As we evaluate the things of this life, what are the things that are precious to me? Are spiritual blessings the most precious? Are you honoring the truly precious things?

- Gary Smalley

* "Even a small star shines in the darkness!"

* "Friends multiply joy and divide sorrow!"

* "Evolution is to science what quackery is to medicine!"

* "Do you have any idea where you're going? God has shown you in His word!"

* "Everyone you meet today is on heaven's most wanted list!"

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)