

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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With What Should We Appeal?

While many in the world today, and not a few in the church, are resorting to various things to draw people, we should still be content to appeal to honest and intelligent men and women with the Truth of God: His Word and His Word Only! For by it ONLY men and women are truly drawn to Christ. Those who are drawn by other things are necessarily drawn to something else, or to someone else!

Therefore, when we bring others to the "church" by any other means, except the gospel, we actually stop short of saving their souls. Oh, they may become members of some local "church of Christ" but, "are they saved?" is the question. And this should be our interest: saving people, not just adding numbers to the local work. While it is encouraging to see the number grow, and surely we should have a proper desire for this, it is more proper to desire to see men saved, and thereby our numbers grow. When men turn to other things, other than the basic gospel, whatever that be (to draw a crowd, for example) it is but an admission that they believe the word of God has lost its power to save.

We therefore appeal, not to your emotions, pride, fleshly desires, or social life, but rather to your intellect: understanding and reasoning. Study the Scriptures with us, and let us reason with you concerning God's plan of salvation. You can understand it. Yea, you must understand it and obey it in order to be saved.

Someone has said "Draw men with fine buildings, and when the new is worn off, they are gone. Draw men with entertainment, and when it stops, they stop. Draw men with emotional fervor, and when they have time to reflect upon it, you will see them losing their emotions and quitting the church. Draw men with numbers, and when they drop, they drop and leave for a church with bigger numbers."

Surely we can see the folly of all such. Indeed our appeal is to all with nothing but the gospel of Christ, and the teachings set forth with reference to Christian living and the work of the church. The word of God, the New Testament is sufficient and will abide forever (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- - Wendell M. Powell, via The Charlotte Lamp, 07/24/2011

"Hallowed Be Thy Name"

After addressing our prayers unto "our Father in heaven," Jesus says our Father's name is to be "hallowed" (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). The word "hallow" means to regard as holy, to honor as sacred, or to give due reverence and respect unto someone or something. It is translated from the Greek word *hagiazō*, which means to render or acknowledge to be sacred or holy.

Our Father in heaven is separate from all sin and above every common thing. Our prayers should acknowledge this fact in words of praise. Brother Paul Earnhart has made the following comments regarding the hallowing of God's name in our prayers: "To hallow the name of God means simply to hold Him in reverence to place Him in that special high and holy place where He belongs as the God of all creation and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, He is already the holy God, and there is no means at our command to make Him holier. The concern of this petition is that men everywhere should acknowledge in their own hearts and lives what is manifestly true... So our prayers are to begin, not with a concern for ourselves, but with a concern for the honor of our Father" ("Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution," page 86).

The nation of Judah profaned God's name throughout the world when they rejected the Lord in favor of idolatry (Ezekiel 36:16-38). God had punished them and cleansed them with the Babylonian captivity. When the nations saw Judah returned to their land and serving the Lord with a loyal heart, then God would be "hallowed in you before their eyes" (v. 23).

Praying "Hallowed be Thy name" is more than praising the high and holy name of God. It is an acknowledgement that we have a responsibility to live in such a way that will cause God's name to be "hallowed" by the world.

- Heath Rogers

Refreshing!

To be refreshed is to have your strength restored, or to be revived in vigor and zest, renewed in inspiration or power to a condition where you flourish again as you once did. We are refreshed by cool water when thirsty, delicious food when hungry and peaceful sleep when weary. After refreshment we are ready to face whatever life brings with a positive attitude and great confidence!

"Refreshing" is a word used in the Scriptures to describe some Christians who relieve and inspire the souls of others. Philemon, of whom Paul wrote, was just such a one: "For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother" (Philemon 7). Before the close of this short

letter, again we see: "Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ." (Philemon 20). By this last expression we are not to see this refreshment as merely providing some small measure of happiness for Paul, but rather we should see it as corresponding with the claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with its purposes and blessings. We should all desire to be refreshing Christians!

Several times we find this word in the writings of Paul. He desired prayers of the Roman Christians, "so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company." (Romans 15:32). Paul commended the Corinthian Christians, stating that "we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all." (2 Corinthians 7:13b). He praised individuals: "I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men." (1 Corinthians 16:17-18). He wrote of a brother who certainly overcame opposition and obstacles to aid him in prison: "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;" (2 Timothy 1:16).

Christians are refreshing to fellow-workers in the Lord's vineyard when they determine to be just that. Earnest prayers and encouraging words are refreshing to the weary worker, the Bible-class teacher, the preacher, the deacon, the elder, and every soul who strives to overcome this world and live to please the Lord. The big temptation when we are weary is to consider our work as empty and useless, and our work diminishes or becomes non-existent. To the beloved brethren of the Lord, Paul said, "...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58). Refreshment from a brother or sister in Christ goes a long way in supporting that steadfastness!

The greatest refreshing that exists comes from the Lord. In admonishing his Jerusalem hearers to obey the gospel in order to receive forgiveness of sins, Peter commanded, "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). There can be no doubt that the "refreshing" that comes "from the presence of the Lord" corresponds to "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Peter's previous sermon (Acts 2:38), and that these parallel phrases are descriptive of consequences that follow having sins forgiven or "wiped away." If we understand the word "refreshing," we can appreciate such a description of the good that follows release from the consequences of sin.

When the soul turns to God, there is indeed a "refreshing," a renewal, a springing forth from the "old man" (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9), the former life (1 Peter 1:14), which was "separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12b). When one leaves the life of sin for the life of Christ, he is "brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13), reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:16), with "access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). These are "no longer strangers and aliens, but ... fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ... a holy temple in the Lord, ... a dwelling of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22).

In the song, "We Thank Thee, O Father," we thank God because "He sends the snow in winter, The warmth to swell the grains, The breeze and the sunshine, And soft refreshing rain." Farmers, whose crops have suffered from parched soil of drought, appreciate "refreshing rain" like no other. And maybe that is a way of illustrating "seasons of refreshing," when wilting plants are strengthened by a return of moisture to the soil, or when vegetation springs to life after lying dormant.

Refreshing brings strength from weakness, rest from weariness, joys of the Holy Spirit, peace with God and blessings from our Lord. In Christ we have deliverance from evils, relief from burdensome difficulties brought about by the guilt and condemnation of sin. Might that help us to see Matthew 11:28-30 with a greater appreciation? "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Oh, blessed rest! Oh, blessed "refreshing!"

Nothing refreshes Christians more than seeing others brought to faith in Christ, repentance from dead works and baptism for the remission of sins! Friend, can we help you today?

- Gary Smalley

- * "We only believe as much of the Bible as we practice!"
 - * "A consistent Christian life is the best interpretation and proof of the Gospel!"
 - * "There is no place to hide sin without the conscience looking in!"
 - * "The smallest good deed is better than the grandest intention!"
 - * "When compared to the burden of sin, the yoke of Christ is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30)!"
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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)