

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Whose Enemy Would You Rather Be?

Each year, companies, governments, and other entities spend somewhere north of \$300 billion to buy your love, attention, and gain access to your wallet. They want us to not only pay attention to them, but integrate their values and products into our lives. When we don't, we are made to feel left out and even become an enemy in their eyes.

Paul once had a friend who succumbed to the allure of worldliness. At the close of his life, he wrote a second letter to Timothy and noted how one man, Demas, had fallen in love with the present world and abandoned Paul (2 Timothy 4:10). Demas was a man who appeared alongside names like Luke, Mark, and others (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24). He stood beside Paul during his imprisonment in Rome but later abandoned the Gospel because he loved the present world.

When Demas fell in love with the world, he revealed at that moment the love of the Father was not in him and he did not belong to Christ (1 John 2:15; John 15:19). By seeking to be a friend of the world, he became an enemy of God (James 4:4). Although the world may villainize us for our adherence to the Word of God, stance on moral issues, or Christian way of life — I would much rather be an enemy of the world than an enemy of God.

Demas should serve as a warning against our fascination and affection for the pleasures of this life. The hundred-billion-dollar machine wants to devour every ounce of our attention, energy, money, and love to use it for their greed and sinful purposes. Even in the face of this massive foe, we can stand securely in the arms of God. Demas, unfortunately, lost his battle and became an enemy of God. But that doesn't have to be your story. Whose enemy would you rather be?

- Spencer Clark

Why No Instruments of Music?

This question often comes from honest people, wondering why some of us do not use such mechanical instruments in the worship of the Lord. It is a fair question that demands a fair answer.

All worship of God is limited by whatever divine instructions have been given for our guidance. God has always prescribed what constitutes acceptable worship of Him under every dispensation that He has made with mankind. We must conform our efforts to His will and seek never to impose our own wills upon His. A lesson learned from the very first instance of worship recorded in the Old Testament — that of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 — is that we must act by faith in God, based on what He has spoken, if our worship is to please Him (Hebrews 11:4). The same lesson can be learned from the Mosaic dispensation, in the case of Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire to the Lord in Leviticus 10. Whatever God has not sanctified as acceptable to Him in worship is unauthorized and constitutes will worship.

We also learn from the New Testament that worship can be will worship—worship established by one's own will (self-directed worship). Paul spoke about this in Colossians 2:23. The Lord himself declared that worship based upon the doctrines and commandments of men is offered in vain (Matthew 15:8-9). Because no instruction from God under the New Testament shows the use of any music besides singing to be acceptable in worship, a person adding any other kind of music is doing so on the basis of human desires and pleasure, not the expressed will of God. Will worship fails to meet God's approval, as seen in Colossians 2:23.

New Testament regulations for worship are those that apply to God's people under the new covenant of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). Old Testament regulations like those during David's day have no relevance or application to people in the Lord's church. To use the Old Testament is to burden oneself with the entire Mosaic Law, according to Galatians 5:1-4, including its insistence upon animal sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood. To accept part of the Old Testament practices but refuse others, in the absence of any such direction from the Lord to do so, is to make one's own thinking superior to God's thinking.

In spite of David's use of the instrument or the encouragement to use such, as in Psalms 150, the New Testament instructs the Christian to sing and make melody in his heart to the Lord. The heart of the worshipper is the instrument that is employed in acceptable worship, and its melody is the only melody that the Lord stresses (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

In view of Biblical teaching along the lines discussed in this study, it is important to ask for New Testament teaching that authorizes the use of the mechanical instrument of music in worship to God. Where is that teaching found in the New Testament? If it can be produced, then we should all practice it and stop condemning its use. If it cannot be found, then all should omit its use in order to please the Lord, which is the very essence of worship.

- Bobby Graham

Share A Quote...

Paul and James use "works" in two different senses. The works that Paul speaks of are works that "make faith void" (Romans 4:14). The works that James speaks about are works that "make faith perfect" (James 2:21, 22). Actually, Paul and James are saying the same things. Paul is arguing against the "meritorious works" system. James is arguing against the "faith-only" idea. In the Romans passage, the contrast is between an "obedient faith" and meritorious works. In the James passage, the contrast is between an "obedient faith" and "faith-only." Both insist that an obedient faith is the condition of justification, rather than meritorious works being the condition, or faith-only being the condition.

As it was in Abraham's life, so it is in ours - justification was a continuing thing. He was justified several times, as a harmony of all the passages that speak of his justification clearly show. The condition of this justification is an obedient faith. For the alien sinner, immersion is one of the acts of obedience that is required for forgiveness. For the erring saint, confession of his sin is one of the acts of obedience that is required. As James and Paul both insist, the faith that saves, whether it be initial or continuing justification, is an obedient faith!

- Reese, Gareth L., *New Testament History A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Acts*, College Press, Joplin, MO, 1976 (Sixth Printing – 1986), p. 609.

Will You Speak At Our Graduation Ceremony?

Have you ever been asked to speak at a graduation ceremony for a local high school? If the inviters know enough about you to conclude that you are a devout Christian, you may never be invited, especially if they suspect that your message will contain quotations from the Holy Bible. That's certainly opposite from what it used to be!

Since God-haters have come out of the closets and poured into the streets displaying things about themselves for which they should be ashamed (Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12; Jude

7), far too many have become ferociously bold in their attack on all kinds of righteousness and decency. The social pressures from anti-Christian citizens form an antagonism that many are unwilling to bear. However, this was not the case recently when Jim McGuire, an alumnus of River Valley High School in Caledonia, Marion County, Ohio, spoke at their commencement ceremony. Jay Valle, of nbcnews.com, reported lines from his speech: "Choose a spouse, I suggest." "I also strongly suggest to make sure to choose biblical principles, you know a male with a female and female with a male."

Since his recent speech, McGuire's remarks have been called "hateful" and "inappropriate." The "anti-LGBTQ graduation speech," without surprise among Bible-believers, sparked outrage: "When he made the comment that marriage should only be between a man and a woman, my jaw dropped to the floor," one attendee stated.

The school administration released a statement distancing themselves from any connection to the remarks, as did the superintendent of River Valley local schools. One media user wrote, "He made himself the center of attention instead of the graduates and their accomplishments. He should take his ignorant views back to the 1950s."

Those who love the Lord God are not surprised at the charge of "ignorance" when His Word is taught. The same charge was made against Jesus Christ (John 7:15). And His followers are fully prepared to meet the challenges inherent in siding with Jehovah, the living and true God (cf. Matthew 5:10-11; 10:22, 39; 2 Timothy 3:12). A long line of God's prophets came before us and endured great persecutions; if the world stands there will continue to be faithful servants of God who will speak His truth to their fellow-citizens, regardless of the cost! Truth never changes just because the fearful lose the courage to proclaim it (cf. John 7:13)! The Lord Christ said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (Matthew 19:4b-6).

The warning that God sent to His people by the mouth of one of His prophets seems fitting today in America: "Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." (Hosea 4:6b).

- Gary Smalley

* "Plastic surgeons can do almost anything with a nose, except keep it out of other people's business!"

* "Following the line of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked!"

* "Bad habits are like a comfortable bed; easy to get into, but hard to get out of!"

* "Blessed is the man who refrains from speaking until he knows what he is talking about!"

* "The most destructive acid in the world is found in a sour disposition!"

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)