

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **The Body of Christ**

#### **A Church Opposed to Worldliness**

Worldliness is defined as the quality of being worldly; familiarity with the ways of the world. It is further described as the concern with worldly affairs to the neglect of spiritual needs. Paul described such in his letter to the church at Philippi (Philippians 3:18-21) and called the world that he lived in "a crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15).

However, Jesus Christ came to earth, gave His life to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin, and calls us "out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Those who respond to the gospel call are added to the body of Christ, which is His church. This term speaks to a distinct group of people set apart from the rest of the world. The church is the "holy temple" of God, a place where God dwells among His people and gives them His holy name (Ephesians 2:19-22).

#### **Members of the Body Are Not of This World**

One who is "of the world" is a carnally minded person. Paul wrote of those in Corinth who once were carnally minded (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) and said much the same of those in Ephesus (Ephesians 2:2-3). One who is "of the world" loves the things of the world, such as, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, swindling, idolatry and such like. When we place more emphasis on and spend more time on worldly affairs rather than the spiritual, we are saying that we love the things of the world more than we love God. The Holy Spirit says that if we love the things of the world in such a way, then we do not love God (1 John 2:15-17). Furthermore, He says that our "friendship with the world" makes us enemies of God (James 4:1-4).

Those who love God are those who "walk as children of Light" (Ephesians 5:8-14). Those who walk in "the Light" do not conduct themselves as those who do not, but separate themselves from their unholy ways, "the unfruitful deeds of darkness". I often say that the best sermons are seen and not heard. All Christians are preachers. We preach powerful

lessons every day by the way we live our lives. What lessons are we preaching to the world? What message are we presenting to others when we claim to be Christians, but spend our time living as the rest of the world? Influence is a powerful thing. One who has been truly converted conforms no longer to the ways in which he once walked in ignorance, but now having knowledge of the truth strives to be holy like our Lord. Jesus was innocent, undefiled, and separated from sinners. He was holy, and I must strive to be holy as well, because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY" (1 Peter 1:13-15). Members of the body may live in this world, but we are not of it, for Jesus calls us out.

### **Worldliness Corrupts the Body**

When the body of Christ has fellowship with worldliness it forfeits its fellowship with God. Such was the case with the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). The Corinthians were having fellowship with a fornicator among them. Paul had written to them and told them "not to associate" with any brother who had become "an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler". They were commanded to withdraw their social association from any "so-called brother" living in such sins. They were commanded "not even to eat with such a one." Why? Because sin is somewhat like the flu. It is highly contagious and associating with those who are infected also puts you at risk of infection (verse 6). If the proper precautions are not taken it will spread like wildfire through the group. No one chooses to have the flu, but those choosing to live in sin willfully have so chosen to be infected. That is a terrible condition. Therefore, drastic measures must be taken in order to try and restore such people, but also to make sure the church is not adversely affected.

Those who walk in truth flee the corruption of the world and strive to be pure. This is because they realize the great love God has for them in the Son, and they know that one day they will be made like Him (1 John 3:1-3). Those who walk in truth understand Paul's admonition to Timothy to "flee" and "pursue" (2 Timothy 2:22). The child of God is to "flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace". If such things are the pursuit of our lives, then our lives will be free from "the corruption that is in the world" (2 Peter 1:4). If we are striving diligently to do these things daily then we will be a people "unstained by the world" (James 1:27). Such people will have the honor of being the Lord's spotless bride, "holy and blameless" in eternity (Ephesians 5:27). Worldliness corrupts the body, and those who love God continually strive to purify themselves from the corruption of the world.

## Abiding in the Body Means Being Peculiar in the World

True Christians love God and serve Him from the heart. Jesus said this was the first and greatest commandment (Mark 12:30). This determination springs from the soul of the mind where all our passions and endeavors originate. It brings on a very distinct attitude of self-denial, relinquishing control of ourselves and making Jesus the Lord of our lives. In turn, He guides us from the inside out such that all our thoughts, words, and actions spring from a heart that is commanded and controlled by the word of God (Matthew 16:24).

The gospel changes hearts when received by those who are willing to be changed, and such a change produces a very peculiar person in the eyes of the world. It won't be popular to be peculiar in this way (1 Peter 4:1-4). We will seem strange to the rest of the world. We at times will suffer because of our convictions, but the crown of life is worth the cross that we bear!

Those who are members of the body of Christ, His church, are those who are living in the world but are not of the world (John 17:14-19). They are "sanctified in truth." As Christians being fitted into God's dwelling place, members in each local church must work together so that the body can be perfected and that the world may see Christ in us. The solution to whatever problem this presents is evident – a choice must be made. We can choose to jump on the bandwagon and fellowship everyone and everything, or we can continue to function as the Lord's body which is trying in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be what "the Way" was in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. I pray that we will always have the courage to stand with Jesus and His apostles that we may remain "set apart" in this life and live in glory in the next.

- Jason Shackelford

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## *Share a Quote ...*

There once was a lady who wanted to hire a driver. When three applied, she had them in one by one. "Well," said she to the first, "How near can you drive to danger?" "Madam," said he, "I believe I could drive within a foot without fear." "You will not do for me," said she. To the second she said, "How near could you drive to danger?" "Within a hair's breadth, Madam," said he, "and yet, you would be perfectly safe." "You will not suit me," said she. The third came in, and when asked the same question, "How near could you drive to danger?" he said, "Madam, I never tried; I always drive as far off as I can." Such should the Christian act. Some, through the deceitfulness of sin, are always trying to see how near they can go to the edge, so as not to fall over — how near they can sail to the rock and not dash upon it; how much sin they can indulge in and yet remain respected

church members. Shame on us that any of us should be guilty of tampering with that accursed thing that slew the Lord of glory.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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## Welcome to Gospel Meeting Week!

Attending our Gospel Meeting could prove to be the very best decision of your life! Why? The greatest message ever delivered to mankind will be preached! It is the one and only prescription designed to heal and sooth man's greatest illness: sin! Since the first century thousands upon thousands of people have had the opportunity to hear its powerful words, and very many have allowed it to change their lives for the better. This could be YOUR opportunity to hear this message of great blessings!

Jason Shackelford will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we invite you to bring your Bible and investigate what is taught. Jason will merely be the messenger of what has already been revealed to man by God. He will neither add to nor take from the sacred Scriptures. If he should make a mistake in teaching some wrong point, please bring that to his attention and he will correct it immediately. We are interested in teaching and preaching only the Bible!

You will not be embarrassed by being asked to do anything you do not wish to do. You will not be asked to give any money into the collection on Sunday. That is a command for the members (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We are interested in YOU, not what is yours. We only ask that you listen carefully to the preaching of God's word. Ask questions if you wish.

Thanks so much for coming to our Gospel Meeting!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret!"

\* "An old man was asked what had most robbed him of joy in his life. His reply was, 'Things that never happen!'"

\* "Prayer should be a part of our lives, and thanksgiving should be a part of our prayers (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)!"

\* "A diamond is a chunk of coal that made good under pressure!"

\* "What a world of gossip would be prevented if it were only remembered that a person who tells you of the fault of others, intends to tell others of your faults!"

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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)