

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Why am I NOT a Christian?

(Some questions for the person who is not a Christian)

- Is it because I am thinking that I will do as well as I can, and that God ought to be satisfied with that? Please notice what the Lord thinks: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (James 2:10).
- Is it because I am not willing to give up my dishonest and ungodly way for Christ? Please notice what the Lord says about choices: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36).
- Is it because I am afraid that I shall not be accepted, or that I am too great a sinner? Notice what the Lord says about His open invitation with its benefits: "the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." (John 6:37b); "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7b).
- Is it because I do not believe that Jesus is really God's Son? Notice heaven's declaration: "... Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, ..." (Acts 16:31).
- Is it because I am not willing to genuinely repent? Notice the clarity with which you must fight your own will: "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3).
- Is it because I am ashamed to confess my faith in Christ? Notice the hurdle that people must pass over to please God: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26); "for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Romans 10:10).
- Is it because I am unwilling to be immersed for the remission of my sins? Please realize that the Lord commanded His specially chosen apostles to go into all the world preaching this message: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38).

Why not follow Christ now and obey Him today?

- Unknown [slightly edited], via Grand Avenue Messenger, 04/29/1964, Vestal Chaffin, Editor.

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# Hear Instruction and Be Wise!

One of the many important admonitions given by Solomon is recorded in Proverbs 8:33. The admonition is "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not". Since we must be wise in order to inherit eternal life, we should take heed that we "hear instruction". Hearing instruction is very important since those who refuse to hear will be lost.

## WHO SHOULD WE HEAR?

Although hearing is essential, we must be careful as to *who* we hear. We should not hear false teachers. Jesus warns of false prophets in Matthew 7:15. John tells us in 1 John 4:1 to "believe not every spirit but try the spirits because many false prophets are gone out into the world". There are some who teach things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake [i.e., "sordid gain" in NASB] (Titus 1:11). We must not bid false teachers Godspeed. (2 John 9-11).

Each one of us has the responsibility of hearing God as He speaks through Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament. (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4). If we hear what the apostles taught, we hear Christ. But if we despise and reject the teaching of the apostles, we are despising and rejecting Christ and God. (Consider Luke 10:16).

## HOW SHOULD WE HEAR?

In Luke 8:18, Jesus said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear". There were some in the first century, (and no doubt some today) who were dull of hearing (Hebrews 5:11). It should be our sincere desire to hear whatever God teaches. If a thing is taught in God's Word, we must be willing to accept it. If it is not taught, we dare not add it. James 1:19 says, "Be swift to hear". We're told in Mark 12:37 that "the common people heard him [Jesus] gladly." After hearing, it becomes our responsibility to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only (James 1:22).

## WHY SHOULD WE HEAR?

Peter shows in Acts 3:22 that we should hear Christ "in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you". In Mark 4:23, Jesus said, "If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear". We must hear in order to receive faith (Romans 10:17; Acts 4:4). Without faith, we cannot be saved (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore we must hear in order to be saved. In 1 Timothy 4:16 Paul told Timothy to take heed unto himself and unto the doctrine in order to save himself and those who heard him. Jesus very vividly points out the importance of hearing and obeying in Matthew 7:21-29.

Are you willing to hear instruction from God's Word and be wise? Or are you so filled with prejudice that your mind is made up and will not be changed regardless of what the Word

of God says? Your reaction to God's Word reflects your attitude toward God. Suppose you read in the Holy Scripture something that differs from your opinion. What will you do? Which will you choose? Will you be willing to lay aside false teaching in order to receive the truth that is able to make you free from your sins? Your attitude toward God will determine your reaction to his Word when you hear it.

Jesus said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). Are you willing to accept this? Have you obeyed it? If not, why not obey it today?

Peter also said, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11). In 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul said, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23). In Revelation 2:10 we read: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Are you willing to accept this? Are you obeying it?

Let each one of us be sure that we are willing to "hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not."

- Carrol R. Sutton (1932-2016), via *The Instructor*, March, 1964 [slightly edited – GFS]

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## Forgiveness

W. E. Vine, in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, says that forgiveness means "remit; denotes a dismissal, release; it is used of the remission of sins in many passages." It is imperative that folks understand what the Bible teaches about this important principle.

(1) GOD IS READY TO FORGIVE. Matthew 6:14 states that our heavenly Father will forgive our trespasses. Paul instructed the Ephesians that "God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). The Psalmist observed, "And you, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon you" (Psalms 86:5).

(2) MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH CHRIST. Through Christ repentance and remission of sins are made possible (Acts 5:30-31). We have already stated that being "in Christ"

forgives us (Ephesians. 4:32). Paul mentioned to the same church, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).

(3) REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION OF SINS ARE A MUST. When Christians sin, and we do, we must confess our sins and repent! "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The person who has never obeyed the gospel must believe, repent, confess Christ as God's Son, and be baptized for remission of sins! (Acts 2:38).

(4) CHRISTIANS MUST FORGIVE - OR ELSE. If we are not willing to forgive those who sin against us, God will not forgive us! "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14, 15). Read Galatians 6:1, 2.

(5) GIVES HOPE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE. Part of the reason for Paul's mission to the Gentiles was "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified" (Acts 26:18). Peter stated that there is an "inheritance reserved in heaven for us" (1 Peter 1:4). Those who overcome will inherit all things! (Revelation 21:6, 7).

- Mackey W. Harden, via Ellettsville Church Bulletin, 11/20/1986

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## Hypocrites?

Of course there are religious hypocrites; this is a fact that cannot be denied. There have always been hypocritical people, and there always will be until the Lord comes again.

We work very hard to be paid with money, an authoritatively valuable genuine currency. As long as this standard of genuine currency remains, there will always be people working to produce counterfeit money. This counterfeit money is certainly a testimony to the fact that there is something valuable to copy, something worth an effort to imitate, and that there is the genuine thing of value being circulated.

Is it not the same with Christianity? In the Apostle John's day, he warned: "many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1). The strong implication is that there were true prophets, faithful Christians who were sound in faith and doctrine. Many, recognizing the good and true with its priceless value, and yet in unbelief, they will put on the sheep's clothing and appear to be in imitation of Christ. But these evidences of some people remaining in darkness do not at all discredit those who walk in the light, and people

who condemn as hypocrites all of those who make the good confession are certainly not justified.

- Gary Smalley

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\* "There is not enough dirt to bury the truth - and keep it buried!"

\* "To truly forgive, we must love!"

\* "If you are looking for faults, please use a mirror, not a telescope!"

\* "Anyone who looks for friends without faults will find no friends!"

\* "There is never an honest way to do a dishonest deed!"

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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)