

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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So Easy To Be Deceived

When was the last time that you were really fooled? Have you fallen for someone's story only to discover that it was a corny joke? Or perhaps you've become a victim of some internet hoax and innocently passed it along as truth. Chances are pretty good that all of us have been deceived in the recent past.

Hardly a month goes by that I don't receive several hoaxes via the internet and email. Some are from very trustworthy sources. Even some national broadcasters such as Paul Harvey fall victim to these stories from time to time.

There are various factors that lead to our acceptance of what eventually is seen as a hoax. First of all, we may want to believe that it is true. Recently an email resurfaced calling for a boycott of gas stations on a given day. The letter claimed that if we all refused to purchase gas that the oil companies would go broke. Well, with the sudden rise in prices, many of us really wanted this story to be true, but it wasn't.

Secondly, we may accept something as truth because we trust the source. Deception seems to be ever present in our world. Some major newspapers have been deceived and have published information that was later found to be false. A close friend may pass along a story to us and we may accept it as truth thinking that our friend has already verified it.

Thirdly, we may be deceived when truth is mingled with falsehood. Many of the hoaxes that surface are true in some respects, but not in all. Sometimes we see elements that we know are true and then accept the rest as truth as well.

All three of these points can be easily seen in deceit that has entered the church in recent years. Sometimes we are drawn away because we want to believe something else to be the truth. Paul spoke of this as "itching ears" in 2 Timothy 4:3. Others are deceived simply because they trusted in whatever the preacher said, but didn't take the time to verify it. The Bereans of Acts 17:11 knew the value of making sure a message was true. Finally,

we see deceit as it is wrapped up in some element of truth. This perhaps is the most dangerous form of deceit that we see in the church today.

God has always been interested in our defense against deceit. Jesus warned of deceit in Luke 21:8 when He said, "Take heed that you not be deceived For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them." Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'" Paul also said, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived" (1 Corinthians 6:9a).

It is so easy to be deceived in this world today. Please be careful and take the necessary precautions to be sure that what you believe is actually the truth. God has certainly warned us sufficiently and has equipped us with the tools with which we can judge truth. Be cautious, be sure. And as James said, "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." (James 1:16).

- Mike Baker

"We're Throwing Granny a Party!"

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones." (Psalms 116:15 NASB)

She died last week -- a sweet Christian woman. She was known by her family and by those close to her, as simply, "Granny". She was not rich in this world's goods; she never wrote a book; she was not famous. She knew the grief of burying her husband and two of her sons (one son by suicide). Through all this, she was faithful to her Lord. One of the preachers at the funeral poignantly described how she would drive to worship services early -- even in her later years when she, because of memory loss, went on days other than those scheduled. However, that mourning was mingled with joy on account of her being a Christian and the fact that she was released from the grip of dementia (she did not even recognize her daughter at the last).

In the midst of the preparations for Granny's funeral, a three year-old great-granddaughter was introduced to death. She was puzzled by all the events associated with Granny's funeral. She knew Granny was gone, but she then saw the bustle of activity and preparations for a "big event". She also saw the family laughing and enjoying meals among themselves as well as with friends. So when she finally had it all figured out, she pronounced, *"Oh! We're throwing Granny a party!"*

Interesting, isn't it -- how children innocently state the truth? Even though there are aspects of death that sadden us, we often end up celebrating the life of the person who has passed on. For the faithful Christian, this is altogether appropriate. We mourn the loss upon this earth; we grieve for ourselves. However, for Christians, the loss of contact with our loved ones is only temporary. In that sense we understand Paul's desire that Christians "not grieve as do the rest" but differently than the world -- we look "by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:17) to the "things which are not seen" (2 Corinthians 4:18). We have a different view of death because, we are indeed, different (Titus 2:14).

Around A.D. 125, a Greek by the name of Aristeides tried to explain the Christians of his day to a friend. In a letter he wrote, "If any righteous man among the Christians passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby" (Quoted by J.G. Gilkey in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations). We should do the same.

- Lance Cordle

Share a Quote ...

Men and women have duties to others, — and duties to themselves. In justice to ourselves we should refuse to live in an atmosphere that keeps us from living our best. If the fault be in us, we should master it. If it be the personal influence of others that, like a noxious vapor, kills our best impulses, we should remove from that influence, — if we can possibly move without forsaking duties. If it be wrong to move, then we should take strong doses of moral quinine to counteract the malaria of influence. It is not what those around us do for us that counts, — it is what they are to us. We carry our houseplants from one window to another to give them the proper heat, light, air and moisture. Should we not be at least as careful of ourselves?

To make our influence felt we must live our faith, we must practice what we believe. A magnet does not attract iron, as iron. It must first convert the iron into another magnet before it can attract it. It is useless for a parent to try to teach gentleness to her children when she herself is cross and irritable. The child who is told to be truthful and who hears a parent lie cleverly to escape some little social unpleasantness is not going to cling very zealously to truth. The parent's words say "don't lie," the influence of the parent's life says "do lie."

- an excerpt — "The Power of Personal Influence" — comes from *Self Control, Its Kingship and Majesty* (1905) by William George Jordan.

Sons of God are Peacemakers!

A practical and vital spiritual principle to be embraced and demonstrated among all of God's people has to do with personal relationships: resolve conflicts with others; be reconciled to others; mend and restore broken relationships! "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9). The sons of God are workers for peace; Christians "pursue the things which make for peace" (Romans 14:19), serving "the God of peace" (Romans 15:33). Disciples make peace with God, peace with their fellows, peace with their own consciences, and even peace with their enemies, when possible (Romans 12:18). Their Lord is the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6); they serve a "God of peace" (Romans 15:33) according to "the gospel of peace" (Romans 10:15) in the kingdom of peace (Romans 14:17). How can they not be "peacemakers"?

So essential are these spiritual virtues that result in restoration of broken relationships that it is not possible to worship God in acceptable "spirit and truth" (John 4:24) without earnestly putting your relationships with others into the right (Matthew 5:23-24), thus making peace. One cannot be right with God until he is at first right with man. Such is true even in the marriage relationship (1 Peter 3:7). It is true in all relationships (Psalms 66:18; 1 John 4:20-21; cf. James 3:9-10). Being "harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit" (1 Peter 3:8) is a command, not a mere suggestion. Acts of worship, no matter how great we make them in our minds, do not erase personal failure to obey the voice of the Lord in mending and restoring broken relationships (cf. 1 Samuel 15). When "your brother has something against you" (Matthew 5:23), the implication is that you have indeed wronged him (cf. Mark 11:25). You must seek his forgiveness. Offering worship to God is futile when repentance is required (Psalms 51:16-17; cf. Mark 12:32-33). Repent first. Confess and seek forgiveness from your fellow; then worship God in spirit and in truth!

To emphasize the urgency of reconciliation, the Lord Jesus taught that we must come to it as quickly as we can: "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent." (Matthew 5:25-26). If there is something I can do in restoring relationship I must do it at once. One must not allow wrongs he has committed against others to be buried and further ignored. The situation is urgent; settle matters with the one you have injured while time and opportunity is yours. Fight selfish pride before the matter reaches the judgment bar of God. The nature of your impenitent failures may prevent the Lord God from granting forgiveness to you! Walk into God's courtroom with your brethren and neighbors as merciful peacemakers and friends!

- Gary Smalley

- * "Faith is not a leap into the dark, but a step into the light!"
 - * "Firefighters rescue, only Jesus saves (Acts 4:12)!"
 - * "For a peace that lasts put God first!"
 - * "Don't condone what God condemns!"
 - * "Many times, the person who has the least to say is the most eager to say it (Proverbs 17:28; cf. Proverbs 10:19; Proverbs 11:12; Proverbs 13:3)!"
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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)