

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Unity

Agreement in doctrine does not guarantee unity. There have been many churches that divided, when in the conclusion both groups believed and taught the same thing. However, each refused the other. Division often comes as a result of differences in personalities. There are misunderstandings. These create feelings within us, and we must fight for a "cause" that is "right" to "us." Every person's "cause" is right to him. Sometimes discipline is needed under these circumstances because we become factious.

To be worthy of our vocation as a Christian, we are to walk with all "lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." – With these characteristics of life demonstrated, our lives "become" (are suited to) the gospel. Those who manifest these traits are the ones for whom the gospel was intended. It is revealed unto babes (Matthew 11:25). These are "unsophisticated in mind and trustful in disposition." It is possible for Christians to become blinded to the truth. Christians are not to allow the fleshly feelings (either of attitude or lustful practice) to control them. Therefore, endeavouring (make haste, be diligent) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. However, not everyone will try. The unity of the body is far more important to the body than are the ones who do not try to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Where there are seeds of division, efforts need to be put forth to kill them. "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2). "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). Paul beseeched the Christians at Corinth to "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). "be of one mind, live in peace . . ." (2 Corinthians 13:11). "Be ye of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:16). "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind

and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5, 6). These admonitions are needed now as much as they were then.

Sometimes admonitions are not enough. "Now I beseech you, brethren, Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). If such action is not taken, greater problems will arise, and more souls will become involved. Jesus, the personification of lowliness, meekness, kindness, and longsuffering, could, without violating these traits, make a whip and drive certain ones out of the temple (John 2:15).

One can be meek, lowly, and longsuffering and still contend earnestly for the faith. Paul could call Bar-Jesus a child of the devil (Acts 13:10), and say Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world (2 Timothy 4:10). One can say that the word of Hymeneus and Philetus will eat as a canker; point out that they have erred concerning the truth, and still be given to meekness, lowliness and longsuffering. Sin must be pointed out and opposed lest the innocent become contaminated and the elders are condemned because of neglecting to care for the flock. Preachers must speak boldly.

It is not always easy to manifest the spirit of lowliness, meekness and longsuffering while opposing sin and error. One could easily overlook these traits in his zeal for righteousness. Truth and righteousness come before unity, but lowliness and meekness are to be learned when truth first begins to enter the heart. These are foundation traits that help us learn truth, follow righteousness, and practice peace and unity.

- Raymond E. Harville, via *Truth Magazine*, June 7, 1973

Lovers of Peace

"A conqueror is always a lover of peace. He would like to make his entry into our state unopposed." -Karl Von Clausewitz. (Quotable Quotes, Reader's Digest).

EVERY NEW DEVICE, theory or practice in religious circles has been introduced and promoted by professed lovers of peace who label all objectors as disturbers of the peace. Those who urged the Missionary Society and instrumental music upon brethren nearly a century ago blamed the resultant division of the body of Christ upon those who opposed these things. Today, churches are dividing all over the country over church support of benevolent, educational, and missionary organizations, sponsoring churches and church sponsored social and recreational activities, and the promoters of these things are accusing the objectors of

destroying the peace. They would like for these things to enter and be accepted unopposed.

The Scriptures teach that real peace comes when the Sword of the Spirit (Word of God) has "pulled down strongholds, cast down imaginations," and "brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5), rebuke and reprove every false and unauthorized thing. (2 Timothy 4:1-4; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 9).

Because of this responsibility and the reluctance of INVENTORS and PROMOTERS to give up their own ways, it may often seem that the Lord sent "not peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34-35). The conflict sometimes results even in the dividing of family ties. However, the Lord and His Truth must be revered and jealously guarded above peace among men. Lovers of the truth, which alone can insure real peace, must continue to "prove all things," "try the spirits," and insist upon "abiding in the doctrine" and acting "in the name of the Lord."

Promoters of unauthorized practices may accuse objectors, as Ahab did Elijah, of troubling Israel (1 Kings 18:17-18) and use every lying, slanderous, and oppressive measure imaginable to silence opposition, but lovers of that peace which only truth and loyalty to God can bring, will continue to "stand against the wiles of the Devil." A thing which has been quite surprising for modern day promoters to learn, and which they are hesitant to admit, is the fact that there are yet "7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal." These will continue - - -

"Pressing the battle in Jesus' name,
Till victory is won,
Showing the world that the Father's will
Must here on earth be done."

- Herschel E. Patton, via *Mooreville Memo*, 08/30/1963

Chasing the World

We chase after so many different things. Only one thing is needful. Having a fist full of dollars, a great estate, and lots of prestige doesn't mean a whole lot if you've gone to your ultimate address without the Lord.

Even worse is to find that in the middle of your busyness, you awake to find yourself in the barren land where Christ does not dwell and life is not found. Let's not lose our lives, our souls, our meaning, chasing after what is not lasting!

- Phil Ware, via *The Hickory Heights Messenger*, 12/25/2022

Incurable Wounds of Sin

The prophet Micah exposed the sins of idolatry and prostitution in Israel and Judah. Micah, being sore troubled, writes "For this will I lament and wail; I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals, and a lamentation like the ostriches. For her wounds are incurable; for it is come even unto Judah; it reaches unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem" (Micah 1:8-9).

Micah considers the people's sins as a festering wound that will not heal. One can only imagine a terrible flesh wound that continues to be mashed into the ground and tormented every day so that it has no chance of healing. Sins that go on without shame are like a festering wound that one does not take care of.

The natural thing to do would be to take care of the wound and get it healed. Those; however, that love sin will keep doing the very things that brought the wound on in the first place. Such a mind is so bent on sin that it loses sight of the health of the eternal soul.

Sin has a way of deluding the mind and causing man to not be aware or care for the consequences of their actions. Sinful man can only see the immediate gratification before their eyes. Such sins may continue a lifetime and at the end man may look back on all the carnage he has caused not only in his own soul but the destroyed lives of others.

God sees and hears all that man does in every generation (see Jeremiah 23:23-25). There will consequentially be no viable excuse for the wicked when God judges mankind by his works (Romans 1:20 and Revelation 20:10-15). The wounds of idolatry and prostitution must be healed before spiritual healing can take place (Micah 1:9). Many today put their personal desires, opinions, convictions, and conscience above the laws of God and bring great trouble to their lives and the lives of others (see Jonah 2:8).

Micah helps us open our eyes to our sins so that we may be healed. The Apostle Peter once said, "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Let us all open our eyes to the true works of our mind and hands. If there is sin then let us be of a humble and contrite mind so that we may repent and receive forgiveness. Isaiah, speaking on behalf of God said, "For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, said Jehovah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). Are you humble, meek, lowly, and contrite of heart? Look into your lives and cleans yourselves of all defilements

of the flesh that separate you from God rather than letting those wounds of sin fester into a killing disease (see 2 Corinthians 7:2).

- John C Robertson

* "Have character – don't be one!"

* "When down in the mouth remember Jonah – he came out all right!" – Thomas Edison

* "A person may become wise by observing what happens when he isn't!"

* "Think before you speak; silent sense is better than fluent folly!"

* "A pessimist burns his bridges before he gets to them!"

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)