

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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Preach To Me!

Up and down the land, day in and day out, by young and old the banal little protest, "Don't preach to me," is heard. I can't use it. My understanding, my conscience and the needs of my soul won't let me.

The Son of God came preaching. He died that the gospel of heaven might be proclaimed to lost humanity. It has pleased God by the preaching that the world labels "foolishness" to save those who will believe. So, I say preach to me. But when you do so, make certain that it is heaven's will and wisdom, and not man's philosophy and psychology. Hold up God's mirror that I might see myself as I am. Use the Spirit's sword to discern the very thoughts and intents of my heart. Tell me what God wants me to know, and believe, and do, and become. Seek not to please me but to persuade me, not to soothe me but to save me, not to entertain me but to enlighten me.

Preach that which I need to hear and not that which you think I want to hear. Tell me of my blessings that I might be grateful, my responsibilities that I might be faithful, and my opportunities that I might be diligent; but shun not to tell me of my sins, my transgressions, my neglect, my imperfections. At the risk of offending me, angering me and even making an enemy of me, preach to me the whole counsel of God — for in telling me the truth you are not my enemy, but my friend and God's servant. With fear of God, reverence for truth, love for souls, and concern for responsibility PREACH TO ME!

- via Bill Crews in *The Preceptor*, April, 1966

The Time of His Second Coming

If I may say so modestly, let me assure you that I know as much about when the Lord will come again as any man who has ever lived. Yes, it is true! No man has ever known more than I do about the time of the second coming of Christ - and I know absolutely nothing about when the Lord will return! Various men and sects have embarrassed themselves,

their following, and Christians with their projections of when the Lord is coming. The greatest harm is that unbelievers judge all religion by the folly of date-setters like Wm. Miller of the Adventists and Russell and Rutherford of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Jesus said, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). The fact that the Lord will come "as a thief in the night" shows that it will be sudden and unexpected. "No man" knows the day or the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Despite these plain Scriptures, men still profess to know that which the Lord said even He did not know. James Tolle quotes a Seventh Day Adventist publication, *Present Truth*, January 1, 1942, as saying, "Christ has made it plain that his return is to take place in the present generation. It will occur in our time." Such utterances are not indications of reverence for the word of the Lord. "No man" knows the day or the hour.

- Larry Ray Hafley, via *Truth Magazine*, May 27, 1976

Persistence

"The secret is not to give up hope. It's very hard not to because if you are doing something worthwhile I think that you will be pushed to the brink of hopelessness before you come through the other side." (George Lucas)

There are times in my walk with God that I have felt like throwing in the towel and giving up. I have struggled with the same temptation and given in and sinned. When the light at the end of the tunnel cannot be seen, why not just quit? There were times that I felt it was hopeless. I would never change.

I have learned that the feeling of hopelessness comes from viewing God primarily as a judge. That has changed over the years. I have found that I cannot leave God's word alone. I had a hunger for reading His word that persisted even when I wanted to give up.

One thing that changed the way I thought about God was the parable of the talents. I realized that the one talent man was condemned for not trying (Matthew 25:14-30). The first letter of John also helped me to persist in light of my hopelessness. God desires to forgive me and will if only I will confess my sins to Him (1 John 1:9).

The second chapter of 1 John reminded me that if I sin, then Jesus is my Advocate. This ties back to the simple fact that I must be honest and admit my sin.

My Father wants me to persist in my struggle with sin. The greater my persistence, the easier it becomes. However, if fleshly desires are less of a temptation, then perhaps pride becomes a greater problem.

Paul said, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). Trust in Jesus and His cleansing blood and in the proven love of the Father. That is what my hope is based on.

- Ed Wittlif

God's Grace

Paul said in Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Through God's grace we are blessed with many things, especially salvation. This passage also tells us our access to the grace of God is faith. This is again pointed out by Paul in Romans 5:2, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." James says (James 4:6), "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Let us consider the following truths about GOD'S GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE:

(1) The Sacrifice of Christ. Hebrews 2:9 - "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

(2) The Gospel. Paul told of his ministry in Acts 20:24 - "But none of these things move me, [his personal afflictions – WP] neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

(3) The Word of God. Paul also said in Acts 20:32, unto the Elders of the church at Ephesus: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

(4) Grace Brings Salvation. Titus 2:11 - "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,".

(5) Grace Also Teaches Us. Titus 2:12 - ". . . Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

(6) Grace Elects. Romans 11:5 - "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

(7) Grace Justifies. Romans 3:24 - "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

(8) Grace Is In Christ. 2 Timothy 2:1 - "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

But as we stated in the beginning of this article: to have the benefits of all the above "graces" one must have faith. "We have access by faith" (Romans 5:2).

- Wendell M. Powell, via *The Charlotte Lamp*, 08/26/2012

Just One Hypocrite

Just one hypocrite in the church can do so much damage! The church of our Lord, the "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15) bears the difficult task of stain removal, many times long after the unrepentant hypocrite has gone to the grave. A little leaven has leavened the entire lump (1 Corinthians 5:6); the bad apple has spoiled the entire basket (cf. Galatians 5:9); "Bad company corrupts good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Solomon's wisdom is indeed confirmed: "one sinner destroys much good." (Ecclesiastes 9:18b). Even incredible good that can be accomplished through great wisdom will quickly unravel by the influence of a single sinner. Solomon further illustrated the destruction wrought by just one pretender by his lasting "fly in the ointment" proverb: "Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink," (Ecclesiastes 10:1). The wonderful fragrance of wisdom is overcome by the stink of even one person's folly. Such is one hypocrite in the church!

One foolish sin of Achan cost the people of God a humiliating defeat in the battle of Ai and a horrible scene of death and destruction at the valley of Achor (Joshua 7:1-26). A bad influence is a moral and spiritual pestilence that spreads corruption like wildfire. And the wicked influence lives on: "walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, making Israel sin. (1 Kings 15:30, 34; 16:2-3, 7, 19, 26, 31; 21:22; 22:52). How many notable leaders have brought disgrace and shame to their followers, defeating whatever good might be accomplished by sin that is not confessed and forsaken?

In local churches where the sin of hypocrisy emerges and is not soon cut off, the tentacles of putrid rot extend far and wide into the lives of God's people. Elderships are corrupted

in spite of the charade. The lasting effects of the servant of Christ's good works are quickly obscured. The congregation's good report is tarnished for the long term, maybe permanently! Just as idle words cannot be recalled, news of the hypocrite's fraudulent life is spread to the four corners.

The godless man is a destroyer (cf. Proverbs 11:9, NKJV – "The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor"); the hypocrite sears his own conscience "as with a branding iron," (1 Timothy 4:1-2). He has fallen away from the faith. Such a single hypocrite can do much harm and cancel much good that might be accomplished by God's people in any community!

- Gary Smalley

* "He who kneels before God, can stand before anyone!"

* "Many people with money to burn will eventually burn with their money!"

* "No virtue is more universally accepted as a test of good character than trustworthiness!"

* "A lazy person tempts the devil to tempt him!"

* "I would rather live my life as if there is a God, and die to find out there isn't, than live my life as if there isn't, and die to find out there is!"

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)