

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Yes, It's True

"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate." (Psalms 127:3-5)

Yes, it's true . . . children ARE a blessing from the Lord! Even when you are awakened from a sound sleep and have to get up in the middle of the night to satisfy the needs of that newborn? Even when it happens not once, but several times throughout the night and you find yourself dragging the next day due to a lack of sleep? Even when it seems as if you find little time to do anything other than change dirty diapers? Even when those "terrible twos" come and your patience is running thin? Even when that little mind keeps asking "why this" and "why that" and you think back to the early days when they couldn't talk so well? Even when you have to leave the "church services" to discipline them in some form or fashion? Even when it happens several times . . . in one service? Even when you have to punish them so as to teach and train them to behave properly? Even when they break this or spill this or do something that clearly indicates they detached their brain and left it laying somewhere outside their body? Even when they become more and more independent and you realize they are growing up much too fast? Even when they reach a point where they "know it all" and you as a parent, are old and "unintelligent" (a nicer word than "dumb")? Even when, years later, they begin to realize you were right about a lot of things and not so "unintelligent" after all? Even when they have their own children and begin to walk in your shoes?

Yes . . . the joys of parenthood! Our minds flood with memories! Their first word spoken! Will it be "daddy" or "mommy" (or perhaps "dog"). Then there's the point in time when they begin to eat solid food, then feed themselves, then no more diapers, then . . . (and on and on).

In Luke 1:66, there were some unusual things taking place surrounding the birth of John the Baptist which caused people to wonder, "What will this child turn out to be?" Do we not also wonder the same thing about our children? Not only in the "secular world" but especially within the confines of the spiritual realm. What will our child turn out to be? A mechanic? A computer technician? A Doctor? A teacher? Or most importantly, a Christian? A seeker of the things of God? A devout servant of the Lord? A godly man or woman, a godly husband or wife, a godly parent, etc.? The answer to this depends at least, in part, on what kind of parents we are ("Train up a child in the way he should go. Even when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6)

What will our children remember from their childhood? Loving discipline? Fun family times? Spiritual activities in the home, time devoted to the Word, prayer, etc.? Will they remember that when it came time to assemble with the brethren and worship God, that there was no question where our family was going to be? Will they remember the joy and desire that they saw in daddy and mommy in being with other Christians during such occasions (or do they see something entirely different)? It is a blessing to hear the cries of little ones at the services of the local church. It reminds us that the church has a future. It reminds us that there are godly parents trying to instill "the things of God" into their children and are putting forth the effort to do so. It can be very frustrating for parents during those early years especially when the edification you need to receive from being with others in a worship service is hindered somewhat by the distraction of taking care of / training your young children.

To those parents . . . Let me be one of the first to say "thank you" for your efforts to teach and train your children "spiritually," to put them in mind of God from their youth up. Myself and brethren like me applaud your efforts and support you in that righteous endeavor. We understand the challenge of training them spiritually (especially during a worship service), and the challenge of trying to not be a lingering distraction to the worship of others while also striving to gain the edification you yourself need from being "there" with other Christians. Yes, what a blessing to hear the infant cries and to know that with proper spiritual training, herein lies the future of the progress of the Kingdom, those who will glorify the Lord by their lives and be faithful to the cause of Christ! I remember the struggles my wife especially went through with our little ones, finding it necessary to take them out of the worship services on a regular basis to discipline and teach (while I was in the pulpit preaching). But it does get better and it's all worth it when you begin to see the positive effects of those early years of training as your child reaches their young adult years and you see in them, a person who is striving to live a life of devotion to God! Parents, others notice your efforts and we appreciate you! By these words, please let us encourage and support you as you instill in your child / children the things of God!

God's message to parents long ago is still a message we can make application of today, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Yes, it's true, our children are a blessing from the Lord!

- Perry M. Hurst

Clippings . . .

Putting the Lord First!

During the depression years, a financial problem arose in a certain congregation. It was necessary for the church to raise a seemingly impossible amount of money each week for that era of economic poverty. At a business meeting of the church one of the elders, a barber promised to give an amount each week which seemed a stupendous sum for those years.

A close friend visited him at the barber shop and asked him how he could promise and give so much when he did not even know how much he would make each week. He opened the cash register where he put his barber tickets and said, "Jim, on each customer I make a small commission. Well, I just put the commission checks over here until I have set aside the amount I promised. Then, the rest of the commission that I earn I can use for myself." He was putting the Lord first.

- Unknown

Jesus Welcomed Sinners!

Luke records the very words of Christ: "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32). The Lord's detractors could not withstand His logic: "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick." (Verse 31). His business was with sinners.

What was the Lord's first point to sinners? They needed to repent; they needed to change their minds into thinking the way He thought. If they were practicing sins of immorality He commanded them to stop doing it (cf. John 5:14; 8:11). If they hated their enemies He commanded them to do the opposite (Matthew 5:43-48). He came to lead the lost into righteousness. Sin is a sickness that needs to be cured. Without obeying Christ's command to repent, horrible consequences are the result (Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 11:20-24).

Repentance is the avenue that leads sinners to find God's salvation from the consequences of sin. The Lord Jesus directed His specially chosen apostles to teach His doctrine. Peter declared, "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;" (Acts 3:19). He continued: God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways." (Verse 26). Yes, the Lord came to call the lost, to call sinners to repentance!

Jesus sought occasions to share His saving message with sinners. In Luke 5, He ate with tax collectors and sinners. He singled out a man regarded by "the righteous" as "a sinner" (Zaccheus, Luke 19:5-10). Did the Lord Jesus accomplish His purpose? Notice: "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Verses 9-10).

The aim and example of Jesus Christ stands as what we should imitate. Are we seeking sinners for the Lord? Do we believe there are still sinners who will desire to change and will with the right encouragement? Are we welcoming to sinners, knowing that they have the potential to become devoted followers of God's Son? Our heavenly Father is continuing to give many opportunities for sinners to repent (2 Peter 3:9). Are we working to save them?

- Gary Smalley

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- * "The chains that restrict us most were forged by our own hands!"
 - * "Paul condemned high-mindedness, never mentioned broad-mindedness, but urged Christ-mindedness!"
 - * "The "strait and narrow way" never needs "reconstruction" to provide for a heavier flow of traffic!"
 - * "Some people are so sensitive to pain that they never give 'til it hurts!"
 - * "The world divides people horizontally (upper and lower class), but God divides them vertically (to the right and to the left)!"
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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)