

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Led By Example

In my years of dealing with horses one thing I found to be common among each one is that they are always looking for a leader. Horses are herd animals. When speaking of horses in the wild, the "Alpha", or the dominant mare always leads the herd. After the decision is made as to which mare is the dominant, this being done by outward displays of aggression, the mare then can for the most part lead the herd by example. Where she goes the herd goes. She dictates where they eat, where they drink and how long they do it.

In a way we humans are more "herd animal" than we sometimes think. We learn by example in almost everything we do. At a very early age we find ourselves somewhere following the crowd duplicating the actions of someone else. There is always a leader, but the leader learned to be a leader himself from someone else as well. It's by following these examples that we learn the habits that dictate who we are as individuals.

With this idea in mind, let us now consider the life of a Christian. The apostle Peter tells us that we are a "chosen generation", a "royal priesthood", a "holy nation" "His own special people" (1 Peter 2:9-10). We have come to be this peculiar group of people because we have been called out of the darkness of sin into the wonderful light of righteousness. Those in the light no longer seek after worldly lusts. How do we know who to follow? How do we know which way is right?

Well my friends, we too are led by example. The word of God goes on to tell us in the same chapter of 1 Peter that Christ is our leader and we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21). Here in the context the apostle is speaking of slaves serving under masters, but the application is general and can apply to all walks of life.

When Jesus was scathed with abusive language He didn't retaliate with the same. When beaten unmercifully Jesus didn't threaten. When mocked and made fun of while he hung

upon that tree he patiently endured. Knowing He could have called 10,000 angels to wipe out every one of His adversaries.

The cross had to go before the crown. Victory over sin came with a price, a price that could only be paid with the blood of God's own Son. By way of His victory He has now become our Shepherd and Overseer. Our "herd" is more like a flock. At some time we all have strayed from the fold but our Shepherd has rescued us from eternal danger. A shepherd, you see, leads His flock; he doesn't drive it. Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, leads His flock by the example of a perfect sinless self-sacrifice. Jesus suffered before victory and if we intend to follow Him, we will as well (2 Timothy 2:10).

We have an example to follow. He has asks us to deny ourselves just as He did (Matthew 16:24). The reward of the faithful is won no other way. Let us humbly and obediently follow our "Alpha" to an eternal life in the paradise of God. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city (Revelation 22:13-14).

- Jason Shackelford

New Testament Baptism

The efficacy of baptism does not depend upon: (1) the administrator, (2) church succession, or (3) what is said over the subject. The important thing is what is done in baptism, not what is said. There is no baptismal formula in the New Testament (Acts 2:38: 10:48: 19:5). In each of these passages the important thing is what is done.

To a penitent believer, baptism is immersion in water, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for, or in order to, the remission of sins. And at this point the Lord adds the obedient subject to the church (Acts 2:47).

In the New Testament, salvation always came after baptism. The truth of this proposition is obvious to the student who has carefully digested the contents of the Acts of the Apostles. New Testament baptism never puts one into a denomination, but always into the body of Christ (Galatians 3:27, 1 Corinthians 12:13).

It is not uncommon for one to remark, *"I'm satisfied with my baptism!"* Such a statement may be sincere, but it is relatively insignificant. The question is, *"Is God satisfied with what has been done?"* If the immersion has been performed according to the teaching of Scripture, the Lord is pleased; otherwise He isn't. It is rather difficult to believe and

practice error from beginning to end and have a valid baptism, since immersion is the culmination of gospel teaching (Acts 16:31-33). One who has not been baptized according to the New Testament order is still in sin. And one who has obeyed the teaching of Scripture concerning baptism, but subsequently joined some denomination, should abandon the sect, confess the sin of having gone beyond the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9), and unite with the Lord's church, the church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18).

Realistically, there is no such thing as "denominational baptism." It is baptism after the New Testament order or it is not baptism. But we use the phrase for whatever it may connote. So-called denominational baptism has the wrong sequence; it reverses the gospel order. i.e., it has repentance before faith and makes baptism "because of," instead of "in order to," the remission of sins; it has the wrong confession, since men must confess Christ instead of "feelings;" it has the wrong subject because it is a penitent believer who is to be baptized, not one who thinks he is already saved; it has the wrong motive because men are baptized into Christ and into His church, not into a denomination; it has the wrong emphasis because it attracts men to man-made churches instead of the church of the Lord.

- Noah A. Hackworth, *The Christian Courier*, June, 1972.

Remaining In A Group Where Error Is Taught

Over the years I have tried to persuade Christians to come out of local congregations that are not preaching nor practicing the full New Testament truth. However, a lot stay in them, saying, "I believe I can change them.", or "I remain there to be a thorn in their flesh." This is a very dangerous attitude to possess, because it normally does not work. Rather, what usually happens is that they get caught in the error themselves. I would like to share with you an article of many years ago:

Brother J.W. McGarvey was one of the noted scholars of the restoration movement who fellowshiped the errors and departures of the late 19th century. Jesse P. Sewell (gospel preacher-wp) quoted brother McGarvey as saying: "You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't let anyone persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshiping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinctions between churches that used it and churches that didn't. During all these years, I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it, to every young preacher who has passed through the College of the Bible.

Yet, I do not know of more than six of them who are preaching the truth today. It won't work."

How true, how true. It would not work then, and it will not work today. One cannot for long stay in a local work that practices, teaches, or endorses error and not be overtaken by it.

Always remember the words of John in 2 John 1:9, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

- Wendell M. Powell, in *The Charlotte Lamp*, 08/26/2012 [slightly edited – GFS]

Feast

Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom of God in several parables as a great feast to which people from around the world and throughout history will come (Matthew 8:11; 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24). In the Bible, feasts are not mere parties. They are celebrations of God's gracious goodness toward His people. When God's people held a feast, joyful voices were heard amid festive music and dancing (and of course abundant food)! They were occasions of fellowship with one another and with the Lord in remembrance of the wonderful things God had provided for His people.

What a joyful celebration of the Lord God's faithfulness to His promises! The glorious kingdom of God is depicted as a great feast at a marriage banquet which joyfully expresses the most intimate fellowship between the Son of God and His bride (Matthew 22:1-14; cf. Revelation 21:2; Ephesians 5:22-33). Believers from the first to the last moment of history will attend "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9). As believers who have accepted heaven's invitation to the feast, we are preparing our hearts to enter heaven. How very blessed we are to be called children of God (1 John 3:1) and to have been translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13)!

Friend, have you accepted the Lord's invitation to His feast?

- Gary Smalley

* "The man who can't get out of a rut these days soon will find it closing over him!"

* "It is the good listener that makes the good sermon!"

- * "Many are free from something, but they are free for nothing because they have no purpose in life!"
 - * "No matter what method one uses, there are many supplements to, but no substitutes for HARD WORK!"
 - * "Light woes are loud-mouthed, while crushing grief is voiceless!"
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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)