

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Water of Life

Water! What a blessing! To think that here in America, if we are thirsty, we simply turn on the faucet, go to the water fountain, or open up a container of bottled water. When we get ready to take a shower, wash our car, water our garden, we simply turn on the faucet. Oh how we take this wonderful blessing of water for granted!

While "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep...the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). During the creative process, God said, "Let there be a firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so" (Genesis 1:7). From the reading of these verses, perhaps water was one of the "firsts" of God's creation, in that, it existed when the earth was still without form and void. Most all living creatures God put here on earth are composed of a high percentage of water. Humans, animals, and vegetation all need water in order to survive.

I find it interesting that God, in His wisdom, included immersion in water as part of His plan of salvation for man -- baptism. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). He further stated, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?...And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38). At the house of Cornelius, Peter raised the question, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized?...And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:46-48). Peter stated that "God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism..." (1 Peter 3:20-21).

Though water covers much of the world, more than 97 percent is salty. Two percent of fresh water is locked in snow and ice, leaving one percent for us. Two-thirds of our water is used to grow food. Americans use about 100 gallons of water each day in their homes. Millions of the world's poorest populations subsist on fewer than five gallons of water per day. Forty-six percent of the people who live on this earth do not have water piped to their houses. Women in undeveloped countries walk an average of 3.7 miles to get water.

Truly, we Americans are blessed! Some estimate that by the year 2025, 1.8 billion people will live where water is scarce. (These facts and figures were obtained from *National Geographic*, A Special Issue, WATER: OUR THIRSTY WORLD, April, 2010.)

As wonderful and essential as water is, let's consider the One who created it and gave it to us -- Jesus, the Son of God. The Bible tells us that He created all things -- "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16).

Now let's consider another kind of water that Jesus provides. While having a conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, Jesus told her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14). Just imagine -- never thirsting again, a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life! Jesus provides this for us by the giving of His life and our obedience to His gospel.

What a contrast! When we are thirsty and get a drink, we thirst again. This living water causes us to never thirst again. Later on, Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). Thus, all the spiritual blessings that are provided "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3) are represented as "living water." And then, to think that this water flows in Heaven, "and he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1).

Surely, we desire such water -- indescribable blessings, life everlasting in Heaven! It's even better than the legendary "fountain of youth." And it can all be ours if we will but simply come to Him believing, repenting of our sins, confessing our faith in Him, being baptized for the remission of our sins, and being faithful until death (John 8:24; Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 16:16; Revelation 2:10).

And, finally, consider this: Jesus invites us to drink of this water. "And the Spirit and the bride say 'Come!' And let him who hears say 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. And whosoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

- R. J. Evans

THE HOLY BIBLE

This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, Heaven opened,

and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object; our good is its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

- Unknown

Unknown Tongues

There is great misunderstanding in the religious world concerning UNKNOWN TONGUES. Actually in the original language (Greek) the word "unknown" is not found in regard to speaking in tongues. The King James translation is the only popular translation that has injected the term "unknown" in the text of 1 Corinthians 14.

When we compare 1 Corinthians 14 with Acts 2 where the Apostles spoke in tongues we realize that speaking in tongues was synonymous with speaking languages which the spokesman had not previously learned.

Even in the first century, during the time that the miraculous gifts were in practice, speaking in tongues was classed as a very minor gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:19 that he had rather speak five words that could be understood than ten thousand words in a tongue. Evidently, speaking in tongues never was as important as some of our "Holiness" friends believe.

In regard to both "unknown tongues" (so-called) and divine healing, the Bible teaches that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased when the Word of God was fully confirmed (John 20:30-31; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Jude 3).

All healing today is divine. Without God there would be no healing, but we do not uphold the religious fakery of today's so-called faith healers.

- John Ramsey (slightly edited – GFS)

A Sharp Contrast!

THE WORD OF GOD	THE WORD OF MEN
But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. (James 2:20-24)	"Justification . . . is bestowed . . . solely through faith in Christ." ~ (The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, p. 62) "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." ~ (Doctrines And Discipline Of The Methodist Church, p. 29)

Exercise That Holds Out A Lasting Promise

Paul's first letter to Timothy contained this admonition: "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (1 Timothy 4:7b-8).

Godliness is piety, being well-devoted to reverence. Mastering it must be firmly fixed as the Christian's purpose so that he rigorously disciplines himself as would an athlete in training (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Christians are to be just as determined and energetic in training the inner man (Ephesians 3:16) as Olympic competitors are in training their bodies. Paul spent many years among the Greeks, so he well knew that for many of them, bodily exercise was an all-absorbing preoccupation. Certainly working toward physical fitness has value, but it is relatively unimportant compared with spiritual fitness. The chiseled physical body will return to dust, but the godly inner character will realize blessings in eternity.

Godliness is profitable in every way. In pursuing it, let us put aside "every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us," in imitation of Christ, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2). He endured great hostility at the hands of sinners; He endured the cross! So, "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us". Let us strive to attain our maximum potential in godliness!

Put simply, a "godly" person wants to please God, and he does that by hearing, believing and obeying the word of God. He uses the means God provided to cultivate and produce godliness in his life.

Friend, have you set yourself for the purpose of godliness?

- Gary Smalley

- * "If prayer does not drive sin out of your life sin will drive prayer out!"
 - * "If the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future!"
 - * "If we are like Christ, some will not like us!"
 - * "If we are not fishing, we are not following!"
 - * "If we pause to think, we'll have cause to thank!"
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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)