

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Serving God by Serving Others

Those who are obedient to the gospel become servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18). As servants, they are to serve. They are to be doing those good works for which they were created in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10). In fact, they are to be "zealous" for those works (Titus 2:14).

Romans 12:1-2 encourages Christians to be "living sacrifices" for the Lord. That is accomplished when we start living for the Lord and doing those things His will would have him do. One of the things the Lord wants His disciples to do is to serve others. He illustrated and emphasized this in John 13.

At what many have come to call the "Last Supper," Jesus paused, girded Himself with a towel, took water, and washed His disciples' feet. He told them,

"You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (John 13:13-16).

Jesus was not binding the rite of "foot-washing," rather, He was showing that those who would be His disciples were to be of a mind to serve others, regard their needs, and do what they could to help them.

James declares that if one is going to have a saving faith, that serving others is an essential aspect of that faith. In the second chapter he states,

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the

body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

One can profess again and again to be a Christian and to have great faith, but if he does not see to the needs of his brethren he, in reality, has no faith.

Serving others is an important matter to the Lord. When He depicted the judgment scene in Matthew 25, He stressed how important it is to Him and how it should be to us for He showed that it affects one's eternal destiny. To the righteous He said,

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:34-40).

The unrighteous were told to depart because they had neglected to be of service to others (Matthew 25:41-46).

Mike Waters wrote,

"Our Lord and Savior set a superlative example of serving others during his brief three-year ministry... A study of the life of Christ will reveal a character unconcerned with the serving of self. Jesus took advantage of every opportunity to instill this same trait in his disciples. Christ wanted his disciples to understand that they must learn to think little of serving self and much of serving others" (Spreading the Word, Vol. 3, No. 8, March/April 1991).

Opportunities abound for those who would be like Christ to demonstrate their love for Him by their service to their brethren. They can start by giving their brethren a friendly hello and a warm greeting. They can speak a kind word of encouragement; send a card to the sick or those absent from services; prepare a meal for the shut-ins; visit the sick, elderly, the weak, or discouraged; help the sick and/or elderly with chores; provide financial assistance when needed; and, of course, pray for their brethren.

It is vitally important for all Christians to actively serve their brethren for in so doing, they serve the Lord.

- Gene Taylor

Paul's Lists

As you study Paul's epistles in the New Testament, you will find that he frequently made lists. The contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:19-23 is an example of such a list. Romans 1:20-32 contains a list of progressive sins committed by those who depart from God. Paul reminded the Corinthians that some of them had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, but they had been washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The armor of God is listed in Ephesians 6:14-17. Things to meditate on are listed in Philippians 4:8. The vices of the "old man" to "put off" are listed in Colossians 3:5-9, while the virtues of the "new man" to "put on" are listed in verses 12-14. Activities that are contrary to sound doctrine are listed in 1 Timothy 1:9-11.

The list of Paul's lists could go on.

Why did the Holy Spirit lead Paul to make these lists in his writings? Some would prefer to live in a world of vague generalities and grey areas. They will acknowledge there is a difference between right and wrong, but they don't want to be specific about such things.

God's word does set forth principles of righteousness and ungodliness, and we are to understand these and conduct ourselves accordingly. However, God goes even further and draws clear lines identifying exactly what behaviors constitute righteousness and ungodliness. These lists are in the Bible for a reason. They are for our benefit, removing all doubt, so we can know what God expects of us. Let's pay attention to them.

- Heath Rogers

Share a Quote ...

There are few men who would pass through a gold mine, having full permission to carry away with them choicest specimens of its choicest treasures, who would not make good use of such an opportunity. All along the highway of life God is setting before each traveler opportunities to be and to do, which are far more valuable than the richest treasures of gold or gems which earth offers. These opportunities are so many open doors which lead to the treasure houses of God, prepared for all who seek, and offered to all who ask.

- H. W. Beecher

Ready to Go

That title describes the apostle and servant of Christ who wrote the epistle of joy and affection: Philippians. As death loomed ahead of him, he wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21). He had previously mentioned "the greater progress of the gospel" and "that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." (vv. 12, 20). Paul would eventually disappear from the scene, but he had no greater desire than to exalt (magnify, make greater; cause to increase) his Lord, Jesus Christ. What a determined purpose, that of allowing Christ to glorify Himself and His Father by life or death of His servant!

Previously, Paul had written admonishing the Christians in Corinth, "For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:20). This he did: "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:10). Someone stated that Paul's "earthen vessel" (2 Corinthians 4:7), his physical body, would be the "theater" in which Christ's glory would be displayed, and Christ would be glorified by his life or death.

To the genuine Christian (not in name only), it is as Paul wrote in Romans 14:8, "for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." Yes, "to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Notice Paul's emotional conflict: "But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake." (Philippians 1:23-24). Even with his compassionate desire to remain and help others, he was drawn by eternity to be "at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Is Paul's confidence your confidence? Has your love and desire to meet Christ transformed your concept of the moment when we depart this life for the next? Has Paul's example improved your outlook on harsh struggles of life? For us to gain when we die, we must strive to become Christ as we live. As hope lives in us, we can be of great comfort to brethren during their times of loss. Truly, it is very much better to be with Christ! Are you ready to go?

- Gary Smalley

* "God's grace makes you a better person, but not better than someone else!"

* "God's grace is free, but it's not cheap!"

* "God made you in his image, don't try to make Him in yours!"

* "God's will should be our highest priority, not an option!"

* "God says, 'Don't wait!' Satan says, 'Procrastinate!'"

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)