

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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WHOSE TRUTH ARE YOU LIVING?

The psalmist spoke to God, saying, "The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever" (Psalms 119:160, NKJV).

With the psalmist's declaration in mind, please notice that a recent CNN news article reports the following:

"Dwyane Wade has opened up about his daughter, Zaya, identifying as transgender. 'Me and my wife, my wife Gabrielle Union...we are proud parents of a child in the LGBTQ+ community and we're proud allies as well,' he told host Ellen DeGeneres on Tuesday's 'Ellen.' 'We take our roles and responsibility as parents very seriously.' The retired NBA star explained that Zaya was born as Zion, assigned male at birth, but wanted to live her truth... 'Zion, born as a boy, came home and said, "Hey, so I want to talk to you guys. I think going forward I am ready to live my truth. I want to be referenced as 'she' and 'her.' I would love for you guys to call me Zaya," Wade recalled... 'We're just trying to figure out as much information as we can to make sure that we give our child the best opportunity to be her best self'" (Marianne Garvey, CNN.com).

These developments should serve to sound warning alarms with regard to the following:

1. Unreliable standards. When a biologically male child is encouraged to "live her truth" by identifying as a female, one must question the meaning of the word "truth." By definition, "truth" is: "the true or actual state of a matter...conformity with fact or reality" (Dictionary.com). When a male child feels that he should be a "she," those feelings neither represent the actual state of the matter, nor do they conform to fact or reality. What has taken place in the Wade household simply serves as a reminder that we now live in a postmodern society in which each individual is encouraged to adopt his or her own "truth" in spite of the facts. However, God's word remains the unchangeable and unshakeable

standard of absolute truth. Rather than leaving each individual free to live his or her own truth, Jesus prayed to the Father, saying, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The only reliable standard of truth by which one may live is the word of God.

2. Parental failures. With respect to the duties of parents toward their children, the apostle Paul writes, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Rather than leaving each child to decide his or her own "truth" and live accordingly, parents must teach their children the truth of God. The Bible teaches that, "He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'" (Matthew 19:4; cf. Genesis 1:27). Parents are responsible for teaching their children that they cannot change what God "made them" with regard to gender and sexuality. What has taken place in the Wade household is simply a reflection of what is also taking place in households all over the world. Parents are utterly and completely failing when it comes to communicating the will of God to their children.

3. Tragic choices. While Mr. Wade claims that he and his wife intend to give their son "the best opportunity to be her best self," nothing could be further from the truth. By encouraging their son to travel a path based on a grossly distorted view of reality they are actually encouraging his destruction. With regard to leading children astray, Jesus warned, "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Rather than being something of which to be proud or being cause for celebration, what has taken place in the Wade household is very sad and tragic. Sinful rebellion against God and His created order will not go unpunished (cf. Romans 1:18-32; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).

Conclusion

The inspired wise man writes, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12). The idea that you are free to live your "truth" is simply another lie of the devil. The ones who will spend eternity with God are those who submit to His unchanging standard of truth and walk in it (cf. 3 John 3-4). Whose truth are you living?

- David Dann, via 07/16/23 – Articles, Stoneridge church of Christ, Jonesboro, AR

When Silence Is Not "Golden"

There is an old adage to the effect that "silence is golden." Much has been written - most of it true - concerning the evils of the tongue and the care that should be exercised with

reference to our speech. There is probably no subject more frequently discussed in the word of God than this. On the other hand, grievous wrong is often done by saying nothing when something ought to be said. Another familiar saying is, "Silence gives consent." Silence is often the refuge of the coward and the compromiser. It is quite often an effective means in perpetuating a vicious lie. Many an individual, who would not think of voicing a vicious falsehood about his neighbor, will give consent to and assist in perpetuating such a lie by silence when a word from him could have corrected and stopped the matter. Many permit Satan's lies to triumph over God's truth by their silence at vital moments. Well did Robert Louis Stevenson write: "The cruelest lies are often told in silence."

- James W. Adams, via *The Instructor*, December, 1971

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WHAT IS THE POWER?

When the church has to resort to ball games, feasts, and picnics to keep up interest in the work, it seems that the gospel has about lost its power there. Could you imagine Paul at Ephesus as a located preacher having ball games, banquets, and other worldly affairs to keep the men, women, and young people interested in the church? I fear that some are borrowing so much from the denominations that they will be a long time in paying back. Now, as the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, all these things may be a power for something, but not for salvation, nor to God. If the gospel will not hold people for the Lord, then nothing else will (Romans 1:16).

- H. M. Phillips, in *The Gospel Advocate*, June 30, 1935

Being a Good Moral Person Just Isn't Enough!

When a thief quits stealing and a drunkard stops drinking the character improvement is admired among all who have proven that such changes for the better result in a happier life. Good people maintain a high moral standard of blameless behavior. But moral goodness, as beneficial as it is for society, does not make one a Christian.

The Bible tells us of a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian cohort at Caesarea, who was certainly a blameless man of good moral character who even honored Jehovah God. Notice: he was "a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually." (Acts 10:2).

But what seems strange to many people is the fact that this fine moral man was not yet enjoying salvation that is found only in Christ. He needed something more.

Morality alone is not enough to save a person and add him to the body of Christ (cf. Acts 2:47). There are people of high moral character who have never even heard that there is a Christ. But now since the coming of Christ into the world, "God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30b-31; cf. Romans 1:4). The appointed Man in whom all must believe is Jesus, the Christ (John 8:24; Acts 4:12).

Consider that honorable Cornelius was commanded by an angel of God to send for the apostle Peter, "and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household." (Acts 11:14). The angel did not speak saving words to him. The angel instructed him to get those words from Peter. This case demonstrates that a good moral man needed words from an apostle of Christ, words that had in them the power to provide salvation (cf. Romans 1:16; 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21). Incidentally, these are the same words that Jesus Christ commanded His apostles to go into all the world and preach to every creature in order to make disciples (Mark 16:15-16; cf. Matthew 28:18-20).

When Peter arrived at the home of this fine man, he found Cornelius, his relatives and close friends (many assembled) to hear his words. "Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." (Acts 10:33). Then Peter preached Jesus Christ, leading to their belief, and hence, their forgiveness through baptism in water (Acts 10:43, 48). Such is the happy effect when good hearts (good moral people) receive the truth of the gospel.

Millions today are like Cornelius was before he was saved by obeying the gospel. They are morally good, devout, God-fearing, generous, and praying regularly, but they, like Cornelius, need to hear, believe and obey the words of salvation (cf. Acts 2:37, 41, 47). Feelings, experiences, circumstances of life and high moral character may turn people to religion, but only the gospel can turn men to Christ (Romans 16:25-26; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Ephesians 3:6; 2 Timothy 1:10).

Good moral people certainly need the gospel of Jesus Christ. These are the words of "good news" that bring salvation. Those who would seek salvation in some other way do so in vain. The gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

If you are a good moral person who has not yet come to believe and obey the gospel of Christ, may we help you today?

- Gary Smalley

- * "The main goal of life is not how to make a living, but how to live!"
 - * "If you would escape criticism, you must be satisfied to stay in the background!"
 - * "Rivers are like people: they become crooked by following the course of least resistance!"
 - * "One good thing you can give and still keep - your word!"
 - * "One difference between a buzzard and a gossip is that the buzzard waits until the person is dead before he tears him apart!"
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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)