

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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September 03, 2023

Volume 43, # 36

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### **Following the Bible**

The Scriptures clearly indicate that God would have us strictly construe His Word. We must do only what the Scriptures authorize. A thing is not to be considered acceptable just because it is nowhere forbidden. This is taught in the Old Testament and in the New, by precept and example.

#### **Old Testament**

God was pleased with Noah who did "according to all that God commanded him, so did he." (Genesis 6:22). When the tabernacle was completed, "Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them." (Exodus 39:43). And so did God, for they had acted according to His instructions, not according to their own judgment.

But the priests, Nadab and Abihu, took the liberty to offer fire before the Lord "which he had not commanded them." (Leviticus 10:1.) With this, God was greatly displeased (v. 2). He was equally displeased with the oxcart on which David moved the ark (1 Chronicles 13). God had never specifically forbidden an oxcart for this purpose. It was simply an unauthorized substitute for what God had authorized. David was forced to confess: "The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order." (1 Chronicles 15:13).

God warned Israel: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deuteronomy 12:32).

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition." (1 Chronicles 10:11).

#### **New Testament**

From the New Testament one example should suffice since it is that of Jesus. His refusal to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:3-4) can scarcely be explained on any other ground than an unwillingness to use His powers without authority from God. Though He had been without food for forty days, He was more concerned for authority from God than for bread. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In harmony with this, He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." (John 6:38).

That we must be similarly governed is clear from such passages as Matthew 7:21, where Jesus says, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The "will of the Father" is in contrast with the "doctrines and commandments of men" which must be avoided (Matthew 15:9).

The apostle Paul instructed the Corinthians "not to go beyond the things which are written." (1 Corinthians 4:6). He wrote to the Colossians: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." (3:17). How could one do "in the name of the Lord Jesus" what the Lord has not instructed? To Timothy Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If the Scriptures furnish us completely unto all good works, then we will not be hindered from any good work by doing only what the Scriptures authorize.

Finally, note the words of the apostle John: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9). How could our thesis be stated more clearly? It is with this assumption that all our writing shall be done.

- Sewell Hall, via *The Graphic Evangelist*, 08/05/1984

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## Dangers in Neglect

- We have neglected our salvation when we do not radiate the love of God in our lives (1 John 4:7-11).
- We have neglected our salvation when we are indifferent to the needs of lost souls (Romans 1:14-15).
- We have neglected our salvation when we have lost a burning desire to improve (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- We have neglected our salvation when we leave God out of our choices (Matthew 6:24).

- Dee Bowman

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## SPIRITUAL HEART TROUBLE

Having heart trouble, I am very aware that men die annually with this problem. Yet, a more serious kind of heart problem is that of *spiritual* heart trouble. Jesus said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1). Let us consider some serious spiritual heart troubles among men:

**(1) Gross Hearts:** There were some in Jesus' day who had rendered their hearts calloused and unfeeling. Jesus said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matthew 13:15). We keep our spiritual ears and eyes open so we can understand God's word with our spiritual heart.

**(2) Unforgiving in Heart:** True forgiveness comes from the heart. Jesus said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matthew 18:35). These words were spoken after Peter's question (v.21): "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times" Then Christ gave the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18: 23-34) to teach disciples to forgive every brother from the heart. God forgives us when we obey Him, and as Christians, we must forgive those who sin against us. It must be from the heart, just like our obedience was: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Romans 6:17).

**(3) Melting hearts:** At various times, Israel became discouraged. Notice: "wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water." (Joshua 7:5). Basically they became "faint" in heart. Beloved, it is hard to live for Christ, and fight off sin, when we become "faint" in heart.

**(4) Immoral heart:** Jesus said: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matthew 15:19). The immoral first think such things in their hearts. No wonder we are admonished to think on pure and good things (Philippians 4:8).

**(5) The Impenitent heart:** It is difficult to get people to repent. And yet God requires repentance of all men (Acts 17:30). When one does not repent, he will perish (Luke 13:3, 5). The apostle Paul said in reference to the sinful Jews, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Romans 2:5).

Do you have spiritual heart trouble? Christ is the remedy!

- Wendell M. Powell, via *The Charlotte Lamp*, 09/09/2012 [slightly edited – GFS]

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## **Christ is the Direct Route to God!**

A brother in Christ happened to notice as he was walking through an airport that the Alaska Airlines ticket counter did not offer a single non-stop flight directly into Alaska. He thought that quite strange. An airlines bearing the name of a state, but not offering a direct route to get there? They are offering detours!

The Bible advertises heaven for "whosoever will", and it always offers a direct route: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the permanently direct Way to eternal salvation! There are no detours!

Faithful servants of God in the Old Testament saw God's promises from a distance, the desired promises of "a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God ... has prepared a city for them." (Hebrews 11:16).

These "pilgrims" were not interested in finding detours; they would let nothing destroy their faith and alter their direct course. They were faithful to God! They "died in faith, ... having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13). Certainly, the devil multiplied detours for them in their life-long journey (cf. the fearful report of the ten spies in Numbers 13:31-33. The people were tempted to murder God's faithful leaders and return to Egypt, Numbers 14:4, 10). Likewise, the faithful today are urged to stay in the "narrow" way "that leads to life" (Matthew 7:14). The devil continues to show us many detours, where "the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13). As faithful pilgrims live on the earth, they must not be deterred by any alternate adventure. The devil disguises the ruin and destruction that results from such detours! "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11).

May the Lord God help us in the strengthening of our faith such that we never lose our direction toward Him through worthless avenues! Have you lost your sense of direction today? May we help you and encourage you in the true Way?

- Gary Smalley

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\* "The reason talk is cheap is that supply far outpaces the demand!"

\* "The reason a dog is man's best friend is because he does not pretend; he proves it!"

\* "Blowing one's own horn only succeeds in deafening the listener!"

\* "If you correct yourself, others won't have to!"

\* "Your character is what you have left when you've lost everything you can lose!"

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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)