

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.  
Jackson, TN 38305  
*oldhickorycofc.com*

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September 10, 2023

Volume 43, # 37

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### We Must "Take" The Remedy!

"This fellow was on the way to be baptized, see! And this limb fell on him, and killed him. Now, what about that fellow?"

Repeatedly, this ancient question is asked --- often by people who seem to think they have originated the Gordian knot [commonly used to describe a complex or unsolvable problem - GFS] --- as if every commandment of the Lord relative to baptism must now be cast aside.

Suppose we have that same man on his way to hear about Christ, for the very first time? A crocodile jumps up out of the bar-ditch and gobbles him down. Now, what about that fellow? In both cases the untimeliness of his death, or what he may have done had he lived, have nothing to do with his spiritual fate. This is determined by what he did do -- the "things done in his body" while he lived. (2 Corinthians 5:10 Romans 2:6)

Was he a sinner? If so, the wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23). But we are reminded that "the gift of God is eternal life." To which we reply that this is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ's death on the cross is the REMEDY -- it made possible the salvation of sinners; but the remedy must be taken, or appropriated, before its benefits are realized.

Citizens of the proverbial "far-away" island who have "never heard of Christ" are just as lost as those in Suburbia, U.S.A., who know of Christ, but ignore Him. Those islanders die of physical disease, in the absence of modern medicine, just as we do who have the medicine but refuse to take it. The same principle is true with reference to spiritual sickness. Spiritual death is due to sin -- here, or there, or anywhere. One of the plainest of Bible doctrines is the remedial aspect of the gospel of Christ. The laws of God's revelation do not impose a burden upon mankind; but are a part of God's gracious remedy, to correct and deliver us from the consequences of a spiritual condition we brought upon ourselves.

Man was already a sinner when our Lord died for us (Romans 5:8). In Matthew 26:28 Jesus said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." "FOR REMISSION OF SINS" means, in order that sins may be removed. He did not die because sins were removed, but so that they may be removed. That is clear to all Bible readers.

Then Peter uses the same expression in his instructions to the believing portion of the Pentecostal multitude: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you --- for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). The obvious facts are: these people were sinners, they believed Peter's statements regarding Jesus Christ, and they must now repent, and be baptized, (by Christ's authority) SO THAT THEIR SINS WOULD BE REMOVED. God's instructions were a part of the remedy for sins --- the means by which God saw fit to test their faith, and the conditions upon which He saw fit to offer salvation through Christ.

Recognizing your sinful condition, have you faith enough to obey God?

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, November, 1964 [slightly edited – GFS]

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## **Metaphors of Jesus: The Way, the Truth and the Life**

The New Testament teaches that the Christian is a pilgrim on his way to glory. He is seeking a better country, a heavenly one. But without any direction, the Christian knows not how to go. But God speaks through His Son in this age leading in the way that leads to life. To say that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life is the most comprehensive of all claims (John 14:6).

1. Jesus said: "I am the Way." Hundreds of years before this the Psalmist said: "Teach me thy way, O Lord" (Psalms 27:11; 86:11). Moses told the Israelites that they must not turn to the right or the left, but must walk in the way God had commanded them (Deuteronomy 31:29). Isaiah heard God say: "This is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21). This was the promise of a way of holiness in which nothing unclean could exist, and which was so clear that not even a fool could miss it (Isaiah 35:8). Disciples of Christ, Christians, as a whole were first referred as "The Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9). And the letter to the Hebrews speaks of the new and living way which Jesus opened for us to the presence of the Father (Hebrews 10:19). But Jesus' claim goes beyond any of these thoughts. Notice that Jesus did not say, "I show you the way" or "I open for you the way." He said, "I am the way." If someone approaches us and asks us how to get to a certain place we can tell him with specific instructions as to how to get there, or we can give him a map, or we can do the best thing by going with him to be sure he reaches his destination. In the same way, Jesus

did not only show us the way, or tell us the way only, but also went with us. No man can fail to find the Way as long as he is following Jesus.

2. Jesus said, "I am the Truth." Jesus is most certainly reliable and genuine, but the truth is not simply something which is intellectual or something to be known, it is also moral, something which is also to be done. John said, "He who does what is true comes to the light" (John 3:21). "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). We can see how much greater this truth is than intellectual truth. This truth enables man to live the good life. In fact, truth and goodness are one. To say that Jesus is the truth is to say that He is the perfect pattern of life as it should be lived.

3. Jesus said, "I am the Life." This can be taken at least two ways. It can refer to physical life since John said of Jesus: "All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:3, 4). The Word, Jesus, the pre-existent Christ brought life into the world. But even more it refers to eternal life. Jesus is the creator of life, and Jesus is the re-creator of life. He brought life in the beginning and He came to make life new. When Jesus offers eternal life it is evident that it means more than life which exists forever. For it to be a mere extension of life would be more a curse than anything else. Both quality and length enter into it. The life that Jesus brings to men is the life of God: living a life of godliness now (quality) and then being thus rewarded by being allowed to enter the gates of heaven forever (length). Remember Jesus' words: "No one comes to the Father but by me." Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

- Bruce James, via Truth Magazine, June 29, 1978

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## **God's Means of Saving Man!**

Jesus said to the Jews that rejected him, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:44). An individual can come to Jesus in no other way than to be drawn by the Father. In order for an individual to receive salvation, the Father must draw him.

We could easily become lost in a sea of opinions about how God draws men! How does the Father draw men? Many religious teachers say that God draws sinners to Christ by miraculous power, some mysterious influence, visions, dreams, voices, etc. If we would simply read the rest of what Jesus said in this passage, many of these ideas would be exposed as false. As we continue reading, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all

be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me." (John 6:45).

Jesus Christ declared that God draws men to His Son by the teaching process. Before anyone could come to Jesus, he must hear and learn the teachings of God. Is it so strange that God appeals to man's understanding and intelligence in order to draw him? God exerts an attractive force upon men, not through some mysterious means, but through a clear message of heavenly origin that appeals to his intellect and his desire to be good and righteous.

God's agency for teaching man has not always been the same. "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." (Hebrews 1:1-2). God is no longer teaching man through contemporary prophets, but through His Son (John 12:49-50; 17:7-8). How does the Son teach today? If He uses miraculous or mysterious means to draw men, why did He command His apostles to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15)? Why did He command that "repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations" (Luke 24:47)? In making salvation available to men, why was such importance placed upon PREACHING the GOSPEL? What is God's power to draw a man to Christ for salvation? Hear what the Bible teaches: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16). God's power to save is the GOSPEL. Sinners are drawn to God through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Notice: "for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13-14). The preaching of the gospel of Christ affords men the opportunity to hear. This is how belief, or faith, comes (Romans 10:17), and ultimately how salvation is obtained. The one and only means by which God draws men unto Christ is teaching the gospel of Christ. If we are drawn to Christ, it will be because we hear and learn of Him through the gospel.

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "It wasn't the manger that sealed the courage of the apostles; it was the cross!"
  - \* "Faith is not real until it is all that you hold onto!"
  - \* "God doesn't have a plan B! Beware of those who teach that He does!"
  - \* "Experience makes a person bitter or better!"
  - \* "The train of failure usually runs on the track of laziness!"
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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)