

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Tomorrow!

What a familiar word! What a dangerous word. "I will do it tomorrow." The tragedy of it all is that tomorrow never comes. If we don't do the things we should today, then today's things will never be done.

Solomon said, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1). So uncertain is tomorrow that we dare not to trust our souls to it. If your soul is not right with the Lord, now is the time to do something about it. The apostle Paul said, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation I have succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Tomorrow may find me unable to do the things I should do today. I may not be alive tomorrow. James says, "Come now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that." (James 4:13-15).

- Hollis Creel (1928-2014)

Share a Quote ...

Profession without practice was not only the curse of the Jews; it has been throughout the ages the curse, of the Church. . . . During his early days in South Africa--in Pretoria--Gandhi enquired into Christianity. For several Sundays he attended a Christian Church, but, he says, "the congregation did not strike me as being particularly religious; they were not an assembly of devout souls, but appeared rather to be worldly-minded people going

to Church for recreation and in conformity to custom." He, therefore, concluded that there was nothing in Christianity which he did not already possess--and so Gandhi was lost to the Christian Church with incalculable consequences to India and to the world.

Profession without practice is something of which we are all more or less guilty. It does incalculable harm to the Christian Church; and it is doomed to disaster, for it produces a faith which cannot do anything else but wither away.

- William Barclay, Daily Study Bible on Matthew, Vol. 2, p. 281.

We Walk By Faith

"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord — for we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:6-7).

The Bible often uses "walk" as a metaphor for one's manner of conduct. Life is a journey; we are merely "sojourners and pilgrims" here. An old hymn says, "This world is not my home; I'm just a passing through." In the body we are "absent from the Lord," but like Paul, we "walk by faith" and "make it our aim to always be well-pleasing" to God (2 Corinthians 5:2-9). Our choices are made with respect to things, which are unseen, rather than to those which are seen (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Although we cannot see God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Heaven with our eyes, we have complete confidence that they are real, and we act accordingly.

Whether we see or do not see does not alter their nature or importance, nor does it make it improper to act with reference to them.

Faith enables us to see when the eye cannot. It makes easy the most self-sacrificial service required of us (cf. Abraham, Gen. 22). It enables us to endure sore trials without murmuring. When dangers arise, it lights our path and gives us courage. It enables us to overcome doubt and temptations for we believe that "Faith is the victory that overcomes the world!"

We do not "walk by sight." One walks by sight when he is motivated only by the approval of other people. He walks by sight when he makes mammon his god ... when he lives for getting and hoarding, or spending and squandering ... when he estimates worth by wealth, or property. A man walks by sight when he cannot control his appetite or passion; when he cannot put aside things "good for food and pleasant to the eyes" for the sake of

tomorrow's sickness, or a life of disgrace; when he finds himself again and again yielding to the same temptation from which he has suffered. Weakly lives and miserably dies the one who is a slave of what his better nature condemns and despises, but to which his fleshly appetite, long made a tyrant by yielding to it, ties and binds him.

- James E. Cooper

Want to Learn About the Church?

Why become comfortable with the habit of learning about "the church" from what is said by people around you? If you want to know what the church is, then pick up your New Testament and read about it for yourself. Do not allow the divided religious world to distort the beautiful description of the church as found in God's word!

Jesus Christ promised to build His church: "... I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." (Matthew 16:18). How can I be content without being in the church belonging to this divine builder? Why would I reject it for the counterfeit churches built by men, around men, and around the doctrines of men? [Recall the Lord's warning: "But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." (Matthew 15:9).] Christ is "head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22-23), and as such, men are "in subjection under His feet." The church is "His body." It belongs to Him and is directed by Him. He is "the head." In the New Testament, congregations were called "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16).

The church of Christ existed long before the Roman Catholic Church or Protestant Denominations. It was founded in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; 2:1-47). The Apostles of Christ were given the authority to persuade men by preaching Christ's gospel (Mark 16:15-16), whereupon the choice to receive it or reject it resided with the hearers. Reacting to Peter's preaching, "... those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41). What phrase would describe these people to distinguish them from all others? "The saved" (Acts 2:40, 47). To what were they added? "The church" (Acts 5:11; 8:1). Who added them to the church of Christ? "The Lord" (Acts 2:47). Going forward, were they free to invent their own doctrines? No, "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship" (Acts 2:42). They were required to "abide in the teaching of Christ" (2 John 9). Teaching is doctrine.

"All those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ... Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple..." (Acts 2:44, 46). They had unity, and were "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). This

would have been impossible had they preached different doctrines and led people to believe they could serve God on their own terms. Members of the body of Christ were identified by being called "Christians" (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). They did not wear divisive sectarian names. Dividing the body was sinful (1 Corinthians 1:10); "there may be no division in the body" (1 Corinthians 12:25).

The members met together "on the first day of the week" in order to "break bread" (Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42). [This was not a social meal, as the Watchtower's New World Translation would have us believe.] They did not diminish the importance of remembering the Lord's death for their sins by observing the Lord's Supper monthly, quarterly or annually. Each one was instructed by the Apostles to give of their means "on the first day of every week" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). The churches were not instructed to raise funds through bake sales, car washes or stock investments. They listened to preaching and teaching (Acts 2:40-42; 11:26; etc.). The gospel of Christ was the only doctrine taught (Galatians 1:8-9). Unheard of were John Calvin's doctrines. They sang to one another and to God, "teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing ..." (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). They were not commanded to play instrumental music in worship. They prayed when they assembled (Acts 2:42; 12:5).

As the church spread, each group of "saints in Christ Jesus" had their own "overseers [elders] and deacons" (Philippians 1:1). There was no earthly "headquarters" at any location. The preachers were men who embraced the divine directive to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). They taught sinners, saying, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38), and "be baptized, and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). They never told one person that "baptism does not save you." They taught the direct opposite (see 1 Peter 3:21).

Friend, if you want to be reconciled to God by the forgiveness of sins that you might be saved, it is only found "in one body" (Ephesians 2:16), "the church" (Ephesians 1:22-23). This is the church you must find! Believe and obey every command of the Lord so that He will add you to the church that belongs to Him. God will bless you in that endeavor!

- Gary Smalley

- * "No one is ever too old to learn, but many keep putting it off!"
 - * "It is better for your foot to slip than for your tongue!"
 - * "Some 'Christians' are like balloons - full of wind and likely to blow up unless they are handled carefully!"
 - * "The intensity of our desire for the truth will determine our eternal destiny!"
 - * "It is better to ask twice, than to go the wrong way!"
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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)