

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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

September 24, 2023

Volume 43, # 39

"It's Not Reasonable!"

Reason is an appeal to the mind, describing the mind's apprehension and evaluation. It is egotism gone to seed that declares everything untrue that man does not comprehend. How foolish in our world filled with incredible things.

Reason does not establish right and wrong. A musical instrument in worship is not wrong because it is unreasonable. It is without scripture and thus unauthorized. And all we do or teach must be authorized (Colossians 3:17). A fellow proclaims the demand for baptism to be unreasonable — "I do not see any sense in water baptism." So what? It is commanded (Mark 16:16 Acts 2:38). We do not look in our own mind (reason) for the answer to what is right; we look — by revelation — into the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16).

There are also things that are true but entirely unthinkable. Just try grasping the speed of light — 186,000 miles per second. Stretch your mind to envision the distance of a light year. Such thoughts defy the mind. While fact, they are absolutely too large to fit into our minds.

God is also several sizes larger than man's thinker. The finite mind will never fathom eternal existence — though even the rankest skeptic must admit something has always been. Now add God's other characteristics — omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Reasonable? Absolutely not! Small wonder man does not understand God; his thinker is far too small for infinite thoughts.

"It is not reasonable to believe in resurrection, instant healing; calming a raging storm, or opening a path through the sea. So I reject the Bible." Wait a minute! You have not considered all the facts. "Unreasonable" may be no more than "incomplete" reasoning." You need one more fact before a conclusion — God. With God and his power considered, the other things are quite reasonable.

Your neighbor abruptly quits his job of twenty years, forfeits his retirement, virtually gives away his possessions, leaves his friends and moves to the desert. Is that reasonable?

Has he lost his mind? Now add this bit of information. The doctor advised him he would die in three months if he did not make that move. Ah, that is different! The unreasonable suddenly is perfectly sensible.

Consider another case: A family devotes most of their time to religious work. They go to church several times a week — rain or shine. They constantly study and talk about the Bible. They have little time for recreation or hobbies. They spend much of their money on religion — even sacrificing things they need to have more to give. Are these people unreasonable? Crazy? Consider: Man is appointed a judgment with consequences as grand as heaven and as horrible as hell. The time at stake is eternity. Jesus died to give the forgiveness and happiness. Many are unaware of this. This changes the picture. It transforms a "living sacrifice" into a "reasonable service" by a "renewed mind" (Romans 12:1-2).

- Joe Fitch, via Plain Talk, September, 1981

What Might Have Been

How painful is the thought expressed by one of the great poets, John Greenleaf Whittier: "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

Many a person has thrown away his life in drug addiction, (including alcohol). Numerous are those who have thrown away their marriages by becoming involved with others. Parents have often lost their children by neglecting them, or even granting them excessive freedom. Many are those who have thrown away a good name by some ungodly behavior. Do you not suppose that a vast majority of these later in life have shed tears of bitter remorse as they have thought of "what might have been"? It is too late, however, for all has been lost.

This bitter lament is found also in the Bible. It was expressed by the "weeping prophet," Jeremiah (8:20) as he sadly exclaimed, "THE HARVEST IS PAST, THE SUMMER IS ENDED, AND WE ARE NOT SAVED." God had given His people ample time to repent and turn from their idolatrous, immoral ways. They had not shown any inclination to respond appropriately to His offers of mercy. When God was no longer willing to tolerate their wickedness, the Babylonian captivity became His means of teaching them a 70-year lesson. No doubt there were times in Babylon when they mourned and wept over "what might have been" if they had only listened to the voices of the prophets who had warned them.

Such lessons ought not to fall on deaf ears today. That individual who has stopped serving the Lord faithfully will one day realize what he has given up. It may be too late then to do anything about it. My dear wayward brother or sister, before the "harvest is past" and the "summer is ended," you ought to take advantage of a merciful God's offer of pardon by repentance, confession and prayer. Better that, by far, than to stand condemned in the judgment and have to think of "what might have been."

That individual, too, who has never obeyed the gospel should ponder seriously what hell is like (according to God's word) and submit himself to the rule of Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism before it is too late to do so. Far better this than to be separated eternally from God and think of "what might have been."

- Barney L. Keith

THE PERCEPTION IS ...

"A good name is better than precious ointment" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). "Only let not your good be evil spoken of" (Romans 14:16). Timothy was "well reported of by the brethren" (Acts 16:2). Surely, we would rather be held in respect than despised.

But sometimes perceptions are unjust. Ahab's perception of Elijah was that he was the one who "troubleth Israel" (1 Kings 18:17). It was really the other way around.

Jesus was perceived by the Jewish rulers as a "blasphemer" who had to be stopped at all cost. For that reason they "took counsel together to put Him to death" (John 11:53). Yet Peter said that He "left us an example that we should walk in His steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22).

Paul said, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:23). The perception of both unbelieving Jews and Greeks was wrong. The truth? "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God -- is stronger than men" (Vs. 25).

Unbelieving Jews created a false impression about Paul and his companions at Thessalonica. They dragged "certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, 'these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also'" (Acts 17:6). The perception spread. "And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things" (vs. 8). But it was all based on false information. But still, that was the perception.

Image Problems: -- Let's face it, Jesus, the apostles and the early church suffered from an image problem. I guess Demas succumbed to it for he "forsook...having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). The church of our Lord has often suffered from an image problem. "That's the little bunch who thinks they are the only ones who are right." "Oh, they are the ones who don't believe in music in the church." The perception of many younger people now is that organized religion is hypocritical, repressive, and out of touch with life in the real world. On top of that they are judged to be too judgmental and bigoted.

Solving The Image Problem: -- I don't know that we always can solve it. We cannot compromise the truth because some who stand for it have been slandered and false perceptions have been created. All of us need to keep on preaching what we know to be the truth, doing what we know to be right, and living uprightly before God and the world, whether or not the perceptions are changed. In the final analysis, does it really matter what people think of us? No, it does not. What matters is what God thinks about us. If my action is right before God, then whatever contrary perceptions may prevail are of no importance. When we begin to sample perceptions, brotherhood or otherwise, and decide our actions and associations accordingly, then we have sold out our principles for the pottage of human approval and opinion. Is there a price to pay sometimes for acting contrary to the "perception which is out there?" Absolutely. You may have a meeting or two canceled without any explanation. That happened to me twice this year. One was cancelled with no other explanation than "for the health of the church." I don't know if that meant the church was all too sick to attend a meeting or they thought my preaching would make them all sick. Another was cancelled with the explanation "due to circumstances." When I inquired what those "circumstances" were, I received no answer. Do churches have the same right to cancel meetings as to schedule them? Of course they do. But there is such thing as honorable treatment which even people in the world recognize in the realm of business dealings.

Am I going to cut off association with brethren I know to be honorable and who are engaged in activities which are just and right because of some "perception out there"? No sir, I am not. Others may choose whatever course they desire, but it appears to this old country boy that principle and perception are not always on the same page. The measure of a man's character and caliber may well be decided by which one he chooses. "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23).

- Connie Adams in Truth Magazine, Vol. 52, No. 10, December, 2008

* "I am secure in Christ. No need to fear any person or future!"

* "Happiness may be thought, sought and caught, but never bought!"

* "God takes care of our living when we take care of His business!"

* "Give your troubles to God, He never slumbers nor sleeps!"

* "God can take the place of anything. Nothing can take the place of God!"

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)