

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Soul of Obedience

Remember the old story about the man who was going on a journey, and asked his son to lay out the farm according to his instructions? Corn was to be planted in this field, beans in that, the garden here, a shed built there. The boy put the corn where his father wanted it, and the beans where the father said. But he changed places for the shed and garden. When his father returned and objected to his son's disobedience, the boy argued he had done half of what his father ordered; but the father said, "No, you did nothing in obedience. It is obvious that you only put the corn and beans where you did, because you thought they should go there."

We might well ask ourselves the question, WHY do we live as we do? Is it out of respect for God and His laws, or are we simply following a pattern of mores ["the fixed morally binding customs of a particular group" (Merriam-Webster's dictionary) - GFS] that we approve, and which represents no higher authority than our own traditions? The motive for obedience is an aspect of law that has been somewhat ignored.

In Paul's arguments on law versus faith (Romans and Galatians) he certainly does not rule out law. He says faith establishes law (Romans 3:31); and he says the law is "holy, just and good" (7:12). Its weakness was by virtue of its subjects, men (8:3); but even then, it served to bring them unto Christ — aware of their need for mercy and forgiveness (Galatians 3:24).

One can not accept the existence of God and ignore the expression of His will; and acknowledging the relation of creature to Creator imposes an obligation to submit to His hand (Romans 1:20-21; 9:20-21). There is a close correlation between keeping the commands of God and abiding in God, and He in us (John 14:23; 1 John 2:3-6).

Christ is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9); and saving faith is an obedient faith (James 2:24) "which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). The principle here is not that of law meritoriously obeyed (which would demand perfection) but because obedience from the heart demonstrates our attitude toward Him

who made and gave the law. How else could the breaking of one law make a man "guilty of all"? James explains, "He that said, Do not commit adultery said also, Do not kill" (James 2:10-12; 4:10-11). To select from all God said those parts we approve and are willing to obey, assumes a position above that of God. It is to imagine ourselves judges OF the law, hence OF God, instead of realizing we are subject to and are judged BY the law, hence BY God. Without the proper attitude toward God, no obedience (?) is acceptable to Him.

Some have suggested these Bible approved motives for obedience: fear of punishment, appreciation of our position as clay to Potter, and varying degrees of love for God. Paul says "the love of Christ [our recognition of His love for us - RFT] constrains us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). However you list them, they start with faith "that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Perhaps we are failing to elicit more obedience to God because we do not work hard enough at preparing the soil, or stirring proper motives.

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, May, 1980

Is God the Author of Confusion?

On the *Arise To Truth* radio program, I have had individuals to ask, "If one wanted to be saved what plan of salvation would he adhere to? All these different churches have different plans of salvation, what is one to do?" I tell them to forget what these various churches and preachers are saying (including us) and go back to the Bible. God is not the problem: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Mankind is the problem for leaving God's pattern!

Do you believe that Peter taught one plan of salvation and Paul another? What about James and John, what did they teach relative to the new birth? What a mess if each of the apostles taught different doctrines. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Notice, there is only one "apostles' doctrine" – not two, three or four thousand, but just one!

There is but one faith: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Our Lord prayed for unity: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). He prophesied unity: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). He preached unity: "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said

unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25). He practiced unity: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). He planned unity "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:3-6).

If angels add to the Word of God, they will be cursed (Galatians 1:6-9). If we add to the Word of God, our names will be erased from the book of life and our part will be taken from the holy city.

Any preacher who adds to the Word of God, will be pronounced a liar (Proverbs 30:6). God is telling us: please do not tamper in any way with His inspired instructions. Friends it does not take a Solomon to realize someone has perverted the Word of God.

So we ask you is the plan of salvation that you have obeyed in the Word of God? Is the church that you are a member of in the Book Divine? Is the way that you worship based upon a thus said the Lord? Is the organization of the church of which you are a member biblical? Is the moral code of the church of which you are a member based upon the moral code of God's precious Word?

The true church had its origin on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. Any church [different in doctrine and order – GFS] started after that time is wrong and unscriptural. Most people in the New Testament that became Christians had to change religions. You may have to change religions to be right in the sight of God! Some waited too late: "Not every one 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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). You and I do not want to be in that group. There is only one way to avoid that: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We must have Bible authority for what we do!!! If we can help in your Bible study feel free to contact us.

- Wesley Simons

Can You Believe It?

I never thought I would see the day! Former president of the Southern Baptist Convention (He completed his Ph.D. in Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.),

J.D. Greear, who is advertised as "an evangelical American religious leader who is the pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina" has made a startling discovery by studying his Bible!

"Several years ago, our church chose to hold our first baptism service after we noticed the biblical pattern of spontaneous baptisms while preaching through a series in the book of Acts." (<https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/j-d-greear-why-baptism-sunday/#:~:text=Several%20years%20ago%2C%20our%20church,than%20we'd%20ever%20seen!>)

"For New Testament believers, the pattern was alarmingly simple: Believe, confess, get baptized. There was never a gap between when a person trusted Christ and when that person was baptized. Not one." (<https://www.namb.net/news/j-d-greear-why-baptism-sunday/#:~:text=Our%20fear%20of%20extending%20these,exception%2C%20is%20spontaneous%20and%20immediate.>)

"... every single baptism we have on record in the New Testament, without exception, is spontaneous and immediate. John the Baptist invited his hearers to show their repentance by baptism, an invitation received most notably by Jesus himself (Matt 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11). Peter baptized 3000 on the spot in Acts 2 after one sermon (Acts 2:40-41). Philip baptized the eunuch after their first conversation, (Act 8:36-38), and Ananias baptized Paul "immediately" after meeting him (Acts 9:17-19, cf. 22:16). Paul baptized the Philippian jailor and his household "at once" (Acts 16:31-34)." (<https://jdgreear.com/why-we-sometimes-baptize-on-the-spot/>)

"Demanding that we delay baptisms to ensure against false professions is to pursue a good objective in an unbiblical manner. Those who do this have allowed concerns over false professions to trump biblical patterns. Whenever we develop a theory from some biblical data that conflicts with other biblical data, that's a sign our theory has gone wrong." (Ibid)

From the day I first heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, I was impressed with the fact that Bible study is important! Maybe Mr. Greear will continue to study so that he will learn that: baptism is "for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38), baptism is in order to "wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16), and "baptism now saves you" (1 Peter 3:21), rather than what he presently teaches.

- Gary Smalley

- * "Bitterness is like sawmill gravy. The more you stir it, the thicker it gets!"
 - * "The devil entangles the youthful with beauty, the miser with gold, the ambitious with power, the learned with false doctrine!" - Spurgeon
 - * "We follow the world in approving others; we go far before it in approving ourselves!"
 - * "In the time of Jesus, the mount of transfiguration was on the way to the cross. In our day the cross is on the way to the mount of transfiguration. If you would be on the mountain, you must consent to pass over the road to it!" - H. C. Trumball
 - * "The most overloaded, desperate people are those who can see no burden but their own!" – David H.C. Read
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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)