

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

The church of Christ is a divine organization, free from all human traditions, bearing the following marks of identity:

1. The Founder of the church as born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6). A person born in any other place cannot be the founder of the church of Christ.
2. Jesus Christ was the Founder of the church (Matthew 16:18). Any other person claiming to found the church or a church is an imposter.
3. Jesus is the foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:11). An institution built upon any other foundation is not the church of Christ.
4. Jesus is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). An institution having any other head is not the church of Christ.
5. The church of Christ is one body, each individual Christian being a member of that body, with Christ as its head (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18). Individual Christians, and not religious denominations, are members of the body. Each denomination is itself a body with its own head. Christ is the head of ONE body, or church only - not of a multitude of denominations.
6. Jerusalem is the place of the beginning of the church (Isaiah 2:1-3; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:1-26; 2:1-47). An institution beginning at any other place is not the church of Christ.
7. The church of Christ has a well-defined law of admission (John 3:5; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). An institution admitting members in any other way is not the church of Christ.
8. It has a creed that needs no revision (Matthew 16:16), and its "discipline" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) nullifies all human creeds, disciplines, confessions of faith, and catechisms,

rendering them useless, even condemning the man who manufactures them (Revelation 22:18-19).

9. The followers of Christ are distinguished by a divinely-given name (Isaiah 62:2; Zechariah 14:9; Matthew 10:32; Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). An institution wearing any other name than the name of Christ, whose members wear any other names than those given in the New Testament, such as disciple or Christian, cannot be the church of Christ. Human organizations wear human names.

10. The church of Christ has one system of worship (Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 5:19-21). An institution that does not observe, or adds to, or takes from or in any way changes this system, cannot be the church of Christ.

11. The church of Christ has one system of government: Elders and Deacons. There were several [at least two – GFS] in each fully-developed congregation, and they had no authority outside their respective congregations (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The centralization of power in the hands of such functionaries as popes, cardinals, arch-bishops, reverends, etc., or in such assemblies as synods, presbyteries, conferences or conventions, was unknown in New Testament times, as well as the functionaries and assemblies themselves.

The Word of God - the Bible - contains sufficient instructions to guide us in the worship and in the work of the church (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3); it condemns all who go beyond its teaching (1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9); it pronounces a curse upon the man or angel who preaches another gospel (Galatians 1:8-9), and threatens with plagues, and exclusion from eternal life, all those who add to or take from the things written therein (Revelation 22:18-19).

Having thus identified the church of Christ, we ask: Are you a member of this church? If not, why not think seriously on what has been placed before you, follow the truth, and become a Christian only?

- Unknown, via *The Instructor*, January, 1969

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## *Clippings ...*

### **Just an Ordinary Member**

Just an ordinary member of the church I heard her say,  
But you'd always find her present, even on a rainy day.

She had a warm handclasp for the stranger in the aisle,  
And a friend who was in trouble - found sunshine in her smile.

When the sermon helped her, she told the preacher so;  
And when she needed help, she let the elders know.  
She always gave so freely and tried to do her share,  
In all the ordinary tasks for which some have no care.

Her talents were not many, but her love for God was true.  
Her prayers were not in public, but she prayed for me and you.  
An "ordinary member" did you say?? I think I would say.  
She was "extra ordinary," in a humble sort of way.

- Unknown

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## Looking Forward With Joy

Snow means different things to different people. For some, snow days are about shoveling driveways and tricky commutes. For others, snow means e-learning and Zoom classes. However, for another group, snow is all about wonder and winter activities. My three little girls definitely fall into the latter category; they love to play in God's winter wonderland, making snowmen, snow angels, and engaging in the occasional snowball fight. They also love to sled. Unfortunately, our property is about as flat as a pancake, which doesn't make for very good sledding. That usually means my girls will beg me to take them to a few places in town with good hills.

This all played out recently. The snow came, the girls were anxious to go sledding, and unfortunately, I was busy. But after some additional prompting, I committed. You should have seen the girls' reaction; they went from being anxious about possibly not getting to go to looking forward to the event (read jumping up and down) – and all because they believed I would make good on my word! When we reached the appointed time, we all piled into the van in our snow gear, and the girls had a blast.

I think there's a spiritual lesson here for us. In Scripture, God promises that Christians will join Him in heaven. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 reads: "For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

The verb translated "destined" means, "to destine or appoint someone to or for something." Biblically, the word "destiny" is used regularly to describe God's

determination of events. In other words, if God says it will happen - we should believe it! There is indeed wrath coming for all who are unbelieving and disobedient, but not for God's faithful. Paul goes out of his way to tell the Christians at Thessalonica (and therefore us) that God has NOT destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through Jesus.

Just like I made an appointment with my girls to take them sledding, in Christ God has made us a divine appointment. If we are faithful to the end, God has destined us for salvation; it is His will and His desire. Therefore, we need to be encouraging each other with these words! Just like my girls looked forward to their appointment on the sledding hill, we should look forward to our eternal destination. In fact, my kids spent the next few days gleefully talking with each other about their upcoming appointment with "Dad", and as God's children, we should be doing the same. I hope you look forward with joy to being with our Father throughout eternity; I know I do!

- Scott Hafer

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## Ancient Landmarks

When God led His people into the land He had promised to give them, the land of Canaan was divided by the authority of God and given in portions to various tribes and families. Throughout the succeeding generations, when portions of land were handed down to descendants, the land was not sub-divided and given to all children as is the common practice of our day. Rather, the land was given to the eldest son. This practice insured that the benefits provided by the land, grazing pastures, sheep folds, dwellings, vineyards, wine-presses, etc., were retained by the families in accordance to the authority and gracious gift of God. Firm markers of stone were used to set the boundaries of these family plots. These were "landmarks," and were not to be arbitrarily moved.

The Law of God had stated, "You shall not move your neighbor's boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess." (Deuteronomy 19:14; cf. 27:17). Reference to "the ancestors" would not have sparked resentment and criticism of their being uninformed and uneducated as is often heard from the younger generation today, but it would have brought to remembrance the parceling out of land in Joshua's day at the instructions of the Lord God. In Proverbs 22:28, we find: "Do not move the ancient boundary Which your fathers have set." Reference to the "fathers" highlighted the old agreements and confirmed their binding authority. The landmark was key to the existence and survival, insuring their continuity and livelihood.

The people most apt to suffer as a result of chisellers and swindlers moving landmark boundaries were the vulnerable: the poor and fatherless. Righteous judges were to forbid this practice, and they were not to take bribes and look the other way. (See Proverbs 23:10-11 and Job 24:1-3.)

It is interesting that this directive to not move the landmarks has become a proverbial warning against any innovations that alter or discard the tried and true ways. Jeremiah 6:16 says, "Thus says the LORD, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls.' But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" This principle is also voiced in the New Testament: "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9).

What an appropriate lesson for our world today!

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "A young man prayed, 'Lord give me a wife that loves Thee — for then I know she will love me.!'"
  - \* "You can better understand the 23rd Psalm when you are acquainted with The Shepherd!"
  - \* "Wrapped in self makes a very small package!"
  - \* "Would you rather trust a guy who wrote a book or the One who wrote The Book?"
  - \* "People who do not believe in prayer will make an exception when tragedy strikes!"
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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)