

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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February 11, 2024

Volume 44, # 07

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### GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (Exodus 20:7).

In vain means useless, empty or without value. To use God's name in vain is to say it without meaning or for no real worthwhile purpose. It indicates a disrespect for God and a disregard for divine things.

Any individual who curses and swears cannot be thought of as being a good moral person. He violates divine law by thus profaning the name of Almighty God. His words will be held against him and he will be found guilty when he stands before the Lord in judgment. Therefore, every Christian should be cautious about his language.

For a person to mention God's name in vain shows three things to be true about him.

First, he does not love God as he ought to and he is openly disobeying His command. His words show an utter irreverence for God, Christ, the Scriptures and the church.

Second, he does not respect his fellowman. Is he considering that what he is saying is offensive and repulsive to those who are trying to serve God? Is he thinking about young boys and girls who are listening and will be influenced in the wrong way?

Third, he is not helping himself any, but rather making a bad impression on others. He is merely showing his lack of vocabulary and displaying a shallow mind.

Christians will want to heed the exhortations found in the Bible. "But above all things, brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." (James 5:12). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (Colossians 4:6).

- Don C. Bentley in *The Visitor*, Houston, TX, 12/03/1950.

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# Clippings...

## HAPPINESS

Happiness goes out from the heart before it comes in. It never by any chance stays home. You can harvest it for the common good, but you cannot store it for your individual use. You lend it, but you cannot borrow it. You can earn it, but you cannot buy it. You can spend it, but you cannot accumulate it. A man must contribute to the stock of human joys before he can participate in its profits. To seek happiness without giving it is a futile quest, and all our longings for it, if we have not learned to give it to others, are empty bottles in the wine cellar of the soul. Happiness never really was any good in this world but to give away.

- Unknown

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## Have You Responded to the Gospel?

The specially chosen apostles of Christ were sent into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). They were endowed with the Holy Spirit, who enabled them to remember what their Lord taught them and to reveal further truth to them without error (John 14:26; 16:13). The Acts of the Apostles provides us with enough of their activities to verify their successful obedience and effective results, "God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." (Hebrews 2:4). The Lord had illustrated the expansive growth of the kingdom of heaven in parables (Matthew 13:31-33). The book of Acts documents the beginning of the kingdom in Jerusalem (chapter 2), the spread of the kingdom "throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" (chapter 8), and its advance "even to the remotest part of the earth." (chapters 13-28; cf. Acts 2:8). The church belonging to Christ grew as the servants of Christ attempted to persuade their hearers to "be reconciled to God" through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-21) by believing and obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:21-22). Not every hearer was a happy recipient of their "good news" message (Acts 13:45, 50; 14:2, 4, 5, 19).

In the city of Thessalonica, many people rejected heaven's words of life: "But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people." (Acts 17:1-9). Paul and Barnabas spoke the word of God to Jews who knew the Scriptures, but they were satisfied with their current beliefs and willing to use devilish actions and unrighteous people to advance their opposition. Notice the Lord's analysis: "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since

you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46). In Corinth, Paul was "solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 18:5-6). When Paul preached to the Jews in Rome,

"Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, 'The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, "Go to this people and say, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Otherwise they might see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.'" 'Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.'" (Acts 28:24-27).

People who once were faithful to God departed from Him by failure to maintain holy hearts!

Those brought up not knowing Jehovah God nor His righteousness opposed the gospel message, desiring to continue living by the dictates of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21; cf. Romans 8:7) and the urgings of an alienated, hostile and defiled mind (Colossians 1:21cf. Ephesians 2:3; Titus 1:15). Among these kinds of people, false religions thrive (cf. Acts 13:5-11; 14:8-18; 19:23-41). No wonder that the gospel's enemies charge that these eyewitnesses of Christ and preachers of the gospel "upset the world" (Acts 17:6)!

As the Lord had promised His preachers, "lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest." (John 4:35). There would be many who would listen to the truth!

In Berea, a city in Southwest Macedonia, Paul and Silas entered the synagogue of the Jews, preaching the gospel of Christ. "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men." (Acts 17:10-15). These details indicated a sharp contrast to their previous reception in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). The Bereans demonstrated genuine reverence for the Holy Scriptures. These listeners displayed the type of heart that Jesus indicated would bear much fruit: "the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast," (Luke 8:15). They were eager, persistent, diligent and discerning – daily. They were teachable; their diligence in Bible

study is highly commendable, thus it is no surprise that many of them unhesitatingly believed.

Could we imagine for a moment the great flood of divine blessings that would engulf the lives of gospel-hearers if all freed themselves from the shackles of prejudice and adopted the same investigative motives of these noble Bereans? Think of it: the restoration of blessed universal unity among all of God's people, as every believer taught and practiced the doctrine of Christ! No serious differences would exist as all would embrace the one true faith as members of the one true body, the church belonging to Christ (Ephesians 4:1-6, 13-16; cf. John 17:11, 20-21)! All believers are to be united in Christ. It happens among the noble-minded. Are you noble minded?

Are you like Herod Agrippa II, who responded to Paul's preaching by stating that he was almost persuaded (Acts 26:28)? Are you like Felix, who, as Paul was "discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, ... became frightened and said, 'Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you.' At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul;" (Acts 24:25-26)? He left Paul imprisoned for two years.

The power of the gospel of Christ remains effective today: it still provides salvation to all who believe (Romans 1:16), it reconciles man to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-19), it restores the soul (Psalms 23:3), and it rights everything that is wrong with mankind (2 Corinthians 5:19). The same choice confronts people today. No person can be neutral regarding Jesus Christ and His gospel (Matthew 12:30)! To remain in unbelief is condemnation (Mark 16:16; cf. John 3:36). To be only "almost persuaded" is to remain in unbelief. To put off hearing, believing and obeying for a future and more convenient time is to remain in unbelief. The Lord regards these as unworthy of eternal life by their own choice (Acts 13:46). Oh, how people squander precious opportunities to receive forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption through Christ!

By the grace of God, all who believe and obey Christ will have their sins forgiven and be added to the number of the saved (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 5:9; John 3:36; 8:24; Acts 2:38, 47; cf. Acts 10:35, 43). All Christians encourage you to believe and obey the gospel, being born again to enjoy everlasting life with all of His children. We would be happy to assist you.

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "If you are too busy to pray, you are TOO BUSY!"
  - \* "I know a Master mechanic. Let Him fix your life!"
  - \* "Image is what people think we are!"
  - \* "Integrity is what we really are!"
  - \* "Is prayer your steering wheel or your emergency brake?"
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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)