

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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May 05, 2024

Volume 44, # 19

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### **Fear Keeps Men From God!**

In the parable of the talents, the man who received the one talent did not use his talent, but buried it in the ground. He gave as his explanation for not using the talent, FEAR. Fear kept him from doing what his ability would have allowed him to do. Fear today keeps many from learning their duty and doing it.

There are people today who fear to study the Word of God lest they learn what it requires of them. They console themselves with their ignorance of the Word of God. They reason thus: "If I am ignorant of my duty, I will not be held responsible," not knowing that the Lord "now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Man is commanded to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

There are those who know the truth but are afraid to obey it lest they will be rejected by their own loved ones and friends. They are afraid to pay the price of being a Christian. But Jesus said: "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Matthew tells us the same thing, but shows us the meaning more clearly by saying: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). When truth is involved, don't let father, mother, brother, sister, wife or children stand before you and your obedience. "Fear them not." If they cast you off, remember that "the Lord will lift you up."

There are some who are afraid to obey the gospel lest they will not be able to hold out faithfully to the end. But you do not reason thus in your business dealings. You have faith in yourself and your fellow man that you will make a success in business. You must have faith in God and in yourself that you and God can win the victory over the powers of Satan. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

There are those who are afraid to study the Bible lest they find that they have been misguided by their religious teachers. They had rather go on in ignorance of the Word of God than to learn that their teachers have fooled them. But it will be too bad at the last day if you have not learned and obeyed the truth. You must learn and obey the truth, for "the truth will make you free." (John 8:32).

There is only one whom we are to fear. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Friend, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

- O. H. Hogue, via *Bible Bulwarks*, 10/01/1956 [James P. Needham, Editor]

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## **A Separate People!**

The divine idea of separation in religion is as old as the Jewish race. Abraham was chosen of God to be the father of the chosen race. But idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees was not a land to nourish such a race. Influences were overwhelmingly against God's purpose to raise up a separate people. Hence, the call of God came to Abram to abandon country and kindred and seek a home in an unknown land. And that is the beginning of a separation — a separate family.

Years afterwards the posterity of Abraham, through a series of varied providential circumstances, settled in the land of Egypt. There they grew into a numerous race. Time developed that they could not serve God in Egypt. Separation was essential. God called them out of Egypt. A peculiar nation was formed at Sinai, with peculiar laws, a peculiar government, and peculiar life and relations. In keeping this law and maintaining this separation Israel was blessed. But when they departed, changed their government (1 Samuel 8), served other gods (Deuteronomy 8:19), and formed alliances, they were rejected by God and subjected by their enemies. And only after reformation did God grant them restoration (Ezra 10:10, 11). The lesson of the story is separation — a separate nation.

But that is not the end of the story of separation. God still requires it — a separate church. As fleshly Israel was called out of Egypt, God has called the church, spiritual Israel, out of the world. And to retain the favor of God, the church must maintain that separation distinct and peculiar.

1. The church must maintain separation in speech. "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard in me." (2 Timothy 1:13.) The power of a united language is

demonstrated in the Tower of Babel. It became the bond of an apostate union which God had to break up in a confusion of tongues. And it is so that unity and purity of speech — calling Bible things by Bible names — is a bond among Christians that will triumph over error and bring order out of confusion.

2. The church must maintain separation in doctrine. Paul's admonition to "speak thou the things that become sound doctrine" needs constant emphasis today. The New Testament command to "touch not, taste not and handle not" does not refer to strong drink, but to "the commandments and doctrines of men." (Colossians 2:21-22.) It is a warning against flirting with error and fraternizing with denominationalism. The growing idea that the "church of Christ" is just a church among churches will prove fatal, and it must not prevail. It is the church or nothing. It is one way or none. Any participation on the part of members of the church of Christ in denominational functions can only compromise the church and is detrimental to the cause of truth.

3. The church must maintain separation in worship. The Old Testament injunction to "take heed lest ye turn aside" has its counterpart in the New Testament counsel: "Let no man beguile you. . . . intruding into those things which he hath not seen. . . . and not holding the Head. . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship." (Colossians 2:18-23.) Self-devised worship is condemned along with man-written creeds and man-made doctrines. Christians must adhere to the New Testament pattern.

4. Christians must maintain separation in life. Terms of dignity are applied to Christians. The church is "a chosen generation:" it is "a royal priesthood" and "a holy nation." Christians are to "show forth the praises (or excellencies)" of God who called them. The demand of the Bible upon Christians is to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world".

- Foy E. Wallace, Jr., via The Bible Banner, December, 1941

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## **Rahab: Faith at Work!**

To stereotype a person is to characterize them according to a set concept, image or opinion, oftentimes an oversimplified or prejudiced mental image. New Bible students are sometimes surprised to discover things about people in the Bible that make it difficult to forget them. A woman named Rahab is just such an example. She was a harlot, a prostitute. Surprisingly, we find her listed in the record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 1:5)!

In preparation for the conquest of the city of Jericho, two men were sent secretly by Joshua to spy out the land and city. When they arrived at Jericho, they were received into her house, which was located on the city wall (an ideal place to lodge while gathering information about the city). But their plans were interrupted when the king of Jericho learned of these men and their mission. He sent word to Rahab for her to bring out the men, but she hid them and deceived the king regarding their identity and whereabouts. When the threat was eased, she helped them escape from the city and certain death.

Before the spies fled from her house, she expressed the strong faith she possessed: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, . . . For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, . . . the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Joshua 2:9-11). In return for her help, she asked for her life and those of her family to be delivered from death (vss. 12-13) during the coming siege of Jericho.

Following her salvation by her faith and the oath made to her by the spies, she lived in the midst of Israel (Joshua 6:25). At some point she married and bore a son (Matthew 1:5). As stated, Rahab, her husband Salmon and their son Boaz appear in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5).

This woman was quite brave in risking her own life to protect Israelite spies. Why did she do it? She did it because she had developed faith in the living God. The Hebrews writer in the New Testament verifies this in the section known as "the hall of fame of faith," Hebrews 11. Notice: "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace." (Hebrews 11:31). She had listened and trusted the reliable reports concerning the favorable things Jehovah God had done for His people. The proof of her faith was manifest by what she did: "In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?" (James 2:25).

Rahab is remembered for her strong faith in the true God of heaven. She cooperated with His plans and gave aid to His servants. Because of her great trust in God she was rewarded!

What about us? Have we learned that the Lord God will never be defeated in any of His purposes and plans? Is our faith strong enough to entrust the lives we love into His care? Do I trust Him enough to lay my life before Him to serve Him according to His will? Rahab did!

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "Instead of putting others in their place, put yourself in theirs (Philippians 2:4)!"
  - \* "Is what you are living for worth Christ's dying for?"
  - \* "It is unlikely there'll be a reduction in the wages of sin!"
  - \* "Jesus became what we are so we can become like He is!"
  - \* "Know more Bible, no more Satan!"
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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)