

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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June 02, 2024

Volume 44, # 23

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### A Heartless Thief!

Many times I have heard preachers of various doctrines condemn the man that STEALS. They do look down upon that creature who unawares to his neighbor takes his goods. The Bible truly condemns stealing in every form, but let him that is guiltless cast the first stone. Many of these preachers whom I have heard condemn the thief are the most cruel, heartless thieves that one could imagine. Some of them are the kind that Jeremiah talks about. " ... I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words everyone from his neighbors" (Jeremiah 23:30).

The importance of the all-powerful word of God cannot be over emphasized. The wise man said, "Buy the truth and sell it not." (Proverbs 23:23). A blessing is pronounced upon the man that meditates in the law of the Lord day and night (Psalms 1:1-2). A curse is pronounced upon the man that perverts the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-9). Paul instructed Timothy to "preach the word, be instant in season and out of season . . ." (2 Timothy 4:2). There is no excuse for any man's being ignorant of the doctrine of Christ. New Testaments can be purchased for twenty-five cents. It is much safer to depend upon what God has said than to listen to someone steal the words of the Lord. The thief of the word of the Lord is that man that preaches a perverted gospel, who twists the Scriptures to fit a theory, who will leave out any portion of the will of God while dying men are starving for it.

Word Thieves! The man is a thief of the word of God who preaches that one can be saved by FAITH ONLY. The expression is found in the New Testament only one time and says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and NOT BY FAITH ONLY" (James 2:24). James did not say that we are justified by works only, or by our works which we may devise. The thief who says "saved by faith only" has denied that men must repent. Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). He has denied that men must confess the name of Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32). He has stolen the words of our Christ who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Another case of stealing the words of the Lord is the theft of those words that warn us against apostasy. The thief will say "one cannot possibly fall so as to be eternally lost." God's word does not talk that way. Notice some of the warnings of the word: "Looking diligently lest any man FAIL of the GRACE of God" (Hebrews 12:15). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12). Paul declared, "YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE" (Galatians 5:4). He also said of himself, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself would be a CASTAWAY" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

No believer will ever be lost, but in order to be saved one must become a believer. All unbelievers will be lost. If one can become a believer by his own voluntary decision and be saved, can one then not by his own voluntary decision cease to believe and be lost? In 1 Timothy 4:1-2, we read of some DEPARTING from the faith. God will never forsake the believer, but when one departs from the faith he ceases to be a believer and hence will be eternally lost (Revelation 21:8).

In 1 Timothy 1:19, Paul tells us of some making shipwreck of the faith. Jesus said that some would endure for a while, and then fall away (Luke 8:13). Listen to Paul again, "Having DAMNATION, because they have cast off their first FAITH" (1 Timothy 5:12). Let us not steal the word of God by telling men once saved that it is impossible for them to be lost, and encourage looseness and laxity in morals. Perhaps there are many who are stealing these warnings from their neighbor unaware that they are being thieves. But if a man takes something from another unconsciously or deliberately, he is still trespassing that man's rights. It is a fearful thing to mishandle God's word. If one is unconscious of such error he needs only to quit posing as a prophet until he has learned the SCRIPTURES.

JEREMIAH the prophet of old said, "THE MAN IS A THIEF WHO STEALS MY WORDS FROM HIS NEIGHBOR."

- Paul Brock, via Bible Bulwarks, 11/01/1956 [James P. Needham, Editor]

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## **"GOOD . . . IF HE HAD NEVER BEEN BORN"**

"Good . . . if he had never been born." (Matthew 26:20-25; Mark 14:17-21). This statement was made by the Lord about Judas who betrayed Him. This is certainly saying a lot; it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born. WHY? Because he missed heaven and will wind up in hell. In Acts 1:25 it says that "he might go to his own place" which is hell. This means there is a hell and it is such a terrible place it would be better for one to never be born than to be born and go to hell.

We read about many people in the Bible who will go to hell and it would have been better if they had never been born. In Luke 16:19-31 we read about the rich farmer. In Matthew 23:33 we read about some Pharisees. In Matthew 7:22-23 we read about some "religious people."

Would it have been better if you had never been born? Certainly, if you miss heaven and go to hell. This is not only true of Judas, but would be true of any person.

Some of you may be thinking; why Judas was a "devil from the beginning." That is what the Bible says. Friend, I would like to cast my eyes on this verse. Give me book, chapter and verse, please. No, Judas could cast out devils along with the other apostles when they went out on the limited commission, (Matthew 10:1-15), and Jesus said in Matthew 12:22-28 that Satan does not cast out Satan.

The problem with Judas was the same that many have today - love of money. (1 Timothy 6:10). He was the treasurer and stole from it. (John 12:1-6; etc.).

Judas allowed Satan to "enter into him," (Luke 22:3-6; John 13:2, 27, etc.) and Satan was not always in him. Ananias and Sapphira had the same problem. (Acts 5:2). Judas, "by transgression fell," (Acts 1:25), and you cannot fall from something you do not have as would be the case if "he were a devil from the beginning."

What about John 6:70-71? Notice the verse says is, not always was. As we have noticed, Satan entered into him.

- Huston Gateley (1929-2013)

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## **A Caution for Disciples**

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." (Matthew 7:6).

The general sense of the Lord's illustration seems clear: sacred things and priceless, invaluable things should not be offered to those who are incapable of appreciating them. Dogs and hogs present images to illustrate some people who are brutish, vile and vicious. When presented with the gospel they will snarl, snap, bite and viciously devour. They are accustomed to feeding on filth. When you attempt to help them with the gospel they despise the truth and resent your efforts to have them think about it. You annoy them with the message of light. They wish to remain undisturbed in darkness. Because of their uncaring, sensual, hard-hearted and adverse disposition they resent the exposure of their

character by comparison to God's standard. Animosity, persecution, ferocious attack and great harm will be thrown at you from this class. Jesus told His disciples, "whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next;" (Matthew 10:23).

There are certain people who are not fit to receive the gospel from servants of Christ. They are as unappreciative of the truth as a pig is of pearls. They are indifferent and incorrigible. The gospel of Christ demands great respect. The Christian's precious time and invaluable message should not be wasted on those who refuse to hear and be benefitted by it (cf. Matthew 10:13-14). There are still many who are worthy and have "ears to hear" (Matthew 11:15; cf. 13:15).

Our Lord acted on this principle when He refused to answer the questions and charges of the hypocritical Pharisees. He gave no answer to Herod Antipas when questioned at some length (Luke 23:9). The apostles turned their attention to Gentiles when Jewish listeners began to contradict their message and blaspheme (Acts 13:44-46; 18:5-7; 28:23-28; cf. 19:9). Further attempts to reach these who had closed their ears and hearts would have been like giving something sacred to a dog or casting pearls before a pig!

Because of the love for lost souls, Christians hate to give up on anybody. We must understand the nature of many people in this world that we would love to see honoring the Lord God. But time is running out and there are too many people hungering and thirsting after righteousness for Christians to waste the precious pearls of divine truth by casting them before men with the disposition of swine. Sadly, some simply judge themselves unworthy of eternal life by rejecting the truth. Jesus taught wise disciples to take the message elsewhere.

- Gary Smalley

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\* "It is always a safe policy not to raise any more devil than you can cast out!"

\* "Habit is a cable; we weave a thread for it each day, and it becomes so strong we cannot break it!" - Horace Mann

\* "Beware of your spiritual condition if you find the most enjoyable part of the service to be the closing song and the dismissal prayer!"

\* "Little things are the hinges on which great results turn!"

\* "Beauty is more the result of how you make up your mind than how you make up your face!"

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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)