

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Remember the "Blue Laws"?

Many of us here remember a time when "the blue laws" were in effect for Sundays. We remember a time when only basic necessities such as food or gasoline could be purchased on Sunday. Everything else was closed. Sunday was a day of rest and reverence. Businesses were closed, and most people got together with their families after attending church in the morning. Sundays were very different when I was growing up.

Somewhere along the way, we lost our respect and reverence for the Lord's Day. Now, it is hard to tell Sunday from any other day of the week. Every business and recreational activity is available. We can purchase almost anything now upon "the first day of the week." We can indulge in every activity with our children. There are all kinds of athletic events, concerts, practices, and places we can attend. I remember a few years ago, before I retired from education, that our school district was in discussions about allowing basketball leagues to use the school facilities on Sunday. The compromise made was to only allow practices and games on Sunday between noon and 5:00 p.m. Of course, you know that didn't last long. Eventually, the school district gave in and allowed Sunday usage all day long. It eventually spilled over into Wednesday night, as well. After all, "look at all the good we are doing for the kids" was their argument.

As convenient as this is, it poses a great challenge to the children of Christ. Instead of Sunday worship taking priority, it now seems that "going to church" is something we do if there is nothing else happening. As we continue to strive for spiritual growth, we must make the commitment to place God's service first and not just work it in when we can.

Let us remember:

- Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness (Matthew 6:33).
- Place God first and then family second (Matthew 10:37).
- Be Steadfast in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).
- Do not love the world more than God (James 4:4).
- Be good examples to those outside the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

What is more important to you and your family, worshipping God or participating in activities? How important is your soul to you? How important are the souls of your family members?

- Larry Schneider

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## **Clothed With Humility**

"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:5-7).

Humility needs to be a dominant quality in the character of a Christian. In fact, we are to be "clothed with humility." Think about what it means to wear humility. While clothing is superficial by nature, the idea of being "clothed with humility" goes straight to a person's heart. At your very core, you must have the attitude that you are not greater or higher than anybody else.

A person who wears humility will have no problem submitting to others. If you remember, 1 Peter 5:1-4 tells us about shepherds in the Lord's church. It is a blessing to belong to a local church under the oversight of scripturally appointed elders. Every individual in the flock must of course submit to the oversight of the shepherds. Verse 5 takes this idea a bit further. The New American Standard Bible renders it this way: "all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another," (1 Peter 5:5). True humility is demonstrated not just to the elders, but towards everyone.

Why is humility such a big deal? As 1 Peter 5:5 ends, he states: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." There are two choices presented to us, each with a direct consequence: proud or humble; against God or with God. God stands against you when you are led by pride, act selfishly, and put yourself first. The proud are in opposition to God.

Now pause and consider what else verse 5 tells us: the proud do not receive God's grace! God's grace is reserved for the humble. It is the humble who allow God to lift them up and strengthen them. 1 Peter 5:6-7 tells you how to humble yourself "under the mighty hand of God," and that is by "casting all your care upon Him." You are to give everything to God. God "cares for you," (1 Peter 5:7). That is amazing! Because He cares for you, He wants you to put all of your cares in His hands. Philippians 4:6 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." This is how you humble yourself before God.

As Peter continues, we are warned that the devil is real and active, (1 Peter 5:8). It is because of Satan that we experience suffering in this world, (1 Peter 5:9). Peter warns about suffering as a Christian multiple times earlier in this letter, (1 Peter 2:20; 3:14, 17; 4:12-16), and there is a need for him to return to the topic of suffering here at the end. Whatever you suffer for your faith, God will give you the strength to get through it if you continue to trust in Him (1 Peter 5:10). You suffer to His glory, (1 Peter 5:11). If you are going to resist the devil, you need to do so with clear eyes and a clear purpose. Recall how Peter began his letter:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Peter 1:3-7).

Remember the God you serve. Remember the promises He has made to you. Remember to serve Him while "clothed with humility."

- Dustin Russell

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## **Do We Have the Right Kind and Amount?**

The command to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, being such a vital part of our spiritual growth and maturation, provides us with occasions to sharpen our effectiveness in such self-reviews. Checklists are helpful.

### **Do we have the knowledge that will guide our zeal?**

Those who serve the Lord are "fervent in spirit" (Romans 12:11), they are "zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). But the fervency and good deeds must be in accord with knowledge of God and His Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Peter 1:2-3). Had the rulers of this world possessed this knowledge, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Many people are zealous for what they believe to be right, yet their possession of "true knowledge" concerning salvation as a gift from God (1 Timothy 2:4; cf. Hebrews 10:26) is missing or incomplete. In Paul's selfless struggle on behalf of Christians, he faced this situation with his own Jewish brethren who were raised with a knowledge of the Holy

Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15): "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:1-3). Please consider:

(a) Is zeal alone, zeal by itself, sufficient and effective in producing eternal salvation for man? No, not according to Romans 10:1-3.

(b) Is knowledge alone, knowledge by itself, sufficient and effective in producing eternal salvation for man? No, not according to 2 Peter 1:2-15, where partaking, escaping, "applying all diligence," in faith supplying "moral excellence," "self-control," "perseverance," "godliness," "brotherly kindness," and "love", "increasing" in these qualities, with the diligence "to make certain" about the relationship with God (in other words, "zeal for God") is required.

(c) Would zeal with some knowledge, partial knowledge, be sufficient and effective in producing eternal salvation for man? No, not according to Romans 10:1-3. This is precisely the condition wherein people attempt to establish their own righteousness, failing to subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Declaring ourselves righteous by our own standard is not submitting to God's righteousness. This is exactly how the scribes and Pharisees erred. Equally deceiving is the reasoning that a man is righteous because he is not like other men in their reprehensible behavior (Luke 18:11).

Many people are zealous yet they do not know, or know only partially, about God's righteousness. Certainly, we must be zealous, but we must know the truth, God's righteousness, if our zeal is to be guided in the right direction. Recall that Jesus taught in order for one to be blessed, he would "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). His zeal is focused on being right with God, with whatever has been appointed by God to be recognized, accepted and obeyed by man. Man is righteous only to the extent that he is zealously striving to conform to the will of God (self-denying submission to God's plans for making men righteous; cf. Matthew 5:20). A person is righteous when he has a right standing before God. The Lord God determines his standing, not man. The Lord God is just, having revealed how any man comes to be righteous.

Friend, do you have the knowledge that correctly guides your zeal?

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "It is a sickly faith that is shaken because some frail human being goes wrong!"
  - \* "Emotion is no substitute for true devotion!"
  - \* "Pure religion is Bread for dally use, not Cake for special occasions!"
  - \* "You cannot push yourself forward by patting yourself on the back!"
  - \* "Whenever Christians want to be like 'other people' they cease to want to be Christians!"
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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)