

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### The Power of Facts!

Facts have a tremendous influence upon our lives. When we learn of a close relative becoming a Christian we rejoice greatly. We sorrow when we learn of the death of a loved one. The kind of facts determine the response.

God knew we respond to facts. Someone has estimated the Bible is four-fifths facts. With these facts we have commands and promises. This is God's way of making His will known to mankind.

It is a fact that the Jews killed Christ. It is a fact that the Gentiles had gone so far in sin that God gave them up. The preaching of the gospel was a declaration of sin and sinners, of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, of forgiveness, son-ship and fellowship with God, etc. These are some very wonderful facts. Being facts for the First-century people, they can be facts in our lives if we believe and obey as did they. The preaching of these facts moved sinners to turn to God. These repentant ones set their affections on things above as opposed to things on this earth (Colossians 3:2). The preaching of the simple gospel continues to bring tears and sorrow to the sinner, and joy to the believer when he responds favorably to the gospel.

When John sent his disciples to Jesus, Jesus said to tell John "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them (Luke 7:19-23). These facts showed Christ to be the Messiah. The facts of His life recorded in the Bible are for the purpose of producing life-giving faith in us (John 20:30, 31).

It is a fact that the early disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7), that is: to observe the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:20, 23-33). It is a fact that people were baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It is a fact that there was but one faith, one baptism, and one body (Ephesians 4:3-6). These facts exist because inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit directed apostolic preaching and writing. The Bible contains exactly what God wanted. Today, we can read and

understand (Ephesians 3:4), thus believe the facts, obey commands, and enjoy the promises. The facts about the Christ prove that God so loved you that He gave His Son so that you would believe in Him and thus have everlasting life (John 3:16). The word of truth shows that God wants you to be a Christian. Why not love Him because He first loved you (1 John 4:19), and obey the truth?

We invite you to study with us regarding the powerful facts found in the Bible.

- Raymond E. Harville (1932-2010)

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## **"Let Not Man Put Asunder" – Matthew 19:6**

"So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

It is interesting to me to notice that the word "man" here (Matthew 19:6) is different from "male" and "female." "Male" and "female" are the specific terms to denote the masculine and the feminine; but the word "man" here is from the generic word having to do with man in the sense of all mankind. We are taught here to see the contrast between what God has done and what mankind might attempt to do.

Jesus taught that in the creation of marriage God intended that the male and the female should have such a union that mankind must not tamper with it. Mankind must not rise against that which God had produced. The dissolution of every marriage having to do with the break-up of the home, except by death, ultimately represents the effort of mankind, either personified in one member or several members, to destroy that which God has produced. We cannot discuss that dimension of it, but that is what Jesus taught.

And every home in this world that is destroyed is destroyed because mankind usurps the role and violates the intention and the purpose of God and destroys what God has created. That makes divorce wrong. That makes breaking up a home wrong. That makes destroying what God united to be wrong. Now, the exception is to be noted, to be sure. But we sometimes get in such a hurry to get down to the exception that we do not notice the rule, and the rule is what we are talking about here.

". . . Let no man put asunder."

The word "asunder" is from an original word which means "to be of no value, not to matter, to have no meaning." There are many marriages today that will never go down to a lawyer's office or a courtroom and separate, but they have quit mattering to each other,

and they are violating the very principle that Jesus was talking about here. For the benefit of the children or the family or this or that, they will pretend to be married, and nobody will know; but God knows, and the couple knows.

What they are saying is, "You do not matter to me anymore. You are not important to me. You can come, you can go, you can do, or not. I do not care anymore." They are putting a marriage "asunder." That is the concept here. It includes more than that; it includes the overt break and each going in separate directions, yes; but the root of it, the start of it, lies at the point where one thinks and/or says to the other, "You do not matter anymore. You can live, you can die, you can come, you can go." There are homes like that today. They maintain a facade; they maintain a kind of appearance. But in their heart of hearts, they no longer mean it, and that marriage is trembling at its very foundation.

Jesus taught that God intends the marriage to be permanent. It is interesting to notice that ". . . let not man put asunder" is a present tense imperative meaning. "Keep on not letting him." Do not let it happen the day after the marriage. Can you imagine that as a couple is leaving the church building on the way to the wedding reception a lawyer meets them and says, "All right, are you ready to file for a divorce?" You think about that for a moment. Why, you would probably have a fist fight right on the steps of the meeting house, if you could get the respective fathers pulled off long enough. "Let me hit him first! You all get out of my way, I want him!" What about ten years later? "Oh, yes, that's all right." What about forty, fifty? "Oh, my, yes, where do I apply?" Jesus said, ". . . Let not man put asunder" - keep on not letting man put asunder, the first day, the fiftieth, the thousandth, the ten-thousandth. That is the imperative that God gave.

- William Woodson

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## **Do We Have the Right Kind and Amount? (2)**

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.

### **2. Do we have the faith that will move us to obey God?**

The Lord God is just, having revealed how any man comes to be righteous: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, . . . For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'" (Romans 1:16-17). The one who believes the gospel is righteous because God acknowledged that truth. The righteous man is justified before

God because he obeys God (John 3:36). His faith is expressed in acts of obedience (cf. Hebrews 5:8-9; John 12:48). If any person obtains salvation from sin and its consequences by the power residing in the gospel, he does so through obedience to the gospel. This is the believer who is made alive by his faith. This is the faith by which the righteous live. Paul was made an apostle of Christ to bring about obedience to the gospel (Romans 1:5; 10:17; 16:26). To deny obedience to the gospel as belonging to saving faith violates and denies the very word of God (cf. James 2:18-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). The gospel is what heaven has revealed to bring about man's greatest benefit: salvation, or "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6), or righteousness (Romans 1:17) by means of faith, which produces the very faith made known by the gospel for exactly the purpose that the Lord God intended (the righteous will possess life in relation to God).

Consider the faith of Noah: "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Hebrews 11:7). Noah built an ark at the command of God, and thus became righteous by his faith.

Consider the faith of Abraham: "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8). This "friend of God" (James 2:23) was commended and blessed for embracing the faith that obeyed.

Do you have this genuine, God-revealed faith, the avenue to righteousness and salvation? It comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Do you live in faithful obedience to Christ that will result in everlasting life? It comes by obeying Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:21-27). Unless we have the genuine faith to obey God's plan of salvation as revealed in the gospel, we do not possess the promise of eternal life. May we encourage you to live by faith?

- Gary Smalley

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\* "To truly live, one must eat daily of the bread of life!"

\* "If you want to commit suicide on the installment plan, smoke or worry, or do both!"

\* "Prejudice is being down on what you are not up on!"

\* "A person is old when he has outlived enthusiasm!"

\* "God's Way is not popular, but it is *always* right and best!"

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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)