

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **The Joys of Leading a Soul to Christ**

"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:40-42).

In this passage, Andrew told his brother Peter about discovering the Messiah, the Christ prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. Andrew did what he wanted to do; no one had to beg or badger him to do it.

Are we still talking to our friends and family about the Lord? Forty years ago, when I was a kid, I constantly heard of efforts by brethren to establish faithful churches in communities where none existed. All too often, it seems these days that churches are established because brethren can't get along. Have we lost our zeal to lead souls to Christ? Have we consigned all of that business to hired specialists called preachers, whom we hire from afar, who are strangers to our community, friends, and family? Do we expect him to move in and, with some magic spell, convince our people who are unconvinced by our light and life? Hmmm . . .

How can we capture or recapture Andrew's spirit? By reminding ourselves of the joys of leading souls to Christ:

First, this is it! Our hearts can be settled that this is God's way to reach the world. God's way, by definition, must be the best way (Psalms 18:30)! We live and walk by faith, and, in the area of personal evangelism, faith is essential to success. Aren't we today like the Gentiles of old (1 Corinthians 1:21-23), thinking God's methods are foolish? They are not; instead, they are proven and uncomplicated enough for any Christian to employ with success. Paul said, "For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13-14). Our God decided that the use of Christians as His instruments (Romans 6:12-13) would be the method of spreading His message most effectively. How

many of our neighbors have died without efforts on our part to interest them? "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink," we are told, but as Lloyd Barker has often said, "You can salt the oats." Andrew salted Peter's oats, and we need to get involved and interested in the lives of others around us to do the same, certain in our faith that this can result in the salvation in eternity of precious souls! It is truly a joy to know that we are teaching the way of salvation!

Second, all have a place to be, a job to do. Paul wrote to Timothy, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient . . ." (2 Timothy 2:24). We're all servants of God; therefore, we must all be able to teach. Every Christian knows God's plan of salvation and should be able to convey that, as best he or she can, to the lost. All are best suited for this job, regardless of your abilities. God expects no more than your best. Your best will be in the circle of friends and family, people who know you. If our lives are godly and we learn the need to be servants in God's kingdom (Matthew 20:25-28), He will give us supreme influence in certain people's lives. No matter how talented the local preacher is, his influence in your loved one's life is limited. This is your place, your time to speak up and encourage your friend in Jesus' direction. You might be very surprised by his interest and willingness to learn more.

Third, this is the most effective method, period! People in our society today don't go to worship every Sunday as they once did, and need to be shaken out of material stupor and into spiritual reality. As Christians, we must remember why personal involvement in the lives of others is the best way to lead them to Christ. To begin with, there is your life and character. Every time you "do the right thing," help another, or forgive, you make an impression. Jesus said, "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). Then there is the Providence of God that prepares souls by working in their lives to ready them for the gospel. If they are willing, by the time we come into the picture with our effort, feeble as it might seem, our friend has already been prepared by God, and we are the perfect agent for God at that time with our knowledge and words of encouragement.

The roll is already being called right now. Who will go for the Lord?

- Jeff McCrary, via Biblical Insights, Vol. 15 No. 2, February 2015

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## **Free Gift**

Some teach that "there are no conditions for salvation" because it is a "free gift." But free gifts can have conditions for reception. I can put a free gift in the trunk of my car and tell you that if you take my keys and get it, you will have it. Look at the conditions for having the free gift. Taking my keys is one, going to the car is one, opening the trunk is one,

reaching in and getting it is another. If you don't meet any one of these conditions the free gift remains in the trunk and not in your possession. Meeting these conditions did not earn you the free gift. You can't say, "Well, if I have to walk to the car and open the trunk, it is not a free gift because I had to do something."

If you have to start believing in me and what I promised, does it cease to be a free gift because you had to do the believing? Was it no longer a free gift if you first had to hear what I said? Is it only a free gift if I force it into your hands? Wouldn't you have to do the receiving and holding of the gift? Wouldn't that make it dependent on you doing something?

With some thought, we can see that a free gift does not cease to be free if you have to do something. It is a free gift because the giver was not obligated to give you the gift. They gave it to you of their own free will. Your perfect behavior did not obligate them. They gave the gift freely, which will always make it free no matter how many conditions may be involved. When I took the keys, he offered freely; taking the keys did not make the gift an earned wage. When I walked with the keys to the car, walking with the keys did not make what was in the trunk an earned wage instead of a free gift. Opening the trunk did not make the free gift an earned wage. Reaching in and grabbing the free gift did not turn the free gift into an earned wage. The free gift remained a free gift received because I believed the giver enough to meet the conditions of faith.

Faith moved me to grab the keys, walk to the car, open the trunk, reach in, and grab the free gift. On the giver's end it was by grace, on my end it was through faith. But each move I made (grabbing the keys, walking to the car, opening the trunk, and grabbing the gift) was something I did by faith. If I stood there before the giver and merely said, "I believe you," but did not take the keys, walk to the car, open the trunk, and reach to grab the gift, then mere faith that does not believe enough to take action remains unbelief. You must have faith enough to act (James 2:14-24). The faith actions do not earn, and they do not turn the free gift into wages earned. It is a free gift, and the conditions to get it do not turn the free gift into wages earned.

On Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41), the people wanted to know, "What shall we do?" They were not in a position to earn salvation. Peter told them to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Those who gladly received the word were baptized. However, notice that Peter promised that if they met these conditions, "you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The gift was conditional and was not turned into a wage earned by either repentance or baptism. Those who teach that baptism is a work that earns and cancels grace are in great error. The Spirit shows us clearly that baptism is not a work of merit that earns but rather is a condition of faith, just like taking the keys, walking

to the car, opening the trunk, and reaching in to grab the gift. It is still a free gift because repentance and baptism are not works of merit that cancel grace but rather actions of faith that meet the conditions for receiving the free gift.

Do not let anyone deceive you about this matter!

- Terry Wane Benton

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## **Welcome to Gospel Meeting Week!**

Attending our Gospel Meeting could prove to be the very best decision of your life! Why? The greatest message ever delivered to mankind will be preached! It is the one and only prescription designed to heal and sooth man's greatest illness: sin! Since the first century thousands upon thousands of people have had the opportunity to hear its powerful words, and very many have allowed it to change their lives for the better. This could be YOUR opportunity to hear this message of great blessings!

Brian Messerli will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we invite you to bring your Bible and investigate what is taught. Brian will merely be the messenger of what has already been revealed to man by God. He will neither add to nor take from the sacred Scriptures. If he should make a mistake in teaching some wrong point, please bring that to his attention and he will correct it immediately. We are interested in teaching and preaching only the Bible!

You will not be embarrassed by being asked to do anything you do not wish to do. You will not be asked to give any money into the collection on Sunday. That is a command for the members (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We are interested in YOU, not what is yours. We only ask that you listen carefully to the preaching of God's word. Ask questions if you wish; we welcome questions.

Thanks so much for coming to our Gospel Meeting!

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "The best ammunition misses the mark if the aim is bad!"
  - \* "What a world of gossip would be prevented if it were only remembered that a person who tells you of the fault of others, intends to tell others of your faults!"
  - \* "Do not regret growing old; it is a privilege many do not have!"
  - \* "Before you flare up at anyone's faults, take time to count ten – ten of your own faults!"
  - \* "The man who gets too hot cooks his own goose!"
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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)