

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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We Must Repent

When John the Immerser began to prepare the way for Christ, he said: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". And, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:1-ff).

Jesus began His personal ministry by preaching, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). He spoke of the destruction of certain wicked men in disasters of His time, then said, "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5).

The first converts to Christ in the Christian dispensation had to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you -- " and "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, -- " (Acts 2:38; 3:19).

Paul told the pagan philosophers of Athens, "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Paul rejoiced that the Corinthian brethren "sorrowed to repentance:" "for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

It would appear that repentance is universally needed and demanded -- on the part of pagan, Jew, non-member and member of the body of Christ. The obvious reason is sin - and where sin exists, God calls for repentance. We must recognize our sinful condition, and sorrow after a godly manner. This means we realize that we are in the presence of God, and are ashamed of conduct, word or thought that is so unbecoming to a creature of our pure and wholly good Creator. The shame we feel, knowing that our loving heavenly Father is aware of our sin, makes us truly humble. We prostrate ourselves, figuratively if not literally, before Him. Pride cannot exist in such an atmosphere. The deeds, words or thoughts that brought us to this shame are loathsome to us - we turn from them with revulsion. There is no room for self-pity, no effort at self-justification. Our hearts cry out, "Oh God, I am a sinner!! Be merciful to me!!

That is repentance.

It swallows the penitent -- brings him submissively to the throne of God. It sets the stage for his future conduct. It is an essential element in the Christian system -- set in juxtaposition with the faith in God which makes true repentance possible. It aligns man with the mercies of God, providing the proper setting for his obedience. His faith lives in repentance and obedience, and by repentance faith and obedience are joined. Small wonder that Peter wrote, "The Lord is -- longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Now hear this!! The pride that keeps you from repentance, keeps you from the salvation of your soul. You know you are in error -- but "what will people say -- " "how will friends react?" Repent -- or perish!

Current trends, including atheistic psychiatry, say "feel no guilt" - but God says feel, regret, repent, be forgiven -- and begin a new life.

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, January, 1966

Defiling God's House

When God consecrates a person, a place, or an object, He in essence puts His "holy" name on it and it becomes sacred. The words "holy," "saint," and "sanctified" are terms New Testament writers use to denote what is "set apart" to God and dedicated to Him and to the service that is rendered to honor and exalt Him.

So it was with the priests of Israel, the temple Solomon dedicated to God, and the holy city of Jerusalem where God's rule from the throne of David was established and His authority was manifest among the nations. To defile what God had sanctified was to provoke His anger and evoke His wrath. Assyrian and Babylonian captivities are historical reminders of God's wrath against His people for their abominations and defilements of what He had cleansed, purified, and made sacred.

Jeremiah, God's prophet to Judah, was sent to announce the coming captivity in Babylon as a direct result and consequences of Judah's defilement of God's holy sanctuary—the temple. Jehovah, by the mouth of Jeremiah, warned Judah that they had "set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it" (Jeremiah 32:34). This meant to the nation that judgment was coming to Jerusalem, the city that was holy to God and set apart as the place where God's holy temple was built. Jehovah, again through Jeremiah, declared concerning His holy but defiled city: "It is given into the hand of Babylon by the sword . . ." (Jeremiah 32:36).

These abominations had been set up in part but most dramatically during the reign of Manasseh who erected altars to all the hosts of heaven in the very courtyard of the temple itself. He was even emboldened to set up in the temple the graven image of Asherah, the goddess of Baal worshipers (2 Kings 21:1-9). This is the defilement to which Jeremiah alludes and to which Jehovah responds with the announcement of His vengeance in the coming of the Babylonian king and 70 years of captivity.

God's vengeance, however, is not limited to the nation of Israel and her defilements of His sacred dwelling. The apostle Paul admonishes God's people concerning defilements under the new covenant. He writes to factious brethren at Corinth and warns them that the carnal spirit of jealousy, of envy, of strife, and of lewd practices of immorality defile God's spiritual temple today, whether it be His body the church or individual saints. Both the church as a body and individual Christians are portrayed as God's holy habitation in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; see Ephesians 2:19-22).

God has engraved His name and the name of His Son on His church which is viewed by heaven as the "church of God" or the "church of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16). But He has likewise written the name of His Son on His disciples who were first called "Christians" at Antioch (Acts 11:26). His church has been "sanctified" by the washing of water with the word and His disciples have been set apart by the washing of regeneration as "saints" who are to be "holy" as God Himself is holy (see Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-16).

We today are no different from Israel of old and it is an abomination in God's eyes for His people today to build altars in their hearts and among the people of God, whether they be to the god of pleasure, lust, money, friends, or any other thing they exalt above God who created them in His own image and saved them in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Such defilements of God's sacred people will evoke the eternal wrath of God as certainly as it did against the nation of ancient Israel.

- L. A. Stauffer

Clippings . . .

Are You Helping This Church To Grow?

It Is Easy For The Church To Grow When We . . .

- * Have a deep concern for the lost.
- * Enter the worship with preparation and enthusiasm.
- * Are interested in intense Bible study.

- * Work together on church projects.
- * Encourage those who are serving the Lord.
- * Dedicate ourselves to keeping our lives pure.
- * Express brotherly love to all church members.
- * Get along, are at peace, and harmonious.
- * Help others in the name of Jesus.
- * Are willing to be teachers.
- * Commit all our ways to the Lord.
- * Demand preaching the whole counsel of God with love.
- * Are optimistic.

"Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied." (Acts 9:31).

- Edd Sterchi

"Who then is this . . . ?"

You may recall reading of the Lord and His disciples sailing on the Sea of Galilee when the Lord fell asleep,

"and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. And He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, 'Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?'" (Luke 8:23-25).

Who then is this? Is the answer not given because it is so obvious?

There is a beautiful Psalm of David in which God's sovereign power strikes terror in the hearts of unbelievers but comfort and thanksgiving in those who walk closely with Him.

"By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples." (Psalm 65:5-7).

Jesus Christ is Lord over Creation!

Again, "O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them."

(Psalm 89:8-9). Yes, Jesus Christ is Lord over Creation! His disciples saw His humanity in His tired sleep. They saw His deity in His command over nature. "He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed." (Psalm 107:29).

Do we know enough about Christ to have a stronger faith than these men possessed at the time? Do we know enough about Christ to avoid the fear that these men felt? "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" Soon, Peter will answer that question (Matthew 16:16). HE IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!

- Gary Smalley

- * "He who is a stranger to prayer is a stranger to power!"
 - * "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others!"
 - * "The criminal is the product of spiritual starvation. Someone failed miserably to bring him to know God, to love Him, and to serve Him!"
 - * "Adversity should never get the Christian down—except on his knees!"
 - * "He who learns to say 'No!' speaks the language of temperance and self-mastery. He who will not learn this tongue is ignorant though he learn a thousand others!"
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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)