

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Gratitude Makes Happiness!

Most of our unhappiness is produced by the gross sin of ingratitude; self-pity is what it is often called. Anything we do not like, anything that is against our wishes, makes us miserable if we are consumed by selfishness. It is quite striking that many of those who were so miserable as to commit suicide were blessed with looks, talent, wealth and even fame. They quit on themselves and on life, not because no one needed them, but because they magnified their miseries and ignored their blessings.

The antidote to this kind of misery is to reverse the process. Forget yourself. Jesus said "deny" yourself (Matthew 16:24). Help someone who needs some help. Magnify your blessings and remember that all your problems - all of them - are temporary. We were made for eternity! What a blessing. Thank God for the great hope we have in Jesus, and for the blessings of the common day!

- Jere E. Frost

Appreciate the Bible!

To take something for granted is to use, accept, or treat it in a careless or indifferent manner. I fear too many take the Bible for granted.

A young Christian packing his bag for a journey said to a friend, "I have nearly finished packing. All I have to put in are a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of fine poetry, a few biographies, a package of old letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and a set of tools." "But you cannot put all that into your bag," objected the friend. "Oh, yes," said the Christian. "Here it is." And he placed his Bible in the corner of the suitcase and closed the lid.

The Bible is all those things and more! Why do some not appreciate it? Why do we not treasure this good book for what it is?

Of those who truly appreciate God's word, it is written, "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalms 37:31). "I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8). "Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!" (Psalms 119:11). Stability, joy, and security are found in the Bible. Put it in your heart. Learn to appreciate it.

- David McPherson

Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus

One of the strongest evidences that Jesus was Deity and the promised Messiah is the many prophecies He fulfilled. Let us examine some of the most common prophecies that point to Him as the promised Savior of mankind.

Offspring of woman. "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15). Jesus was fully man, but man played no part in His birth. "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (Galatians 4:4, 5) Also examine Hebrews 2:14 and 1 John 3:8.

Tribe of Judah. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people." (Genesis 49:10). Christ's genealogy proves that He sprung from the tribe of Judah.

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram." (Mathew 1:1-3).

Also consult Hebrews 7:14 and Revelation 5:5.

Born in Bethlehem. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2). In the days of Caesar Augustus, Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem to be registered (Luke 2:1). "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem." (Matthew 2:1).

Born of a virgin. Never before, nor since, had a child been born without the uniting of male and female. Isaiah the prophet gave the details 700 years before the event occurred.

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14).

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly." (Matthew 1:18, 19).

If Joseph was the true father, why did he seek to put Mary away?

The scriptures contain over 300 other prophecies concerning the person of Jesus Christ. One person - our Lord Jesus Christ - fulfilled them all! What are the chances of that happening? Was it a coincidence, or is there another answer? Yes, there is another answer. God predetermined these events, and they all came to pass according to His divine plan, for His divine purpose.

The evidence of His Deity is overwhelming and powerful. Why are men so confused about who Jesus is? Could it be that they cannot bear to acknowledge that God is in full control?

- Keith Greer

Preach the Word!

An attention-grabbing fact regarding the life of Christ that we declare is this: during the Lord's personal ministry He was consumed with speaking the words of Almighty God! The apostle John recorded What Jesus said about this:

"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." (John 12:49-50; cf. 7:14; 8:26, 38).

Jesus said repeatedly, ". . . When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me." (John 8:28; cf. 14:10). Further, concerning those words of divine origin: ". . . the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63).

Concerning the superior significance of these "God-breathed" words (2 Timothy 3:16), and the unshakeable grip in which they were embraced, it is no surprise to the Bible student to find strong emotional reaction from those who take them to heart and declare them to others. Luke stated that Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem because the leaders and many others rejected God's word and God's Son (Luke 19:41). The apostle Paul appealed to those he had taught to remember: "that night and day for a period of

three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:31b-32). In these cases of emotion prompting tears in the setting of preaching, would you think they at least indicate an urgency attached to the gospel?

Paul's epistles reveal that the Lord God entrusted him with a service to every creature under heaven (mankind). He referred to it as:

"the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:18b-20).

With regard to the urgency of his appeal, Paul is declaring that the long-awaited time (cf. Luke 4:19) for God's eternal purpose in Christ (atonement for sins by the grace of God providing righteousness to man, no longer holding our sins against us) has arrived: "behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (Corinthians 6:2). The word "behold" sounds forth the URGENCY! Brethren, there is need of the same urgency now.

The apostle Paul announced it: "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word;!"

- When people listen and when they turn to myths and don't listen (v.4), "Preach the Word!"
- When they love and crave sound doctrine and when they "will not endure sound doctrine;" (v.3), "Preach the Word!"
- When ears are open only to the doctrine of Christ or when listeners begin to want their ears tickled by hearing their own desires (v.3), "Preach the Word!"
- To another generation gone astray (1 Peter 2:25), "Preach the Word!"
- To those who have become entangled and overcome by the defilements of the world (2 Peter 2:20), "Preach the Word!"
- In a time of moral crisis, snatch souls out of the fire (Jude 23); "Preach the Word!"
- When some are being persuaded and others will not believe (Acts 28:24-25), "Preach the Word!"
- When false teachers abound (1 John 4:1), "Preach the Word!"
- In good times (Acts 9:31) and in bad times (Acts 8:1), "Preach the Word!"

If we do not preach the word, many people will not find opportunity to accept the good news! Receive the gospel, believe in the gospel and live in the gospel! And to those who

are not open to it, preach it! The gospel is meant for everyone! With urgency, may we NEVER QUIT! — PREACH THE WORD!

- Gary Smalley

[All Scriptures quoted are NASB, 1995 © The Lockman Foundation, unless otherwise noted.]

- * "A good surgeon does not cut to hurt, but to heal. The same is true of a true gospel preacher. Every pain he gives is an expression of compassion and love for suffering humanity. One can't preach the word fully and faithfully and not "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:1-3; Titus 1:9)!"
 - * "The most untamable thing in the world has its den just back of the teeth!"
 - * "The Christian can see more on his knees than the educated can see on his tiptoes!"
 - * "Instead of magnifying our problem, we should count our blessings!"
 - * Hosea 4:6 - "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."
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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)