

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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King Saul's Treatment of Family and Friends

Remember the story of Saul? He was the first king of Israel. He began very humbly, but in the end, his self-will, anger, and jealousy began to be displayed (1 Samuel 9-11).

In facing the Philistines, Saul was to wait for Samuel to come and sacrifice. Yet, as Samuel did not come immediately, Saul took it upon himself to offer the sacrifice even though it was not his place to do so. For this cause, God promised to remove the kingdom from him and to give it to a man after his own heart (1 Samuel 13:8-14). From this we see that Saul sought his own, rather than God's, will.

As time passed, we again see Saul facing the Philistines. In this case, Israel stands intimidated and afraid of Goliath's challenge to them to send out a champion. When the young man David came and slew Goliath, the Philistines fled before Israel. Then a song was sung, "Saul hath slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Saul was very wroth and displeased by this, and "eyed David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 17-18).

Rather than humbling himself and admitting his errors, Saul allowed jealousy and bitterness to remain in his heart. He came to the point where he was enraged against his own son, Jonathan, for being a friend to David (even though neither Jonathan nor David had done any wrong). Saul even threw a spear at Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20.

What does all of this illustrate? It shows how a self-involved person, one who trusts in self rather than God, can be defensive, mistreating, and persecuting even those who have done him no wrong. Saul's guilt and defiled conscience simply waxed worse and worse, for he did not repent, confess, and forsake his sins as he should have. Instead, he became jealous and angry, and he sought to destroy those who (in his skewed view) challenged his will and desires.

Can such happen today? It certainly can, if we allow it (James 3:13-18). Do we allow sin to remain in our lives? Do we truly repent, confess and forsake sin (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9)? Or do we harbor ill will and resentment because things have not gone our way?

Brethren, let us always behave like true followers of Christ. Beloved, let us always behave ourselves like brethren. And remember, this behavior begins in the heart (Proverbs 23:7).

- Douglas W. Hill, via Truth Magazine, 08/19/1999

Let the Miracles Speak!

One cannot turn through the pages of the New Testament without being impressed with the nature of the miracles performed by Jesus while here on this earth. In contrast to those performed by so-called "faith healers" of today, they did not fail "for one's lack of faith" and were able to stand the test of investigation. They did not have to be drug out until the person eventually was "healed," but were instantaneous in their very nature. They did not deal with those things no one could see, but were obvious to all who saw what had happened. (See also 1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

In fact, these miracles were so overwhelming that they readily bore evidence to the Jews of the power of God. When Nicodemus came to Jesus, he said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). In John 9, as the blind man disputed with the Pharisees, he said, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. . . . Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that any one opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing" (John 9:30-33). The Pharisees themselves were forced to admit He was performing many signs (John 11:47-"miraculous acts"-Vine), and the people asked, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" (John 9:16, here implying they did not believe such a man could be a sinner, but had to be from God). The disciples were constantly amazed as they saw the power of Christ manifested in the miracles He was performing.

But the sad fact remains that not all of the Jews believed. Did they deny that a miracle had been performed? Did they deny that someone had actually been healed? No! Just the opposite is true: they denied that such a miracle had taken place by the power of God, and instead attributed it to the power of the Devil (Matthew 12:24). They accused Him of being a false teacher and a sinner (John 9:16), but still asked how the miracle had actually been performed (John 9:26). They could not deny that such had actually taken place (John 11:47-48; Acts 4:16), or they most gladly would have produced that evidence to refute and expose Christ.

But let us note here another feature about these miracles that were being performed by Christ. That is, that by doing these things, He was also making some rather bold claims,

namely, that He was the Son of God. In fact, Jesus repeatedly turned to His miracles as direct evidence of this fact. In Matthew 11:4-6, He sends answer by John's disciples that the miracles He did were all the testimony He needed to demonstrate He was the Christ. In John 10:37-38, He appeals to the miracles as clear evidence that will stand, even if they reject His spoken word. In John 10:25, He calls on them as clear evidence God was with Him. In John 15:24, He not only notes that the miracles He performed were of such a nature no man could reproduce them, but goes so far as to claim that because of them, those who rejected them would be lost in sin. Indeed these were some rather bold claims to be made as a result of what He was doing.

Many today are willing to come along and admit Christ was a great man, who did some great teaching, but like the Jews, they refrain from admitting He was the Christ. They claim the miracles were mere figments of the disciples' imaginations. However, the disciples not only recorded them during the life-time of those who were eye-witnesses of them (and could thus have easily refuted them), but called upon them as testimony of the deity of Christ (Acts 2:22), and through the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated what they preached was the truth (Acts 4:16; Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:1-4). That which was revealed is too well established for modern day deniers to dismiss that easily.

And what is the consequence of all this? What do these miracles tell us regarding the claims of Christ? Either He was what He claimed to be, or God bore witness through His miracles to what was a bold-faced lie! Since we know God does not lie (Titus 1:2), and would not substantiate a lie with such miracles which were appealed to as proof Jesus was the son of God (if the claim was false, God himself would have turned against Him in refutation of that which was claimed, Acts 12:23), then we are indeed forced to accept the conclusion presented by Nicodemus, "We know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). And since He claimed, and confirmed, to be the Son of God, why will we not heed that which He has set forth (Luke 6:46)?

- Donald P Ames, via Truth Magazine, 11/08/1973

The Good Works of Luke 10!

We have learned from our Bible study that Christians are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Disciples are to take what they have learned in becoming disciples and teach the same to others, observing all that Christ commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). Thinking of these passages reminds us and instructs new converts regarding what we are to be busy doing as we live in this world. "For we are His

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10).

As we look to God's word to define those good works in which we should walk, taking into consideration a bird's-eye view of Luke 10, notice three concepts here.

Jesus sent out seventy representatives, "in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Luke 10:1-2). The Lord commanded them to "heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" (verse 9). They were to sound a warning of condemnation to those who rejected their message and refused to aid them as the Lord's appointed heralds. Their obedience to the Lord brought forth this praise: "rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." (verse 20). So first (Luke 10:1-24), you and I are representatives of Christ, who by His authority, make disciples of all the nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that the Lord commanded us (Matthew 28:18-20). The Lord has not authorized us to perform miracles of healing, but we must point others to the New Testament scriptures, which were confirmed by those miracles (cf. Hebrews 2:3-4).

Second, just as the Samaritan was to the man who fell among robbers, we must be compassionate neighbors to all others, not merely saying, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" (James 2:16). The Samaritan actively cared for the suffering man in need (Luke 10:25-37). We must look for opportunities to demonstrate God's mercy and compassion to other people. "Go and do the same." Faith must contain works to be alive (James 2:17).

Third, we must not be like Martha, "worried and bothered about so many things." We must be like Mary, "seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word." (Luke 10:38-42). In our devotion to Christ, we must feed on His word often. We must commune with Him and worship Him, and these devotions must take priority over so many things in life.

So, whether we are chasing opportunities to make disciples by teaching and baptizing them, or we are interrupted with an opportunity to be a neighbor to someone in need, or pausing from our own activities and concerns to worship God and receive His word, let us rejoice in that our names are written in heaven because we do the will of God. Does this describe you today?

- Gary Smalley

- * "Don't consult your bank book to ascertain your real wealth!"
 - * "Who gossips to you about others will gossip to others about you!"
 - * "Without a Divinity there is for man neither purpose, goal, nor hope; only a trembling fear of the dark!"
 - * "Merely going to a church meetinghouse doesn't make you a Christian any more than going into a garage makes you an automobile!"
 - * "Unlike the so-called royalty of this earth, the King of kings knew the meaning of calloused hands, a grimy brow, and honest sweat!"
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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)