

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### How Men Act When They Repent

In Matthew 12:41, Jesus said, "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." According to Jesus, the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah.

You remember the story, don't you? God had commanded Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). Now Nineveh was not only a city filled with wickedness, it was also the capital of the Assyrians, hated enemies of the Israelites. Jonah didn't want to go. He fled from God's presence. However, after being given some quality time in the belly of a fish to reflect and pray, Jonah decided to obey God. Jonah walked through the city proclaiming the judgment of the Lord upon these pagan people: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4).

The people of Nineveh repented. They "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" (Jonah 3:5). When word came to the king of Nineveh, "he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes." He decreed that "neither man nor beast, herd nor flock" were to eat or drink and that "every one" was to "turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hand" (Jonah 3:7-8).

The text says that, "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them" (Jonah 3:10). God can read men's hearts. He knows more about what is going on in our heads than we do ourselves. But He did not need to read the minds of the Ninevites to know that they had repented. He "saw their works, that they turned away from evil". When the men of Nineveh repented, nobody was left to wonder whether or not their repentance was genuine. Nobody was left guessing about their intention to stop committing evil. Nobody would have doubted they had actually repented of their sins.

We really need to learn this lesson from the men of Nineveh. We need to learn how to act when we repent. Repentance isn't just saying "excuse me," "my bad," or "forgive me," and then going on with our lives as if nothing happened. Repentance should produce real change in our actions. We are to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). I am afraid that too many of us think that our repentance should go unnoticed. We are incognito repenters! And while God hardly asks us to don sackcloth and ashes today, He does ask us to "do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20).

Let's resolve to turn away from sin in our lives, and make sure that we behave in such a way that folks can tell that's what we've done!

- Steve Klein

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## **Homosexuality Is Selfishness**

I once asked a young homosexual who was raised in a Christian home, "Do you not love God and your parents?" His answer was blunt, shocking, and told the whole story. He replied, "Yes, I love both God and my parents, but not at the expense of my own happiness." Let that answer sink in! What he was saying is that he loved himself more than he loved anything or anyone else. If loving God and his parents meant he had to repent of his sinful life, he was not interested.

In our Bible studies together, he rejected every verse of Scripture that condemns homosexuality as a sin. There was no room in his heart for any divine instruction that stood in the way of his own pleasure.

This young man was typical of people who embrace sexual sin of any kind. Homosexuality is a sin against God (1 John 3:4). It is against nature and is a misuse of the human body (Romans 1:26-27). Those who pursue this lifestyle choose their lusts and desires over heaven itself (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). They care nothing for God, who sacrificed His Son to save them (John 3:16). They do not respect their parents, who taught them to reject fleshly lusts that war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). Even the Bible's warnings of the impending flames of eternal hell could not move the young man to any level of sorrow (Revelation 21:8).

Militant homosexuals block from their hearts everything that is holy and pure, and they put themselves ahead of everything and everyone in their lives. The only thing that matters to a homosexual is that he receives the gratification of his lust and idolizes himself and his basest desires. This is the grossest example of an evil heart of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12). Simply put, homosexuals are like every other sinner. Yes, that is the conclusion to

which the Bible leads us: homosexuality is a sin, and it separates those who embrace it from God.

- David Weeks, via Truth Magazine, January, 2026

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## Hunger

In John's gospel narrative, chapter 6 marks both the height of Jesus' popularity and a drastic turning point in His ministry. At this time, Jesus feeds more than 5,000 people with just a few loaves. This miracle should remind the crowd and John's readers of several passages in the Old Testament – 2 Kings 4:42-44, Exodus 16, Psalm 23, and others. The similarity between this event and God providing the Israelites with manna through Moses was unmistakable. Even the people, who almost always misunderstand Jesus, realize that this act indicated that Jesus was "the Prophet" like Moses who was promised in Deuteronomy 18 (John 6:14). However, more than fulfilling the role of Moses as the provider of sustenance, Jesus claims also to fulfill the role of the bread: "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Jesus not only provides the means for satisfying our needs; He satisfies them Himself.

The claim of verse 35 may allude to several Old Testament passages, but it is remarkably reminiscent of Isaiah 55. In chapter 55's opening verses, God calls through the prophet, "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." God promises free sustenance for the hungry and thirsty. And not only does He fulfill the need for free, but He makes richer provision than necessary, offering milk and wine in addition to water. In light of this offer, God continues, "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food" (Isaiah 55:2).

How much effort and money do we spend on things which do not satisfy? Have you ever noticed that no matter how much you eat, or how good the meal tastes, or how nutritious it is, you will still end up hungry the next day? Even in our physical food, we are reminded of the futility of any attempt we may make to fill ourselves up. All earthly needs and pleasures are the same. We put effort into them, but the gratification we receive is temporary. How much effort and energy do we spend trying to fill ourselves up with work, money, possessions, vacations, and pleasure – things which are "not bread"? Our effort and money are wasted if we spend them seeking these things instead of the free bread which Jesus offers. As He says, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life" (John 6:27). Only that food, which is Jesus Himself, will ever

satisfy. Does our time and effort reflect an interest in the true "bread from heaven" or "that which does not satisfy"?

How long will you choose to "spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" God invites us to this feast: "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live" (Isaiah 55:3). When we hear God's word, and when we fill ourselves with the actions, attitudes, and teachings of Jesus, and when we remain completely in Jesus (John 6:56), we have access to a fulfillment that all earthly pleasures deny. "Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food" (Isaiah 55:2).

- David Smelser

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## **Right or Wrong!**

It is an established truth that "righteousness and strength" are found "only in the Lord." (Isaiah 45:24). The word He has spoken will stand; it is righteousness and it will not be retracted (cf. Isaiah 45:23).

All who seek the virtues of righteousness and truth must come to Him. His cause will always prevail, in spite of the fact that the majority of all people have opposed God and His will for all mankind. Most have always opposed God and most always will, even though opposition to Him will fail and be put to shame. For the majority of people, those who seek to discredit the Lord God offer many base reasons for their path to destruction (for example, John 12:43, "they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.").

The right or wrong of a thing is not determined by the popularity of it. There were only eight righteous followers of the Lord God (Noah and his family) when "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5). God destroyed them as a result (Genesis 6:7, 13). Further, there were less than ten righteous people in Sodom when the Lord God visited that population with total destruction (Genesis 19:24-25). Even among the large number of Israelites that the Lord blessed in leading them from Egyptian bondage, most followed their own desires and were not permitted to enter the Promised Land.

The right or wrong of a thing is not determined by the majority of people. Consider Psalms 119:172, "Let my tongue sing of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness." The words that proceed from God are designed to establish

righteousness in the hearts of mankind. It is impossible for any people to establish superior righteousness from their own imaginations (cf. Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 1:21; Genesis 6:5; 8:21).

Will the righteous allow opposition and ridicule to alarm them? Stephen did not (Acts 7). Stephen shows us the righteous way: standing for the Lord God and His Christ. Indeed, he was most courageous as he, alone, stood for righteousness in opposition to a religious mob.

Friend, where do you stand?

- Gary Smalley

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\* "Some folks aren't interested in anything unless it is none of their business!"

\* "If revenge is so sweet, why does it leave such a bitter taste?"

\* "It is better to have a bad breath than a sour disposition!"

\* "Some men who boast that they are self-made must look pitiful in God's eyes!"

\* "People who wonder where this younger generation is headed will do well to consider where it came from!"

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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)