

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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God Wants People!

Jehovah called unto Moses out of the mountain, saying concerning the children of Israel, ". . . if ye will keep my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples" (Exodus 19:3-6). And in Deuteronomy 7:6-f, "For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth."

And when Hosea prophesied that Gentiles would be acceptable to God, he said, "and I will say to them that were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:25).

God wants people! His creatures, made in His image, have sinned and turned from Him. The Father gave His Son to die on the cross because He loves us, and wants us to return to the fold. He does not want our money. He does not need anything "seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). But He wants us because He loves us -- does not want to leave us lost in sin (John 3:16). Have we grown so calloused that we cannot be moved by such an unselfish love?

Christ died for people. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). The whole plan of salvation, as respects us, is God's plan to change people. Our hearts are changed by faith (Acts 15:9), as we come to put our trust in Him alone. In repentance we turn from our sins (Matthew 21:28-f) to do the Master's bidding. In baptism, the guilt of the old life is removed, and we rise to walk in a new life (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-4). We become new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-17) and no longer walk the ways of the flesh. It is of such people that Peter writes: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10).

God wants a people, to dwell in them. Christ says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). In Hebrews 8:10 the Lord says, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

God wants a people, by whom He may be glorified (Romans 15:6-7). God wants a people to save eternally. "He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). We will never grasp the true significance of the scheme of redemption until we make it a very personal matter; until, in the words of the old spiritual, "it's me, it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer!"

God doesn't want a fine church building! Usually that is something we want. God doesn't want great numbers, for numbers sake. God wants a people -- who are truly His own.

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, February, 1967

Clippings . . .

"When the author walks onto the stage, the play is over. God is going to invade, all right; but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else comes crashing in? This time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. That will not be the time for choosing; It will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realized it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side."

- C.S. Lewis

God's Ministry for John!

Upon the birth of John the Baptist, his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied concerning the role his son would fill in preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. Christ would rescue the people of God by bringing knowledge of salvation, forgiveness, mercy and peace. Luke then tells his readers concerning John, "And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel." (Luke 1:80). Uninhabited areas are ideal for times of prayer and meditation, times of preparation for spiritual undertakings. Luke

records further, "the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness." (Luke 3:2).

John prepared himself for the day that God would speak to him in a supernatural way to command and commission him for the work he must do to fulfill heaven's purpose. Such is reminiscent of the call to other prophets of the Lord, such as Jeremiah: "everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak . . . I have put My words in your mouth." (Jeremiah 1:7, 9). I am certain that John looked forward with great anticipation to the day when the word of God came to him.

Interestingly, the word of God comes to us any time of day or night and on any day we choose. All we have to do is open God's Book. Our level of excitement and anticipation for such times is quite revealing of what sort of servant we truly are, don't you think?

Do you find it interesting that John began his work in deserted areas of the country? If men were planning this work of reformation, would they have started it in the less densely populated area of the Jordan River, or in the city of Jerusalem? Are we not reminded that devotions of prayer and meditation are easily decreased in settings of many distractions? How we are reminded that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts and God's ways are not man's ways! As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Contemplate the ways of John. What a true servant of God was he, filled with great courage!

- Gary Smalley

* "The Resurrection assures what the Cross secures!"

* "A lie may take care of the present, but it has no future!"

* "It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people!"

* "Did you ever wonder why a father and mother can find room for five or six children in a three to five room house, but not a one of those children can find room for an aged parent in a seven to nine room house?"

* "To the influence of the Bible we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization and to this we must look as our guide in the future!"

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)