

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### The Greatest Sermon!

The word "sermon" comes from an old English word meaning a discourse, speech, or talk. In our society, it means a public lecture based on Scripture. Interestingly, "sermon" isn't found in the Bible, but the idea definitely exists.

There are approximately 15 sermons or addresses in Acts. These include the sermon on Pentecost, Stephen's sermon before the Jewish council, and Paul's Aeropagus sermon in Athens. Furthermore, Paul "reasoned" several times with unbelievers (Acts 17:2; 18:4, 19; 24:25).

Over the years, likely millions of sermons have been preached but none greater than the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. It begins with what's referred to as "the beatitudes." This word means "blessed," and it refers to the character of Christians. If they can be poor in spirit, mourn for their sins, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and persecuted for the sake of righteousness, then they'll be fit citizens of the kingdom of God.

What are Christians? After Jesus spoke of the beatitudes of kingdom citizens, He declared that Christians are "salt" and "light". Salt preserves and gives flavor. When we are the "light of the world," we help the world see truth and see God in us. We shouldn't put our light under a basket, but on a lamp stand so that everyone can see the light. Jesus concluded by saying, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (v. 16).

Paul declared to the Corinthians: "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). You are an "epistle" presented to the world in your transformed state, reflecting the glory of God and of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:20-24). That means that Christians can manifest the character of Christ:

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; . . ." (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Christians can worship God in spirit and truth. Hebrews 10:22 explains, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Christians can trust in God during trials, like Job who said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him" (Job 13:15).

You're a Christian. You're "salt" and "light". You're an "epistle" to the world. You're a sermon that's preached to everyone who sees you. Make it a special one. Make it an effective one. Make it glorify God and Jesus Christ.

- Kyle Campbell

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## *Clippings . . .*

### NOW IS THE TIME TO OBEY THE GOSPEL

- "Not yet," said the youth. "I don't want anything to interfere with my pleasure. When I grow older I'll think about my soul."
- "Not yet," said the young married man. "I am just beginning to do well in life. When I see my business prospering, then I shall have more time."
- "Not yet," said the middle aged business man. "I've worked so hard to place my business where it is today. I want to take it easy awhile and devote more time to recreation."
- "Not yet," said the gray-haired man, "Somewhere along the line I have picked up some bad habits I'll have to conquer first. Then too, it would involve several changes, and when you get my age these changes are difficult and you don't want to make many."

And so he lived without God and died without hope. How sad! His big sin was procrastination. Is that yours today? "Today if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." "Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation."

- Gospel Digest

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# FOLLOWERS!

Someone was talking to a great scholar and brought up the name of a younger man: "He said that he was one of your students." The disappointed reply from the teacher was, "He may have attended my lectures, but he was not one of my students."

Does this brief encounter not illustrate a disturbing condition that strongly handicaps the church, in that there are so many distant followers of Jesus and so few real disciples? It is possible to be a follower of Jesus without being His disciple; an observer without being a fighting soldier who has given the King his heart. Empty pews following some uncomfortable preaching is testimony that some people really do fake it.

Certainly, when contemplating coming to belief, it only originates from an honest and good heart (Luke 8:15) who cherishes the implanting there of the word of God (James 1:21). Holding fast the word results in the production of righteous fruit, and it proves one "zealous for what is good" (1 Peter 3:13). There is no other attitude that will result in entrance into the kingdom of God. This is polar opposite of a mere listener (James 1:22-25) who is swayed by peer pressure to conform to some rules of a group. This brand of comradeship will not stand the test (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 13:5; cf. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15). When trials come the half-hearted will vanish.

Of course the believer's first duty is to count the cost of following Christ. A discarded commitment is a humiliating thing (Luke 14:28-32). Similarly, the bride and groom are admonished to not enter marriage lightly or unadvisedly. The current divorce rate is testimony that serious commitments are often abandoned. The Lord's church suffers the same disregard when one puts his hand to the plow and looks back (Luke 9:62).

For the one who comes to faith in Christ, let him keep his assurance that every step he takes in ascending the mountain of the Lord's house, as difficult as the steep path is at times, the Lord will be with him in every step. He will never desert nor forsake him. "The Lord is my helper" (Hebrews 13:5-6). When his walk is ended, the Lord will be there to welcome him home!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "It is better to be alone than to be in evil company!"

\* "The word of God is a healing medicine (Psalms 107:20). But it is bitter as quinine and tastes bad as castor oil to those who hate the truth and have not learned to love it (2 Thessalonians 2:6-12)!"

- \* "Never trust a person with a hardened conscience!"
  - \* "Men turn their faces toward hell and hope to get to heaven; why do they not walk into the river and expect to keep dry?" --Spurgeon
  - \* "Killing time is a slow method of committing suicide!"
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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)