

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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In the Place of God

"But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?' — Genesis 50:19

After the death of Jacob, Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph would rise up and take vengeance for all that they had done to him. They were afraid that he had been lying in wait for them, just as they had once done to him. This would not have been unusual, as many people wait for an opportunity to exact vengeance.

But Joseph reassures his brothers. He acknowledges that God can take actions done by others with evil intent and weave them into His grand plan. He can take what was intended for harm and use it for good. We too need to adopt this higher view of events. Far too often, we become so fixated on what a person intended to do to us that we fail to consider what God did with those actions and what good He brought about as a result.

Joseph also asks the rhetorical question, "Am I in the place of God?" Even though Joseph had never read Deuteronomy 32:35, he understood that vengeance did not belong to him, but to God. His brothers were shocked by the depth of Joseph's devotion to God and by the love he showed them. Imagine the good that could be done if we fully accepted that vengeance belongs to God and that it is our duty to love our enemies.

- Chadwick Brewer

Ten Things That Save

A number of things work together to bring about man's salvation.

God Saves. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who desires all men to be saved . . ." (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

Christ Saves. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shalt call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21).

Grace Saves. "For by grace you have been saved . . ." (Ephesians 2:5, 8).

Faith Saves. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1).

Blood Saves. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

The Gospel Saves. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Romans 1:16).

Preaching Saves. ". . . it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Works Save. "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." (James 2:24).

Confession Saves. "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10).

Baptism Saves. "There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism . . ." (1 Peter 3:21).

Nowhere does the Bible teach that a person is saved by any one thing alone.

by John Edwards [all Scriptures NKJV]

Clippings . . .

Our Thoughts about Others

Someone has wisely said: "What we think about another may make no difference with regard to our character. We cannot in righteousness always approve the deeds of others, but we can and must feel charitable in our hearts toward them. It is one thing to disagree with a person, or to openly oppose his views and/or action, and another to despise him. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." It has been

said that "Doing injury to your enemy puts you below him; revenge makes you even with him, but forgiving him lifts you above him."

- L. R. Hester, Greenville, Texas

Enduring Faith!

Sticking with me since the days when I was a babe in Christ were many things I learned from two of my closest teachers/counsellors, one of which was Leon Mauldin. He told me of his early days as a youngster in Bible class when they studied about the faith of Daniel in the lion's den. Leon said, "I want to be a Daniel!" Those words touched me because they were from his heart, and he meant every word. How do I know? Because my brother is a faithful gospel preacher! Called by the gospel, he put his hand to the plow and never looked back, suffering hardship for the gospel's sake; a true soldier of Christ.

So what are your children saying when they study the Scriptures? Today in our reading from Luke 18, here is the pertinent question: "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8b). Young's Literal Translation has, "but the Son of Man having come, shall he find the faith upon the earth?" Aside from the certainty that God hears and answers the prayer of faith from His children, who is the person that will make the prayer, and what is the content of his or her heart? The judge will act, but is the widow persistently asking (Luke 18:3, 5 cf. 11:8)?

The Lord's question brings to mind what was said in Luke 17, which warns of judgment against those who are not living by faith (they were unbelieving, unsuspecting, and unprepared): "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed." (Luke 17:30). Christ would reveal Himself coming in judgment against Jerusalem for rejecting God's Messiah (Luke 13:35) and also the final judgment at the end of time to punish with "retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Christians then and now have been persecuted and thrown into various trials and temptations. Will God's people be steadfast? Will they persevere? Will they be prepared and ready to meet the Lord? Will "the faith" be living in their hearts, shaping their character, adding to their virtues, and seen in their lives? Will they be genuinely dedicated to the word of God, constantly praying for His guidance and help?

Enduring faith is not automatic, hence the Lord's question in Luke 18:8. I see in the young person who is convicted, declaring, "I want to be a Daniel!", the great potential of persistence, of not growing weary, of not despairing, and of not losing heart. Potential is

there! Determination to be faithful will achieve it! " And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Hebrews 6:11-12). "Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised." (Hebrews 10:35-36).

Is the faith living in you?

- Gary Smalley

- * "Someone should invent an amplifier for the voice of conscience!"
 - * "The religion of some people is well developed in the mouth, but is lacking in deed and in truth!"
 - * "The marriage 'knot' should never prove to be a 'slip knot' or a 'noose'!"
 - * "Successfully serving God requires making His word the main business of your life!"
 - * "The most powerful position on earth is kneeling before the Lord of the universe!"
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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)