

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Can Moral Goodness Alone Save?

Many people seem to think that "moral goodness alone will save us." Is this taught in the New Testament? If it is not taught in the New Testament we have no right to believe and teach it. Let us consider the following facts.

1. IF MEN CAN BE SAVED BY MORAL GOODNESS ALONE, THEY CAN SAVE THEMSELVES. Ecclesiastes 7:20 says "For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." In Romans 3:10 Paul said: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: . . .", and in verse 23 he said: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The above verses show conclusively that man within and of himself can NOT save himself by his own moral goodness.

2. IF MEN CAN BE SAVED BY MORAL GOODNESS ALONE, THEN JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS IN VAIN. We are told in John 3:16 that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." In Titus 2:14 Paul said that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity" and in Hebrews 2:9, that Christ "tasted death for every man." Jesus shed His blood in vain if a sinner can be saved without it. (See Matthew 26:28).

3. IF MEN CAN BE SAVED BY MORAL GOODNESS ALONE, THEN IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR ONE TO BELIEVE AND OBEY THE GOSPEL. Romans 1:16 says the "gospel" is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 teaches that those who "obey not the gospel" will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Paul said the Romans were made free from sin when they "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine . . ." (See Romans 6:17-18).

4. IF MEN CAN BE SAVED BY MORAL GOODNESS ALONE, WHY WEREN'T MEN LIKE SAUL OF TARSUS AND CORNELIUS SAVED BY IT? Although they were "morally good," it was necessary for them to hear, believe and obey words in order for them to be

saved. You can read the inspired record of Saul's conversion in Acts 9, 22, and 26. The conversion of Cornelius is recorded in Acts 10 and 11.

No, moral goodness alone is not able to save one person from hell and its torment. Do not trust in your "moral goodness" or you will be lost eternally.

- Carrol R. Sutton, via The Instructor, May, 1978

Clippings . . .

THREE R's FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

Ecclesiastes 11:9 - 12:1

1. REJOICE, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, before the evil days of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

2. REMOVE, therefore, sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

3. REMEMBER, also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

- Robert M. Mitchell

"They Have Played The Harlot!"

(Hosea 4:12)

The ministry of God's prophet, Hosea, lasted for approximately forty-five years as he witnessed Israel sink deeper and deeper into idolatry. Not only were God's words to be spoken to these unfaithful people, but Hosea was commanded by God to do something very unusual and humiliating that would cause his very life to be a powerful message demonstrating the relationship between God and His people. "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD." (Hosea 1:2). Hosea promptly obeyed the voice of the Lord. There is no hint of hesitation in the record.

Hosea married the harlot, Gomer, and had children by her which were given symbolic names that reflected the Lord's displeasure with His covenant people. She was unfaithful

to Hosea and left him. He paid for her and brought her back, restoring her as his wife. What a powerful message about the loyal, unfaltering love of God! Her unfaithfulness to Hosea was a picture of Israel's spiritual whoredom in worshipping other gods. Hosea's redemption of Gomer was a picture of God's undying love and offer of mercy to His people.

The pain Hosea endured as a result of marrying a harlot and her continued unfaithfulness must have been very great, certainly adding some degree of passion to the preaching of God's message. Have you ever tried to love someone who has deeply hurt you? Maybe you endured the pain of hurt from someone close to you. If so, I am sure you felt the temptation to stop loving that person. Hosea had to have felt this pain, but he did not stop loving her. Our God must feel pain when we choose unrighteousness over His will for our lives, but He does not stop loving us.

Out of this wonderful love of God, He calls us to become and remain His children. Following His will may be difficult at times, and we have to learn sacrifice and suffering for the cause of Christ. But let us remain faithful, thanking Him for showing us the way to eternal blessings!

- Gary Smalley

[All Scriptures quoted are NASB, 1995 © The Lockman Foundation, unless otherwise noted.]

* "The egotist is an I specialist!"

* "It would have been better not to have been born at all, than never to have been born again! (Read John 3:3-5!)"

* "Faults are thick where love is thin!"

* "Faith keeps the man who keeps the faith!"

* "The man who prides himself on having courage to say what he thinks should be sure he thinks!"

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)