

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Just Push!

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light and God appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. So, this man did, day after day.

For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all of his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Since the man was showing discouragement, the Adversary (Satan) decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the weary mind: "You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't moved." Thus, he gave the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man.

Satan said, "Why kill yourself over this? Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort; and that will be good enough." That's what the weary man planned to do, but he decided to make it a matter of prayer and to take his troubled thoughts to the Lord.

"Lord," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

The Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all of your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so?"

"Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown; your hands are callused from constant pressure, your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. True, you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. That you have done. Now I, my friend, will move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just a simple obedience and faith in Him. By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves mountains.

- Unknown

Clippings . . .

"SHE HAS DONE WHAT SHE COULD"

Mark 14 tells of the woman who anointed the head of Christ with ointment. Some murmured against her and said it was a waste. Christ pointed out to the people that it was done for Him and therefore not a waste.

Whatever we do for Christ cannot be a waste. In fact, God expects us to do all that we are able. The people whom God calls for service are busy people who are willing to do something for Him. Moses was busy with the flock when he was called (Exodus 3). This was also the case with David (1 Samuel 16:19). Nehemiah left his job serving the king to serve the Lord (Nehemiah 2). Peter, Andrew, James and John were busy with their occupation of fishing when Christ called them. Immediately they left their nets and followed Him (Matthew 4). Matthew was busy with his job of collecting taxes, but he also followed Jesus (Matthew 9). THEY DID WHAT THEY COULD.

- S. Scott Richardson Sr., via "Gospel Guide", July, 1994

He Never Had an Enemy?

I think often of close brethren in Christ, many dear friends for many years, who have passed on into the comfort of Abraham's bosom. No person could ever rightly charge that they went through life and never had any enemies. Such a "compliment" never came their way. On the other hand, they did not go through life with the purpose of making as many enemies as possible. The pattern for their lives was the Lord Jesus, who had enemies

enough to slander and discredit Him among the crowds and conspire secretly to have Him put to death. Nor could it have been said of Paul that he went through life never having enemies.

As Christians, we all know what Paul wrote to young Timothy: "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12). We have no trouble understanding those words, but nothing wakes me to the reality of them as when I am the one being persecuted. And bear in mind that torturing someone with various forms of physical pain in order to get them to verbally renounce the Lord Jesus is NOT the only form of persecution. There are countless forms of persecution, and some bear up under the trial more courageously than others. It still HURTS ("will be persecuted"), and we SUFFER as a result (physically and/or mentally). Poison words and resentful actions against the righteous will be a daily occurrence until the Lord comes again.

Satan's devices have not changed. We must not be ignorant of them (2 Corinthians 2:11). His tactic of capturing allies in his attempt to destroy every soul who names the name of Jesus is relentless. We have seen others fall who have been ensnared by him. Remember this: people are not immune from the destructive wiles of the devil just because they are on the list of my friends or even included in my own family. Satan has transformed many a Christian into a self-righteous, hypocritical pseudo-church-member. When the blind (blinded by Satan, 2 Corinthians 4:4) follow the blind, they will still relentlessly persecute the righteous from their ditch. Notice what Paul says in this context, verse 13 of 2 Timothy 3: "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Yes, it hurts. Yes, we suffer. It helps me to remember the sufferings of Christ. It helps me to remember the sufferings of the godly disciples ever since. It helps me to remember the battle-worn and weary soldiers who preached the gospel of Christ and went to their graves with their swords in their hands. They took notice of me as a young man unsheathing his sword and shouted back, "You must toughen your skin!"

Paul goes on to encourage, "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:14-15). The godly NEVER give up their swords, the word of God (see Ephesians 6:10-18).

Pray for your enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28). Let all the godly obey this directive from the Lord. Do them no evil (see 1 Peter 3:8-13). Do not be afraid of them; do not be troubled. Be careful with your words. Arm yourself with the mind of Christ (1 Peter 4:1).

Refuse to be captured by the one who has captured them. They will be put to shame (1 Peter 3:16). "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." (Ephesians 6:10).

- Gary Smalley

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

* "A truth worth uttering is a truth worth remembering!"

* "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man without adversity!"

* "The best thing to do with evil is to overcome it with good!"

* "The Christian should learn two things about his tongue: how to hold it, and how to use it!"

* "He who is a Christian in little things is not little!"

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)