

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Baby Cobras

The other day I heard it again – the “snake bark.” Stoffeltjie (little Dusty), our indomitable part Dachshund, had sniffed out a cobra hidden under our front porch. (We generally see 2-3 snakes each summer.) Would he ignore it, hoping it will go away? Never! Let it be – it’s only a baby? Never! Wait for someone more capable, such as our bigger dog, or someone human to tackle the job? Never! He provoked the snake out of hiding, forcing it to show its true colors.

A cobra bite can be deadly to humans, much more to a small dog. We tried to get Stoffel to leave the snake alone, but his God given instinct was stronger than our desires. He moved quickly, grabbing the snake around the neck, biting it and shaking it violently until it died. This is not the first snake Stoffel has killed. He is always aware of where we are in the house and stations himself by the nearest door. He is always vigilant – quick to hear the slightest movement in the grass that signals danger. If a snake tries to slither stealthily away, his nose will sniff out its path and uncover its hiding place.

Everybody needs a “Stoffel” in his life! If I’m a parent, I need to be a “Stoffel” for my children – aware of what’s going on in their lives at all times and vigilant to the slightest sign of spiritual danger. I do not ignore danger, hoping it will go away. I do not minimize sin. I know where sin likes to hide, and if I see my children start down a slippery path of sin, I am quick to get to the source of the problem, force it into the open, and deal with it. I am not immobilized by fear of what my children desire or any pain I might suffer. I do not hesitate to follow the God-given way to eliminate danger -- precious lives are at stake! We have screens on our doors and windows so we are safe from snakes, as long as we stay inside our house. Our “screen” against sin is the word of God – and making sure we stay “inside” it! I pray that we

will love God enough to use His word (not human wisdom) to define sin and not be tempted to allow “baby snakes” of worldliness into our lives, or our children’s lives – just because it seems so much less worldly than what everyone else is doing!

I can remember the first time my father heard someone swear on television. He turned it off! He passed away 35 years ago. I wonder what he would think if he saw TV shows now? Would he even have a TV? Or would he have allowed “baby snakes” into his mind, bit by bit until he didn’t even notice the swearing? The violence? The immorality portrayed as righteousness? That the baby snakes were now adults? Children are such precious gifts! May God bless all parents with competence and confidence to conquer all the snakes that threaten their families!

by Les Maydell – preached in South Africa

Welcome to Holland

Written by Emily Perl Kingsley, 1987

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It’s like this...

When you’re going to have a baby, it’s like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum, the Michelangelo David, the gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It’s all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, “*Welcome to Holland.*”

“*Holland?!?*” you say. “*What do you mean, Holland?*” I signed up for Italy! I’m supposed to be in Italy. All my life I’ve dreamed of going to Italy. But there’s been a change in the flight plan. They’ve landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven’t taken you to some horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It’s just a different place. So you must go out and buy a new guidebook. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills, Holland has tulips, Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

The pain of that will never, ever, go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

My thoughts: I felt like this is a powerful account of how life often goes differently than we planned or imagined. How we respond to these dramatic shifts can make all the difference to our spiritual wellbeing. God is always good, we must remember this, especially through the storms of life.

Psalm 46:1-5

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)