

OH FOR THE GOOD OLD DAYS!

Joe Slater

I remember when working on my own car was standard operating procedure. When I popped the hood, everything was easily accessible (well, relatively easily anyway). Today it's a maze of wires and hoses. Nearly everything is computerized. My shade-tree mechanic days are long since gone. Oh, for the good old days!

But would I really want to go back to the days when I had to change oil every 2000 miles, and do a complete tune-up every 12,000 miles? Was it really better when a vehicle was sent to the junk yard before it reached 100,000 miles?

King Solomon wrote, *"Do not say, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For you do not inquire wisely concerning this"* (Ecclesiastes 7:10). Is this teaching needed in the church today? Assuredly so! Some remember the "protracted meetings" that lasted several weeks and resulted in dozens of baptisms. Now we have mostly week-end meetings. A Sunday-through-Wednesday meeting is a major event. We feel fortunate if the local brethren attend. Community visitors are rare, and conversions are the exception rather than the rule. Our culture has changed. We can pine for the good old days, or we can adapt and move forward.

I also remember when it was commonplace for brethren to step outside for a smoke between Bible class and the assembly. I remember when it was presumed that the preacher would move every couple of years. In some congregations people of color were not warmly welcomed, or at best were patronized. Those "good old days" really weren't so good. Thank God for improvement in these and other areas! May He continue to help us to become more Christ-like every day.

I Surrender All?

Maybe you have heard about the farmer who told the preacher he had "gotten religion." The preacher replied, "That's fine, but are you sure you're going to put aside all sin?" "Yes, sir," said the farmer. "I'm through with sin!" "And are you going to pay up all your debts?" asked the preacher. "Now wait a minute," said the farmer. "You ain't talking religion, you're talking business!"

It's unfortunate that, like this man, so many suppose that we can be Christians in only part of our lives. People think we can have Christ in our "spiritual" lives while we reserve the right to do as we please in "secular" things. Scripture makes no such distinction!

A Christian is to follow Christ every day. Jesus said, *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"* (Luke 9:23). No days are left out in this matter of following Christ.

A Christian is to honor Christ in everything. *"And whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him"* (Colossians 3:17). No conversations or actions are exempt from the claim of Christ.

A Christians is to live for Christ with all his being. Paul wrote, *"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service"* (Romans 12:1). There is no part of our lives which we should not see as belonging to God.

If Christ is Lord, there can be no corners of life where His lordship is not recognized. One's loyalty to Christ will make a difference in his home, his work, his business, his play, and his talk. a Christian is to mean it when he sings, "All to Jesus I surrender; all to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him; in His presence daily live."

--Bill McFarland (via *Old Paths*)

Jesus

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 NIV).

The family has gathered around her bed. Her frail, thin body shows the emaciating effects of years and hard times. This noble mother has shed many tears for her children. Now these middle-aged children are weeping. They must let her go. Now she is finally taking the last steps of her long sojourn in this land of sin and sorrow. For years dementia has worked long and hard to destroy her memory. She no longer remembers their names. But in her last moments, and in her dying breath, she remembers one name, and repeats, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus."

Of all the words in all the languages of the world, the most precious name is the name of Jesus. There is no other name given among men that offers deliverance from the power, practice and penalty of sin.

When all is said and done, the most important events in this world center on Jesus. His remarkable, miraculous entrance into this world, His sinless life lived in a sin-saturated world, His cruel, yet necessary, death on the cross, and His resurrection that defied the laws of death and decay, and the shackles of the tomb. This Jesus, who ascended to the Father to offer His blood as an atonement for all our sins, is the same Jesus who ever lives to make intercession for each of us and will one day come back to raise the dead, judge us all, and determine our eternal destiny. Jesus is Lord!

**"Jesus, Jesus. There's just something about that name.
Master, Savior, Jesus. Like the fragrance after the rain.
Jesus, Jesus. Let all Heaven and earth proclaim:
Kings and Kingdoms will all pass away,
But there's something about that name."**

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)