



ISSUE

24.14

April 3, 2022

BULLETIN OF  
THE OL-  
SEN PARK  
CHURCH OF  
CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

## Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

## Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## “Who Hindered You from Obeying the Truth?” by Kyle Pope

In Paul’s letter to the churches in Galatia, he asks them the question, “**You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?**” (Gal. 5:7, NKJV). What does it mean to *obey the truth*? The phrase is used of those who have never begun to follow Christ. Peter warned, “**For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**” (1 Pet. 4:17). Paul prophesied God “**taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (2 Thess. 1:8). These souls stand outside of Christ. They have not put faith in Jesus, turned from sin, confessed Jesus and been baptized into Christ. They are lost in sin. Some reading this may be like that. You know what to do, you know you have sinned, but something hinders you. The phrase can also apply to Christians who do not *continue* to obey. This is the emphasis of Galatians 5:7. They were Christians who had turned from the truth to error. I suspect there may be some reading this who are also like this—no one sees it. You look faithful, but Let’s think about this question in a very personal way. If you are not obedient to the truth, I ask you to ask yourself the question “**who hindered you from obeying the truth?**”

### The “Who” Could Be . . .

**Friends.** Rehoboam asked for advice from the elders who had served his father but also from his friends. He chose to follow the

bad advice of his friends and lost the people and most of the kingdom because of it (1 Kings 12). You may have been hindered from obeying the truth because you thought your friends wouldn't like you anymore if you followed God. You were afraid they would think you are strange. What does God think about your choice?

**Family.** Jesus said, “**a man’s enemies will be those of his own household**” (Matt. 10:36). If our family hinders us from following God that can be the case. We don’t choose our family, nor can we abandon them, but we don’t have to let them cause us to lose our soul. Job’s wife could have hindered him, but he was faithful to God in spite of her discouraging attitudes towards him (Job 2:9-10).

**Peers.** The Gospel of John records the sad record that some among the Jews actually believed in Jesus but refused to confess Him because, “**they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God**” (John 12:43). We often worry about how we look to others. Sometimes even to those we don’t know. Why is it that we care so much about what people think that don’t even know us? Why is it that we care so little about what the One thinks about us who knows us better than anyone?

**Yourself.** The Wise man wrote, “**He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city**” (Prov. 16:32). Sadly, we are often our own worst enemy. When we fail to exercise self-control and restraint it is not so much a question of “**who**” the hindrance is but “**what**” we have allowed to hinder us from obedience to the Lord. When the Ethiopian Noblemen learned the truth he didn’t hand anything to stand in his way. He asked Stephen, “**What hinders me from being baptized?**” (Acts 8:36b). Will you allow something in your life to hinder you from obeying the truth?

### Sometimes the “What” Is. . .

**Fear of Failure.** In the Parable of the Talents the man who was given one talent was afraid that his master would expect more from him than he could deliver. He allowed his fear to keep him from doing anything (Matt 25:24-30). Certainly, all who begin to follow Christ will stumble, but we only fail if we stop fighting to get back up as quickly as we can when we realize we have done wrong. What each of us must realize is that if the fear of



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failure is what hinders us from obeying the truth—failing to obey the gospel is failure, not a way to avoid failure!

**Thinking We Have Time.** Jesus told a parable about a rich man who assumed he had time and built bigger barns but was not “rich toward God” when he died unexpectedly (Luke 12:16-21). The story is told of an ancient king who lit lamps all around his palace then sent a herald to proclaim that all criminals who would come to his palace while the lamps burned could be pardoned. When the lamps went out it would be too late. What if we wait until the *lamps burn out* on our opportunity for God’s mercy? Paul talked with the Roman governor Felix about the gospel. When he grew afraid he told him to go away until he had a “convenient time” (Acts 24:24-25). On August 24, AD 79 a mountain in Italy known as Vesuvius erupted spewing a cloud of gas and ash into the air coming down on the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Citizens who were in the city were buried in the ash with no time to escape. Josephus tells us that Felix—who thought he would have a “convenient time” to speak to Paul again died there that day (*Antiquities* 20.7.2). Don’t let this be what hinders you.

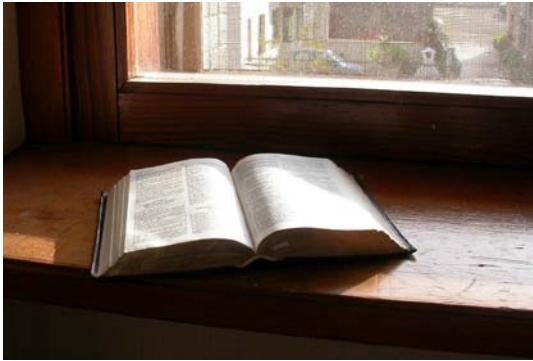
**Fear of Men.** Jesus taught, “**My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!**” (Luke 12:4-5). I heard a news report some years ago about a woman who struggled with an intruder in her house who attacked her. In spite of her fear, she fought the man and strangled him to death. The fear we may feel from men must be put in perspective. It is nothing compared to the absolute terror we may one day feel if we find our souls unprepared in the hands of Him who is able to cast both soul and body into hell.

**Love of the World.** This world offers many pleasures, but none of them will last forever. The apostle John

warns us not to love these things because all of them are “**passing away**” (1 John 2:15-17). How foolish and remorseful we will feel one day if we have sacrificed our souls for the few minutes of pleasure this life has to offer only to forfeit an eternity of joy, peace, and satisfaction with our heavenly Father in the next life.

**Carelessness.** The church in Laodicea was rebuked because they were “**neither cold nor hot**” but only “**lukewarm**” (Rev. 3:14-16). Ours is a world of apathy. There are few zealots. There are few true rebels. Many just can’t find any reason within them to even care about faith in God. Care about something often comes only after we see the consequence of carelessness. Don’t let carelessness hinder you—too much is at stake.

**Doubt.** James wrote, “**he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind**” (Jas. 1:6). You can’t pin down a wave it is ever changing. It doesn’t commit itself to stay in one place but moves as soon as it has started in one direction.



Some people are like that. History tells of an Anglo-Saxon king named Redwald (c. 599 - 624). He was the king of East Anglia in the ancient British Isles, but he couldn't commit to a fully follow Christ. He set up in the same church building an altar to Christ and altar to pagan gods. Don't let doubt hinder you!

**Slavery to Sin.** Jesus taught, "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). Being a Christian

isn't easy. It calls upon us to deny ourselves and submit to God. Perhaps what hinders you is sin. Perhaps you like to drink a little. Maybe you engage in immorality. You may want the freedom to sleep in on Sunday, use whatever kind of profanity you want to, wear whatever you want, and have friends that do whatever you like. That makes you free, but you are actually in the worst kind of slavery imaginable.

I once met a man who "hacked paint"—a practice that involved spraying paint into a paper bag and inhaling it for the high he could get from it. He started doing it for the pleasure it gave him. The problem was, a person who does this little by little it destroys his brain as he becomes enslaved to it. That's how sin is! Whatever sin it may be that hinders us from truly following Christ, it isn't worth it sell our soul to it. Don't let yourself wait until your mind is overcome, your loved ones (in Christ) are alienated from you and all avenues of rescue are exhausted. Be set free from sin today through obedience to the truth.



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# Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.