



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

Volume 28 Issue 3

March 2013

“Heroes”

By
Jeff Haught

As far back in recorded history as we go we find stories of great heroes - men and women performing remarkable feats of courage, strength, or self sacrifice in service to others, while spending themselves in pursuit of a worthy cause. We see that every age, every culture, and every generation has had its own heroes. Such heroes, whether fictitious, real, or exaggerated often fulfill a need within our own spirits, awakening and inspiring us to a greater sense of purpose in our own lives.

From children to adults it seems there is a love for heroism and a desire to be heroic. It seems we have an inherent desire for adventure, to dare greatly in overcoming insurmountable odds for a higher, loftier purpose above and beyond ourselves. A longing to successfully challenge that which is wrong or oppressive in life in order to ultimately be victorious in the epic struggle between good and evil.

But what exactly is a hero? What qualities or actions exactly make one a hero? Are heroes born or made? While these questions are the subject of great debate I would suggest a hero is considered to be someone who is looked up to for sacrificially pressing on in pursuit of a higher cause even in the face of great difficulty or seemingly overwhelming odds. In doing so they may even endure physical and emotional pain or loss, personal injury or even the loss of their own lives.

However, heroes all too often tend to be defined culturally and societally in a way that many times leaves a lot to be desired. It is true that many are appropriately considered heroes for their personal sacrifice to others like soldiers, policeman, firemen, etc., or just average people who simply exhibit self sacrifice and virtuous qualities in overcoming handicaps, disabilities or challenging circumstances or obstacles in their own personal lives. But I believe the problem in our society today is that there are many who are inappropriately considered heroes whose “hero status” is based solely on their

The Southeast

Church of Christ meets at:

35 Walnut Court

Mogadore, OH 44260

Phone: 330.628.7432

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

Visit our website at:

www.southeastchurchofchrist.org

celebrity status, acting ability, athletic talent, physical attractiveness, popularity, or other superficial, trivial characteristics.

I remember several years ago watching a news report on baseball hall-of-famer Mickey Mantle. He was entering the hospital for a liver transplant after years of abusing alcoholic beverages which were a

large part of his past promiscuous lifestyle. A reporter asked him in the interview if he had anything to say to the fans who looked up to him as a hero through the years. The reporter, perhaps expecting an eloquent sound bite or witty cliché, was visibly flabbergasted when Mickey simply replied something to the effect of, "Yeah...don't be like me...don't be like me." How sad when the best advice one can give to others at the end of their life is to not follow after their negative example. I would suggest that if Mickey Mantle is a hero at all it would be for that courageous admission alone.

Similarly, when basketball great Charles Barkley was asked to comment on his status as a hero to young people he replied, "I'm no hero. If kids want a hero let them look across the kitchen table at the man or woman who is working everyday at a difficult, challenging job to support them." His statement serves as an appropriate reminder that we must constantly be evaluating and choosing our heroes both carefully and wisely.

But where should we look for the right heroic examples and the right heroic qualities to emulate in our own lives? Where do we look for the qualities that provide the most

meaning and benefit in our own lives? Where do we look for those qualities that teach us true virtues like self sacrifice? Or the qualities that enable us to slay the "giants and dragons" of this life that are unleashed on us daily by an ever growing perverse, worldly, and immoral culture?

As Christians, rather than look to secular history or the popular culture to define heroes for us, we should look to the Word of God. After all, Ephesians 6:10-12 teaches us that we are engaged in an epic battle between good and evil that is ongoing and real! *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* The fight is not merely a physical, earthly battle where lives are at stake but rather a spiritual battle where our souls and the souls of others are at stake. In order to heroically wage warfare in this spiritual battle than we must effectively utilize the spiritual weaponry and armor that God provides. *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that*

you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...", (Eph. 6:13-18.)

Not only does God's Word equip us to fight this battle, but it also gives us many wonderful, positive, examples of "heroes of faith", many of whom we read of in Hebrews 11. Like many everyday Christian heroes today it's not those we read of necessarily had extraordinary abilities, talents or gifts but that they had extraordinary faith. And while many of these heroes may never receive accolades of men, ticker-tape parades, or their names in lights or newspaper headlines, they will receive the greatest reward - the praise of God, eternal life in heaven with Christ, and their names written in the Book of Life. Who then are OUR heroes?