



*Country Church of Hollywood
Hollywood, California*

Mud Pies

A Radio Sermon by
JOSIAH HOPKINS

Daily Broadcast 8:00 to 8:30 A. M.
Sunday - - - 9:30 to 10:00 A. M.

Don Lee Columbia Broadcasting System

This circular comes to you from Goose Creek in Hollywood, California. This is the name for two beautifully wooded acres in the heart of Hollywood and the site where the Country Church of Hollywood was erected as a memorial to the simple life and earnest faith of our forefathers.

Ever since the horrible days spent in France during the World War, I have thought that an old fashioned country church and the simple faith of country neighbors would quiet the pulse of restless hearts. So, for my own peace of mind, I set out to build this little old fashioned country church seating less than three hundred people and crowned with a steeple and a bell, believing that it would also be a blessing to many other restless hearts.

For months, the little bell has called the neighbors to worship, and through radio facilities, the little bell has sounded its invitation to incredible distances. Our daily mail makes us confident that there are hundreds of thousands of friends who join in the unity of a simple old fashioned country meeting each morning.

My buggy horse, Dan, who served me so faithfully in the hill country where I was a circuit rider, is memorialized each morning as Sarah and I drive the lanes of memory and "howdy" once again with the neighbors we knew in the hills and loved so well. Dan has been where good horses go for twenty-five years, but often when the days grew dark and dreary, Sarah and I have "played like" we are driving Dan again and went merrily away with our dream horse to where the hollyhocks were blooming once more. After the war, I had to have something to help me to forget, and I have never found anything like the hoof-beats of dear old Dan.

The Country Church of Hollywood is undenominational and non-sectarian and has no membership. It is chartered under the laws of California as a non-profit corporation and is administered by three trustees. While it is primarily a radio broadcast, we have Sunday services on the two-acre grounds where thousands gather each Sunday to "howdy" with the other neighbors and to hear again the old fashioned songs and the simple country preaching of Josiah Hopkins.

Sarah Hopkins, who rode the country circuit with me and who has traveled with me through sunshine and through shadow, is known in Goose Creek as the President of the Ladies' Aid Society of the Country Church of Hollywood.

All the folks whom you hear singing and playing the old fashioned songs are Goose Creek neighbors under the direction of "Strolling Tom," whom many radio listeners know as the popular and beloved Wade Lane.

The Country Church of Hollywood is supported by the free-will gifts of its friends, as it has no membership and no solicitors.

May God richly bless you and keep you in the hollow of His hand, and may you live long and prosper.

Country Church of Hollywood
Argyle and Yucca, Hollywood, California

Yours sincerely,
JOSIAH HOPKINS

"MUD PIES"

It has been a long time since my little sister and I made "mud pies" and sold them for five pins each down in sunny Mississippi. How seriously did we take the whole "mud pie" business! It fell to my lot to do all the heavy work, such as gathering pieces of tin on which to serve the "pies" and to keep the fires in our little oven going. Surely, the sun was hot enough to bake them, but we wanted the touch of reality by serving oven-baked "pies". A hole in the side of the hill made an excellent stove, so, we cooked up an ample supply and launched fearlessly into the first mercantile venture of our lives.

Like the big stores that sold real goods, we put our "mud pie" store near the sidewalk, and started the ballyhoo:

"Ladies and gentlemen, step right up and treat yourself to a stove-cooked 'mud-pie'! Only five pins each!"

The folks would stop and talk with us about the pies, but not many sales were made. I can recall now the far-away look in the eyes of the grown-ups as they lingered to talk shop with us and to price the "pies". To sister and myself, this interest was most encouraging, but now I know why they stood in crowds about our little store. They were living over again their own "mud pie" days! Maybe, they had learned much about the affairs of the world, even as I have done since I "hawked" our little brown "mud pies" near the side walk of a little Southern country town.

We must have been in this business for weeks. You know how children

tire of one game or one little make-believe, then try another while the golden hours of happy childhood days fly away.

However, the business attracted so much attention that our children set up "mud pie" stores, all of which we resented, because we were pioneers and thought that we deserved a monopoly in this business. Then, we got to cutting prices! We reduced our "pies" to a bottle stopper, only to find out that "Pud" Jones was accepting a little pebble as the purchasing price of his "pies"! Fights broke out over choice locations, and finally the boys and girls across the railroad tracks boycotted us on the other side. Many a barrage of stones sent each side scurrying for shelter, all over a few little "mud pies"!

The other day the tables were turned on me. Some happy little children were selling "pies" near our parsonage, and I was the dreamy spectator. "Why I even bought a half dozen "pies" for an orange which I slipped out of the bag containing Sarah's groceries. An hour must have passed while I questioned the delighted children about their business. Then, I was wafted away to my little Mississippi home town again, and sister and I were playing store once more.

The family called my little sister "Sweet", and it was a good name for her. She was just like that. She had long black curls bobbing around her neck and falling over her face, as we laughed and played the hours away. But, she's been away some time now and sleeps over near the Verduga mountains out here in the West where she came to the end of the trail several years ago. However, she had time at the end to ask her husband to send me a telegram saying that there were some beautiful hills on ahead where we would leave all the make-believe of manhood and womanhood and go laughing back to play-days again. Often, did I wonder just what sister meant by sending me that dying message. Her life had been a very tragic one, and more than her share of sorrow had broken her heart. My life up to that time had been a sunny and successful one, but, neighbors, I know now why she sent me word that over Yonder we'd leave the make-believe of our grown-ups for the reality of child and go back to our play-days once more. She was right! There was more real joy and happiness in making "mud pies" and "playing store" than in the doing of the strenuous tasks of mature years. The flowers seemed to bloom for us along every path in "mud pie" days; for us the birds sang their sweetest melodies; the trees were all so friendly as they gently spread their boughs over our play places.

Folks try to dignify the work-a-day, humdrum life of grown-ups with all sorts of high-sounding names, such as financier, capitalist, merchant prince, industrialist, educator, minister, political economist, politician, etc., but when you strip off all the make-believe, it is all the same old "mud pie" business. The difference is this: the "pies" may taste better for the moment, and the medium of exchange has a wider purchasing power than the pins and the bottle stoppers. However, there's a limit to what silver and gold can buy, and the very best commodity on the market will soon wear out or cease to satisfy. Then, there is another tragic difference: the enthusiasm and joy of "mud pie" days was real. Clerks wear a superficial smile as professional salesmen or a devil-may-care indifference as, as the mood strikes them, in the shops today.

I was telling Sarah the other day that if one of the business men of these days could have the smile playing over his face that the "mud pie" merchants had, what a business he would build up. No, it's all like coffee without sugar or food without salt now-a-days. Maybe, it's ourselves that have lost the savor. Anyway, the salt of life is missing in a tragically large percentage of the grown-ups.

The jealousies of play-days remain, however, and all over things of no more value than the "pies" over which the children in our little village fell out! Yes, it goes beyond the individual and gets into classes. It is much like the quarrel between the children who had "mud pie" stores on the west side of the railroad tracks and those of us who happened to live on the east side of the tracks! It was all a matter of accident anyway on which side of the tracks we were born. But, the "mud pies" divided us! How foolish it all seems now, throwing rocks at each other simply because the other side was across the railroad

tracks! But, it is no less foolish for grown-ups to do the same thing, and all over a few little old "mud pies" that don't last and can't satisfy. Instead of railroad tracks we have religious distinctions, racial differences; industrial and commercial inequalities, and a thousand and one other "tracks" to put those on one side to throwing rocks at other side. Honestly, neighbor, the "mud pies" are not worth it!

There's another thing that bothers me a lot. It is this: the "pies" on the west side of the tracks were about like those on the east side. Wouldn't we get a lot more joy out of living if we could only stop throwing rocks across the dividing line long enough to take a look at the other side's "mud pies"? No, you don't have to move across the tracks; simply sell your pies and let their's alone.

The world hasn't learned yet that "throwing rocks" across the tracks wastes a lot of time, consumes untold energy, and does a lot of damage. They got to "throwing rocks" in Europe in 1914 and kept it up for four years, and all over things that proved to be of no more permanence and value than "mud pies". The depression was simply the reaction from the terrific "rock throwing" in the World War. A lot of fine boys and girls suffered, too. Millions of them will never make "mud pies" in the shade of their old home trees again, and there is no way of telling what it all cost, the "mud pie" stores on both sides of the "tracks".

Oh, you can put icing on a "mud pie", but it is still a "mud pie" Life is made up of a succession of enterprises that in themselves afford the soul of man no more permanent satisfaction than selling play-day "pies" for pins. Some establishments are bigger than others; some bedeck their wares until you would have great difficulty recognizing that it is the same old "mud pie" business; many of the vendors and owners of the stands ride to work in a vehicle finer than the old wheel-barrow that we children used to use or the goats and home-made wagon, but don't let anybody fool you, the same folks are traveling! The only difference is that they are not as happy as they were in play-days

A funny thing happened one day at our little play store. The richest man in town stopped and asked us the price of "mud pies." I told him that they were selling now for anything we could get for them. He teased sister and me a bit about the necessity of having a city, state, and county license to sell our wares. Then, he paralyzed both of us children by asking if we would sell him a half interest in our business

I said, "You mean you will pay us real money for part of our business?"

He said, "Certainly. I want to share your success and failures, and I will give you two real quarters for a half interest, a quarter for your sister and a bright, shiny quarter for you.

My conscience began to give me trouble. I said, "Why that wouldn't be right for us to take your real money for stock in this little 'mud pie' store." I added confidentially, "You had better watch out or somebody will fool you. These aren't real pies; they're just "mud pies", Mister."

However, he was deaf to my tip and really gave us two quarters for a half interest in our little make-believe store. Can't you imagine the envy we incited across the "tracks," when we daubed on a piece of pasteboard our little names, then, put his name as our partner. The sign read thus:

Josiah and Sweet Hopkins
A. Mangold, Partner".

You know what this story makes me think about, neighbor. Well, it puts me to thinking that our Lord came to this earth to buy into the "mud pie" businesses of humanity. And, He paid in real suffering and put real love on the counter, as He said,

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice and open unto me, I will come in unto him and will sup with him, and he with me."

Isn't that buying into our "mud pie" business? Just think of God wanting to be partner with you! That alone is enough to dignify human life!

I guess Sweet was right when she sent me word that after a while we'll all leave the make-believe, called "human life", and go back to play-days somewhere out Yonder in the wonderful hills of God.