

OakGrove Church of Christ Newsletter – 2022.10.18

Sermon recordings

Scan the QR code, click, or type the QR code short link, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Recordings/.

Speaker-AM: Robbie Moreland

Title: Worst Of Sinners

Recording:

<https://me-gr.com/l/sinners>



Speaker-PM: Tyler Glidden

Title: Balaam

Recording:

<https://me-gr.com/l/balaam>



Trust in him
at all times,
you people;
pour out your
hearts to him, for
God is our refuge.

-Psalm 62:8

Articles

Drinking Everywhere! 10/6/2022, By Nate Vick

We're to be sober-minded as Christians.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” - 1Peter5:8-10

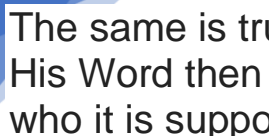
How can we resist the devil or be steadfast in our faith if our inhibitions are taken away by strong drink?

Now we see advertisements for what used to be good family establishments (Cracker Barrel for one) serving alcohol. Just look and you'll see advertisements for botanical gardens wanting to get you in their doors as they serve alcohol. What does alcohol have to do with plants? I suppose the hops come from plants, but they're not usually putting on a seminar about how to make beer or wine. They're just hoping it'll get you in the door and you'll spend or donate some money if you have a good time (lessen your inhibitions).

What's the difference between this and going to your local bar? No difference really. People say, “it's more cultured.” I say, “it's more cultured to go some other time when there's no drinking, or not go at all.”

Why do we feel the need to draw people with something other than what they come for? If people aren't there for the plants, then do we really want them there at all? My answer is a resounding “No!” They don't care about other people's moral values. The idea is that they draw more people with the beer and wine than with what they're really about (i.e. being a family restaurant or a botanical garden).

Many churches practice the same idea. We dismiss the power of God's Truth for the wisdom of man that we think is much smarter and will draw more people. See the first few chapters in Proverbs and 1 Corinthians for God's evaluation of carnal wisdom versus the simplicity of His wisdom. When will we stop trying to bring in people by things other than what we're really about? If we're about plants, people who like plants will come. They won't come if we don't use plants to draw them in, though.



The same is true of the church. If we remain focused on God and the power of His Word then it will draw in those people who seek for it. It only draws those who it is supposed to. When we try to draw using other things, like entertainment, food and drink (see John 6), or just superficial religion trying to seem spiritual but not really (empty, mostly fluff, not growing), we are not going to get good results. Are there churches that do these things that are really big? Yes. Is size the most important indicator of success? No! Spiritual health is! I surmise that if you asked most people if they were spiritually strong and healthy, they would say no or get a puzzled look on their face, because they don't even know what it is to be spiritually healthy and strong. It's not how many people attended worship Sunday morning (was there a good discussion in Bible class). How well do you like to be around one another? Is there love for one another? Not whether they serve coffee and scones in the lobby or have a band. That won't make us happy in the long-term. But if we develop inner joy in Christ, we can have joy even when we're going through difficult things in this life. It cannot be assailed. Just like the tree whose roots are deeply established down in the ground by the river (Ps 1, Col 2), we will not be moved. We are steadfast in our faith and trust in God and we know the foolishness of appealing to any of people's other desires to bring them in. If we bring them in with that, they will never truly be satisfied, and they will always be looking for more.

God told Zechariah that He would make Jerusalem "a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples." Does that sound like a good thing? It's not. God was using it to describe His judgment on the Jewish people.


Other References:

Romans 13:13

Galatians 5:21

Ephesians 5:18

Zechariah 12:2

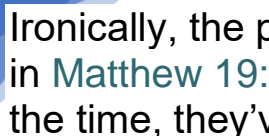


Blind to the Truth 10/15/2022, by Matthew W. Bassford

Upton Sinclair once said, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it.” Few better illustrations of this truth exist than the behavior of the craftsmen of Ephesus in Acts 19. They, along with everyone else in the city, are familiar with the miraculous powers of Paul and the large numbers of Ephesians who are coming to Christ. However, the craftsmen are much more interested in income than in eternal life. Because Paul’s success means that they can’t make as much money from selling idolatrous shrines, rather than obeying the gospel themselves, they start a riot to oppose it.

Still today, there are plenty of people who would rather serve Mammon than the Lord. Consider the man who lies because his boss expects it or the woman who never attends Sunday services because she works every weekend. To their number, we can add the denominational preachers who invest countless hours in trying to explain away passages like [Acts 22:16](#) but won’t spend five minutes trying to figure out what it means. I’ve known exceptions, but most people who are required to maintain a doctrinal position to keep their job will continue to maintain it in the face of overwhelming Scriptural evidence.

However, money is far from the only thing that can blind our eyes to the truth. There are few passages that are as straightforward as [Matthew 19:9](#). I’ve studied the verse with any number of couples before they even obeyed the gospel. Not once has any of those Biblical novices had any trouble figuring out what the text means, even when it had dire implications for their own marriage.



Ironically, the people I've encountered who struggle with comprehension in [Matthew 19:9](#) have much more Scriptural experience than that. 99 percent of the time, they've got a problem. They're unscripturally divorced. They're unscripturally remarried. They've got a loved one who is unscripturally divorced or remarried.

Then, with such powerful motivation, they return to "restudy" the text. The ones who know enough about Greek to get into trouble, use their Greek to do exactly that. Others engage in massive Scriptural-reinterpretation projects. I've seen novella-length papers arguing that Christians are still under the Law of Moses, written with the sole goal of applying Deuteronomy 24 to modern marriages instead of Matthew 19. Sadly, none of this changes the teaching of [Matthew 19:9](#) or what the Lord will do on the day of judgment.

It's easy for us to shake our heads at how easily others fall into self-deception in their study of the Scriptures. However, these things should call us not to arrogance, but to watchfulness and fear. If others who are knowledgeable about and even devoted to the word can make such grievous errors, none of us are exempt! Money, family, and even the fear of what others might think can render us equally blind. Only through awareness of our own vulnerability and stern commitment to the truth can we avoid stumbling ourselves