



OakGrove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2022.12.11

Website: oakgrovecofc.org

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Sermon recordings

No recordings available this week due to Robbie being on travel. Next week we will have all 4 recordings from both weeks.

Please visit oakgrovecofc.org/Recordings to listen to previous recordings!

WAIT FOR THE LORD; BE STRONG
AND LET YOUR HEART TAKE COURAGE;
YES, WAIT FOR THE LORD.

PSALM 27:14

BUT THOSE WHO HOPE IN THE LORD
WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH.
THEY WILL SOAR ON WINGS LIKE EAGLES;
THEY WILL RUN AND NOT GROW WEARY,
THEY WILL WALK AND NOT BE FAINT.

ISAIAH 40:31

Wandering in the wilderness, 12/07/2022, By Nate Vick

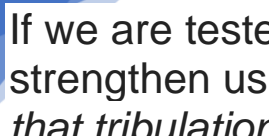
Have you ever wondered how chronic illness can be kind of like wandering in the wilderness (spiritually)? Some great spiritual leaders wandered or lived in the literal wilderness for a time.

- Moses-Midian
- Jesus-was tempted in the wilderness
- Paul (Saul)-spent an unknown amount of time (probably some number of years) in Arabia

If you have chronic illness, consider this. What is God preparing me for? Jeremiah 18 teaches us that we need to allow God an open heart for Him to mold us into His vision. We can't just automatically be transformed without any effort. We must "seek." *"For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined."* Ps 66:10

There are other passages that talk about God refining His people, like Zechariah 13. This specifically refers to 1/3 of the Jews who would remain after God brought judgment upon their nation. Out of this (the remnant) would come those from which the church would be established years later. So, in a roundabout kind of way, it does have a little bit of meaning to us.

We know God still tests us today, though we may not always know exactly how. *"You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives."* Hebrews 12:4-7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?



If we are tested by God, it may be a sign that He loves us and is trying to strengthen us! *“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Rom 5:3.* This can be hard to understand (I’m not sure we’re meant to) and, more importantly, accept. But it’s necessary. To produce perseverance, endurance, longsuffering, patience. Whatever you want to call it.

Let’s take a moment to understand that the testing of our faith is not God tempting us. Satan tempts us. We make the choice to obey or disobey. Do we let our testing weaken us or make us stronger? God finds out what kind of heart we truly have. Though I suspect He already knows. Maybe sometimes WE are the ones who need to find out what kind of heart we truly have.

Maybe we need to be bolder. *“And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 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 6:17-20

Maybe we need to learn not to be ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16, 2 Tim 1:8).

Do we have the confidence and trust in God that we should?

‘So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”’ Hebrews 13:6

God is shaping us into what He sees we CAN be, if we will let Him! What will you be when He is done?

A Round Tuit, 12/10/2022, By Jefferson David Tant



If you are reading this, you are probably wondering what in the world that circle represents. Well, there is a name for it. It's called "A Round Tuit." You may not be familiar with an image with that name, but the title of the circle is a well-known phrase.

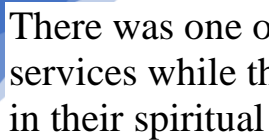
How many times have you been confronted with a task, job, or responsibility, and you delay, delay and delay? And when someone asks why you haven't tended to the matter, your reply is "I'll get around to it later." (I'm not sure what shop you can go to and buy A Round Tuit,)

The truth is, I am sure we have all used that phrase at some time in our lives. It may have had to do with getting our school homework done, getting the yard mowed, getting the house cleaned, getting the car serviced, visiting the sick, etc. We've all been there if we have lived very long on this planet.

And sometimes there is a legitimate reason for the delay. There may be a pressing matter that we face before we can take the car to the shop to have the oil changed. We may need to call the plumber to fix a leak in the kitchen before we go shopping for a birthday present. We may need to go to the hospital to check on a friend who was just taken there in an ambulance before we tend to some other matter.

Then there are other matters that need our attention without excuse. Those matters are spiritual in nature, as Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16).

Too often there are things concerning the Kingdom that we know we need to pay attention to, but for various reasons we put them off, all the while having good intentions that "I'll get around to it" before long. That may be as simple as starting a daily Bible reading schedule or getting back into the practice of faithfully attending church services.



There was one older couple at a church where I was preaching who did not attend services while they were raising their children. In their later years, they were very diligent in their spiritual lives, but not one of their grown children had any spiritual interest.

Then there are young people who intend to be faithful to the Lord when they get older, but they want to enjoy living in the world while they are young. Oh, they are not criminals or evildoers. They just enjoy things of the world that are not compatible with living for Christ. The problem is that too often they become so entangled in the world that Satan has more of an influence on them than Christ does. Or it may be that they die in their youth. Death has no preferences. Accident or disease is not a respecter of persons.

And beyond these matters, another delay may be in talking to my neighbor, my coworker, or my friend about spiritual matters. We all know those who are not Christians, are those who will be lost in the eternal fires of hell if they do not come to know and follow Christ.

What will your answer be if, on the day of Judgment, your lost neighbor, co-worker, or friend should turn to you and say, in the words of the old song, “You never mentioned Him to me, You helped me not the light to see; You met me day by day and knew I was astray, Yet never mentioned Him to me,”

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.’ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (James 4:13-14).

I’m afraid there are too many young people who decide they will enjoy the things of this world while they are young and then will turn to God when they are older. And while some have succeeded at this, too many have put off serving God too long, so that they either become ensnared in the ways of the world or meet an untimely death.

Young reader, please give heed to the admonition of words of ancient wisdom.

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them” (Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:1).

“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:42).

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (The apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:15-16).