

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.01.15

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Caves

Recording:

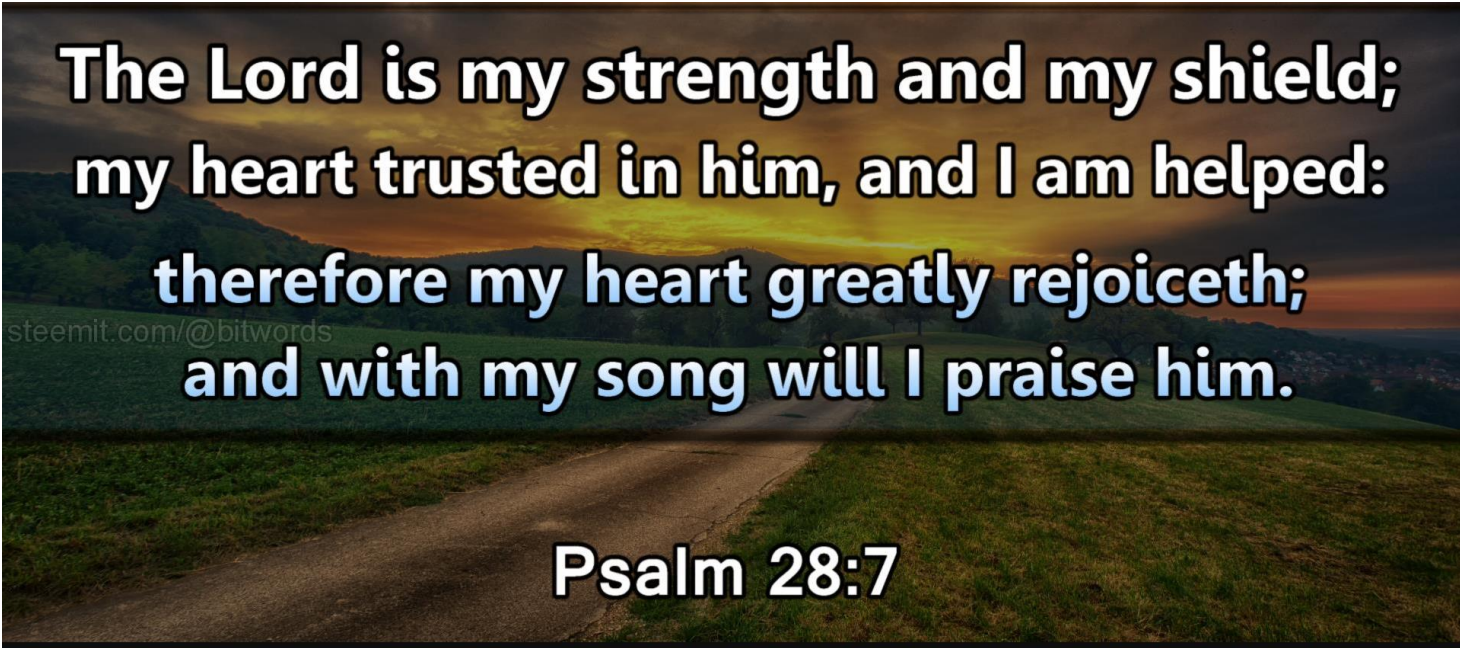
tinyurl.com/JamieCaves

Speaker-PM: Patrick Hite

Title: Becoming More Spiritually Present

Recording:

tinyurl.com/PatrickSpirituallyPresent



**The Lord is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusted in him, and I am helped:
therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;
and with my song will I praise him.**

Psalm 28:7

Reverencing The Name Of God, 1/12/2023, By David Gibson

I once overheard an older woman ask a middle-aged man as he entered the post office, “Are they closed?” “Lord, no!” he said. “They ain’t closed.”

In a Dallas hospital waiting room, several women were passing the time in conversation. One of them mentioned that a certain man they knew was 38. “God Almighty!” one of the other women exclaimed in surprise. Later one of the group said, “O God, yeah, we used to run with each other all the time.”

These remarks are all too typical these days. The use of “God,” “Lord” and variations thereof are so commonplace that hardly anyone seems to think much about it.


That’s the problem. People don’t think. They speak of God without really thinking of Him. God’s name is used not to refer to Him in a proper manner or to appeal to Him in prayer, but His name is employed to express surprise or dismay — and sometimes it is used merely as verbal filler.

How do you suppose God feels about hearing His name being used so trivially and irreverently?

Careless speech often betrays a careless heart. How can we pray, “Hallowed be thy name,” and then misuse His name the next time we feel the need to vent our emotions?

I am indebted to an article on this subject for calling my attention to the following passage: “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and esteem His name” (Malachi 3:16 NASB).

“Holy and awesome is His name” (Psalms 111:9).



Why We Study With Others, 12/19/2019, By Edwin Crozier

Luke 15 shatters a sacred cow. It debunks a myth that I carried with me for a long time and many people I know still hang on to.

It is the myth of “Just me and my Bible.” We like to think we just studied the Bible on our own and figured things out. We like to think we are actually approaching the Bible with a blank slate, and as we sit alone with Scriptures, we are coming to the truth by ourselves. That simply isn’t true.

I became painfully aware of this as I read a book by Mark Allan Powell entitled *What Do They Hear?* He used the Parable of the Prodigal to demonstrate the point. Let’s start with a question: Without reading the text again, what caused the prodigal to be financially destitute?

If you are an American and I was a betting man, I’d bet you said, “He was reckless. He wasted all his father’s money.” After all, isn’t that exactly what it says in Luke 15:13?

However, do you know what most Russians will say? “There was a famine.” Quick, did you know there was a famine? Yep. Luke 15:14 says so. Russians pick up on this because the Povolzhye famine of 1921-22 has left an indelible mark on the psyche of an entire people. We Americans pick up on the reckless living because of the impact of Puritan work ethic and financial responsibility we emphasize.

However, guess how they answer that question in Tanzania. “Because no one gave him anything.” When I first read this in Powell’s book, I thought, “Well, now you’re just making stuff up.” However, look at Luke 15:16. In a historically tribal country where each individual relies on the tribe to help, the fact that no one was there to help the prodigal is what they see.

Here is the point we need to see today. It is never just me and my Bible. It is me, my cultural background, my societal conditioning, all my parents have taught me, what I’ve seen on television and heard on the radio, what my preacher said when I was young, what I have heard from my teachers and classmates, the collective experience of my people, my desires, my presuppositions, my biases, and my Bible. All that together causes me to miss things. It causes me to emphasize things. It causes me to prioritize things. The point, of course, is not that we can’t understand the Bible. The point is we need to read the Bible together. We need to ask what others are seeing and picking up from the text. Then we can go back and read it again. We might even need to ask a Tanzanian what they see in the reading. Of course, the Tanzanian needs to ask an American too. It’s never just me and my Bible, so I need to quit acting like it is. However, the only way to combat that is to keep reading and keeping talking about it with others.