

# Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.07.02

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## Sermon recordings

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**Speaker-AM:** Steve Helterbrand

**Title:** EIS / Unto Salvation

**Recording:**

[tinyurl.com/SteveEis](http://tinyurl.com/SteveEis)

**Speaker-PM:** Kraig Benney

**Title:** Life Of Jesus

**Recording:**

[tinyurl.com/KraigLife](http://tinyurl.com/KraigLife)

*16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

*King James Version*

# Romans 1:16



THEN SPAKE JESUS AGAIN UNTO THEM, SAYING,  
I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: HE THAT  
FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS,  
BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

- JOHN 8:12 (KJV) -

## Support the Weak, 7/1/2023 by Mike Johnson

Paul closes the book of I Thessalonians with some very important and practical exhortations. In I Thessalonians 5:14, he "exhorts" (NASB — "urge") the brethren to, among other things, "uphold the weak."

Christians have a responsibility to "uphold the weak." The weak are those who are spiritually weak. Most churches have those who are immature, and they need to be "upheld." The fact they are to be "upheld" does not mean we are to uphold these individuals when they are wrong, nor does it mean we are to make excuses for them. Instead, we are to "help" (NASB) them spiritually. We are to do things for them that will help them to increase their spiritual strength.

Churches having immature members is not necessarily a bad sign, any more than it would be to say that some families have physically weak members. Children, for example, are physically weak family members, yet having children in a family is not maligning. Churches also might have immature members for various legitimate and acceptable reasons. One converted to Christ, for example, usually will lack strength at first. It is a good sign when a congregation has many new converts because it shows the church has been bringing people to Christ—they have been working. The Bible refers to immature Christians as "babes" in Christ who are on the milk of the word. I Peter 2:2 says, "... as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." It takes time for the new Christian, the babe in Christ, to grow into a mature Christian.

Those who are new Christians are weak and need help. An infant is not left by his parents to feed, clothe, and care for himself; neither should the new Christian be left to himself spiritually. Matthew 28:18-20 records the Great Commission given by Jesus. The commandments are to "teach," "baptize," and then "continue to teach." However, often, we do not continue to work with the new Christian. We need to encourage them, continue to teach them, listen to their problems, and advise them. Frequently this does not happen as the new Christian is by himself to face the temptations of the world without teaching and encouragement. Soon, he may miss some services, and he eventually falters. At this point, many excuse themselves by saying, "Well, I figured he wouldn't last; he probably never was truly converted, to begin with."

While some are spiritually weak because they are new Christians, others may be weak because they have not made an effort to grow. These have had plenty of time to grow, but they have not. In Hebrews 5:12, we read of certain ones who should have become teachers, but instead, it says, ". . . For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food." These people need teaching; they need the first principles again; they need to be encouraged to have zeal and to grow — they have gone backward.

All Christians need to "uphold" (help) the weak. We should have concern for others. In conclusion, Philippians 2:4 states this important principle "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."



## Sullen and Vexed, 6/27/23 by Matthew W. Bassford

The Israelite king Ahab is one of the most complex characters in the Bible. He isn't a straightforward villain like Sisera or Caiaphas. There is good in him. When Elijah confronts him over the judicial murder of Naboth in I Kings 21, he repents and humbles himself.

However, Ahab is doomed by two fatal flaws. First, he is a weak man married to a strong, evil woman, the Sidonian princess Jezebel, and she drags him into all sorts of trouble. Killing Naboth was her idea, not his.

Second, he usually responds negatively to godly correction. When Elijah and other prophets come to him with unpleasant spiritual truths, he takes the criticism personally instead of taking it to heart. He doesn't view the prophets as friends who are trying to help him. Instead, he considers them enemies.

His encounter with a prophet at the end of I Kings 20 epitomizes the problem. Here, the prophet tells him that he is going to lose his own life because he spared the life of the Syrian king Ben-Hadad. When similarly confronted with sin in II Samuel 12, the great King David repents immediately, leading God to spare his life instead.

It is not so with Ahab. He doesn't brush off the warning like the foolish monarch Jehoiakim, but neither does he try to make amends with God. Rather, in the words of I Kings 20:43, he goes to his house sullen and vexed.

God is very patient with Ahab, giving him chance after chance rather than destroying him. However, this patience is wasted on the childish king. Ahab's lack of moral courage ultimately leads to his death and the destruction of his entire house.

The devil would love nothing more than for us to walk in the footsteps of Ahab. Indeed, the temptation to be like him is present in all of us. None of us enjoy correction. None of us like having our sins pointed out. All of us are inclined to take it personally. It's easy for us to regard those who tell us things we don't want to hear, whether a preacher, a loved one, or a friend, as our enemies.

However, rising above these ungodly impulses can make a heaven-and-hell difference in our lives. The problem is that all of us are very good at lying to ourselves about our sins and our spiritual condition. We prefer to believe that we are fine just the way we are, and most people will go on believing that all the way to destruction.

Thus, it often is easier for others to see and diagnose our problems than for us to do so. When someone comes to us, we must learn to check our egos and honestly consider their painful words. Then, we must be strong enough to make needed changes in our lives, especially when those changes are painful and difficult.

It's easy to be an Ahab. It's easy to respond to rebuke by becoming sullen and vexed. However, the easy path leads only to disaster. Instead, we must take the wise words of David in Psalms 141:5 to be our own. There, he says, "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it ..." Let our heads not refuse it either.