

# Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.07.09

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## Sermon recordings

Click or type the short URL, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Recordings/.

**Speaker-AM:** Josh Vinyard

**Title:** Testing Our Prayer

**Recording:**

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

**Speaker-PM:** Nate Vick

**Title:** Ezekiel 22-25

**Recording:**

*Unavailable*



**My help comes from the  
Lord, the Maker of heaven  
and earth. - Psalm 121:2**

## **Ezekiel 23:37**

King James Version

That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.

### Outside the Camp – 7/9/2023, By Isaac Helterbrand

Christians have a choice to make every single day. Each morning we are offered the everlasting love of God and the passing pleasures of sin and we must choose between the two. Depending on their environment, this choice can be quite difficult for a lot of people, but giving up worldly things in favor of Godly things is absolutely necessary if we want to follow the Lord and make it to heaven. Jesus told His disciples, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

Have you considered your standing with the world? Do worldly friends find that you are different from them? Do your work acquaintances get frustrated because of the things you will not do and will not say? Or are they perfectly accepting of you? Do you fit in? It is possible that if you fit in very well with people you know to be worldly, that it’s time to take a step back and evaluate if you are living righteously. The world hated Jesus. The Hebrew writer explains the reproach that Christ endured by likening His sacrifice to those that the Jews made.

“For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.” (Hebrews 13:11-14)


Our savior suffered outside the camp and endured the hatred of those around Him so we might have hope. If we forsake His righteousness and cling to parts of ourselves and parts of our lives that attach us to the world, we reject the sacrifice that He made for us. Rather, we should remove ourselves from worldliness, bear Christ’s reproach, and set our sights on the world that is to come, heaven! Paul said in Romans 12:2,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

James echoes Paul with the following,

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

We must rid ourselves of worldliness and desire to be like Christ! Different from the world, set apart from sin, as holy and as righteous as we can be. Go forth to Jesus, outside the camp.



## A Bronze Serpent, 7/9/2023, By Sam Bunyard

Under the reign of King Hezekiah great reforms were put in motion to expel the stain of idolatry that had become normal practice in Judah, and to restore proper worship practice to the one true God. The first step towards true worship was to destroy the places and items associated with idolatry. Hezekiah “removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan” (II Ki. 18:4).

This bronze serpent that Judah had made into an idol was intended by God to be a blessing to them. As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, they began to complain, “so the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people died” (Num. 21:6). Upon the peoples’ repentance, Moses was told to construct a bronze serpent and to lift it high upon a pole. God said, “it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live” (Num. 21:8).

Even beyond the physical healing of those Israelites who repented of their complaining, the bronze serpent had a deeper, much more important spiritual lesson to teach as well. Jesus told Nicodemus, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:14-15).

Good was intended by God in giving this serpent, but His people chose to use it for evil. Is it possible that we may sometimes misuse the blessings that God bestows on us for selfish or even idolatrous purposes? We should be thankful to God for our blessings – every good and perfect thing comes from Him (Jas. 1:17)! But we must keep them in their proper place!