

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.12.31

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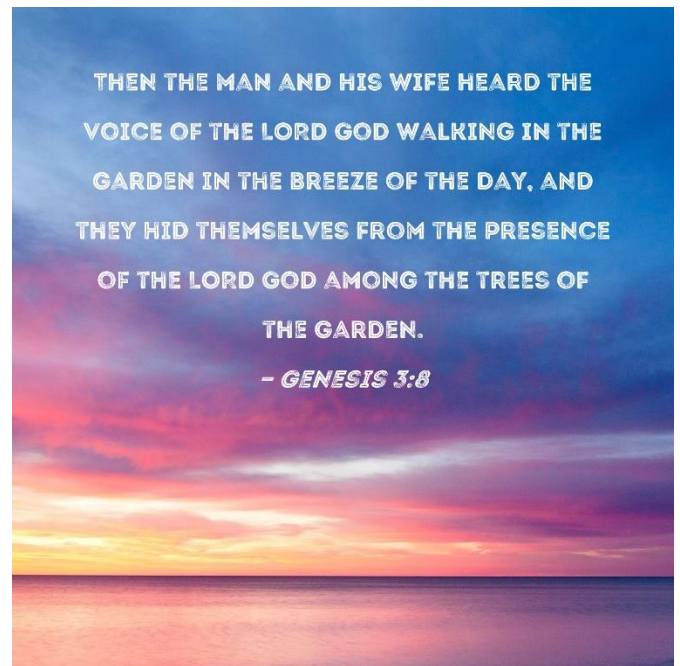
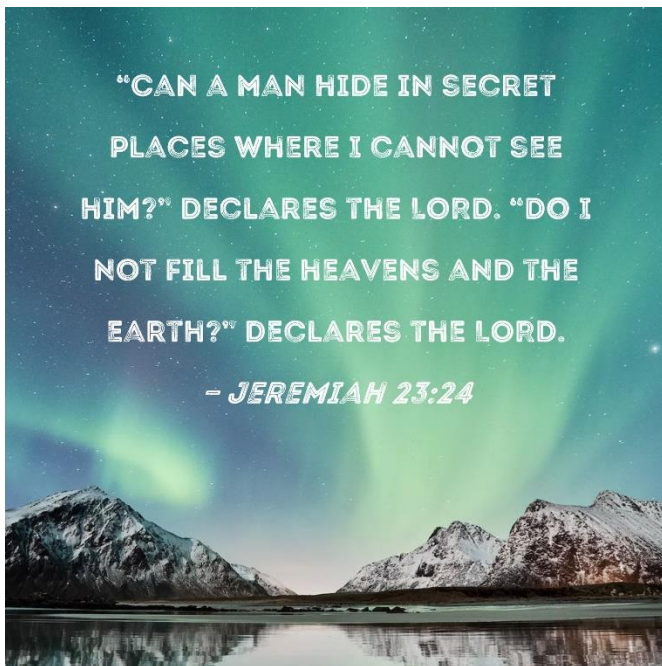
Click or type the short URL, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Sermons.

Speaker-AM: Patrick Hite

Title: Hiding From God

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/hiding-from-god



Truth And Reason, 12/28/23 By Sam Bunyard

“Having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come, that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles” (Ac. 26:22-23).

This was Paul’s bold conclusion as he preached the gospel to Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice. Paul’s preaching was amusing to Festus, who yelled out, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad” (Ac. 26:24)! The preaching may have been entertainment for Festus, but for Paul it was no joking matter. He turned his focus to Agrippa, who would have had knowledge of the Old Testament.

Paul replied, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe” (Ac. 26:25-27).

Paul was not arguing from blind faith. His preaching was based in truth and reason, founded on the word of God. A logical analysis of the Old Testament lined up perfectly with Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus (Ac. 9). It was perfectly reasonable to conclude that Jesus had fulfilled the law and the prophets, an incredible claim! It was by logical reasoning that Paul was convinced of the gospel, and he used logical argument to persuade others.

Agrippa responded to Paul’s appeal, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian” (Ac. 26:28). The gospel is reasonable. If we study it honestly it will convict us – if we present it logically we will persuade others!

The Wrong Definition of Growth, 12/28/2023 by Paul K. Williams (deceased)

John Cripps asked an elder in the United States why the church where he was a member was growing. He replied, "When we stopped pounding the pulpit on the issues we started to grow." The elder also said that the elders were divided on the subject of divorce and remarriage, so they don't teach about that. They let each member make up his own mind on that subject.

An elder's wife wrote me, "_____ preached a hard-hitting lesson yesterday morning on marriage in preparation for the withdrawal of one of our brethren who has entered into an adulterous marriage. A few of the brethren are struggling with this. Weak brethren would like to live and let live when it comes to sin. Sad."

Question: Is that church going to stop growing?

But where will this attitude lead? My grandson, Nathan, told me that a few years ago a friend of his preached for a church in Los Angeles. The elders invited him to move there and work with them, but they said, "You must agree not to preach against abortion."

Contrast that with the attitude of Paul, the apostle. He said to the elders of the church at Ephesus:

"You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:18-20).

And heed what Paul wrote to Timothy:

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:1-5).

When Jesus wrote to the seven churches of Asia, saying that He knew their works, He did not write one thing about whether a church was growing in number. He wrote a great deal about their faithfulness, or lack of faithfulness, in life and doctrine.

Could it be that many of us have the wrong definition of success? Let us not measure ourselves by ourselves but by the word of God.