

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2024.04.21

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Brad Bunyard

Title: The Best Defense

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/the-best-defense

Speaker-PM: Kraig Benney

Title: What About the Old Law?

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/what-about-the-old-law



The law of the LORD is perfect,
converting the soul:
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple.

Psalms 19:7

Articles

What Exalts a Nation, 4/21/2024 By Sam Bunyard

The lesser of two evils cannot exalt a nation – only righteousness can do that (Pr. 14:34)! Likewise, public policy is not the problem our nation faces. Disgraceful policy is just a symptom of a nation full of sinful hearts (Pr. 14:34)!

The answers to our problems cannot be found in the philosophies of man, but only in the plan of God. God's plan cannot be enacted man's way! It must be done God's way. King Josiah did his best to legislate morality (II Ch. 34:33), but when he eventually put politics over God and died (35:20-24), the people went right back to their wickedness! It is not only good actions that matter, but even the motivation behind them.

Even if there is a candidate that can be considered righteous, like Josiah, faith in him is vain! "Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Ps. 146:3-5)! When we adopt a spiritual worldview, it seems foolish to spend time investing in a man whose work will all be undone shortly after he leaves office. Rather, we should invest in the kingdom of which we are a part in Christ (Ph. 3:20)!

Throughout the Bible, bad rulers were clearly described as punishment for the overall wickedness of a nation (I Sam. 8; Hb. 1:6; Jer. 51:20-23; Isa. 10:5-7). When governments are oppressive, it is not the Republicans or the Democrats who are to blame – it is sin! And the solution is not a worldly political activism – it is evangelism!

"...if my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (II Chr. 7:14).

Spiritism versus Spirituality, April 21, 2024 by Terry Wane Benton

Spiritism is occultic, feeling and mood-based, and imagination-based, whereas “spirituality” is revelation and scripture-based. Those who are truly “spiritual” will acknowledge that the things Paul wrote are the commandments of the Lord (I Corinthians 14:35f). Spiritism is trying to contact the dead, spirit world through imagination and feeling-based seances. Here, you try to call up spirits from the realm of the dead and to do that; you have to set the tone for the mind to get in tune with the imagination of spirits making contact. This is the way of incantations, trance-like states. African tribal dances were mood-setting efforts to contact the spirit world. That is “spiritism,” and many involved in that culture of thought transferred that way of thinking to a mixture of the gospel, only imagining that this is the way of making contact with the Holy Spirit of God. They mixed their pagan occultism or spiritism with the gospel and now transferred feeling-based spiritism to imagining contact with the Holy Spirit of God. This is the foundation of Pentecostalism. Modern Pentecostal churches got their feelings from occultic feelings now wrapped in imaginations that they are being “moved by the Holy Spirit.” Much of what we see today is imagination confused with spirituality (revelation-based). Some settle for a mixture of imagination and revelation (the scriptures), but imagination wins over revelation when there is a conflict between scripture and feeling.

Examples of imagination-based religions are seen in many TV evangelists' health and wealth gospels. Oral Roberts imagined that God had revealed a special message to him, and he “felt” that it had led to an appeal to the masses to help him build a hospital in Oklahoma that would cure cancer. There was an imaginary vision of a huge, 900-foot-tall Jesus involved in his self-deception. People were suckered into the scheme that did not pan out as a cure for cancer. Roberts was deceived by his occultic spiritism, which he wrongly thought was communication from God. Jim Jones deceived hundreds into following him into South America and formed what he called “the People’s Temple.” Nine hundred people followed him to their death, drinking poison per his instructions, because the power of imagination and feeling trumps the actual revelation of scriptures, the Bible. Had people understood the difference between true “spirituality” (Bible-based revelation) and “spiritism” (imagination and feeling-based direction), many lives would have been saved, and none would have been exploited because of such ignorance.

People today are often heard to say, “I’m feeling the Spirit move,” as they imagine this is the way the Holy Spirit of God communicates to us. Joseph Smith created the Book of Mormon and other so-called “revelations” through such a feeling-based imagination. When you talk to Mormon “elders” today about proof of the Book of Mormon, they will often appeal to you to accept their claim based on feeling and imagination. Beth Moore often uses phrases about being “moved” by the Spirit. It is a culture of thought based upon spiritism but is far from the spirituality that lets the commandments revealed in scripture have the upper hand.

Spirituality acknowledges that the final authority is what the scriptures say and imply (I Corinthians 14:33-36). Nothing trumps the authority of the scriptures. In spiritism, nothing trumps the feelings directed by imagination. When one imagines that the Holy Spirit is guiding them, it does not matter if the Scriptures contradict the doctrine or practice. The Holy Spirit sends signals through their feelings and imagination, which will always trump the Scriptures.

Is your faith based on feelings and imagination? Or do you stand firmly in the tested and proven revelation of the sacred Scriptures? One way is “spiritism,” and the other is true spirituality. The real spiritual followers of Jesus know the difference. Deceived people feel their way into a perversion, while spiritual people study their way into solid truth (John 8:31,32; Acts 17:11) and build their spiritual house on the rock (Matthew 7:21ff). Are you spiritual? Or a mere spiritist?