

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2025.08.24

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Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Work To Be done

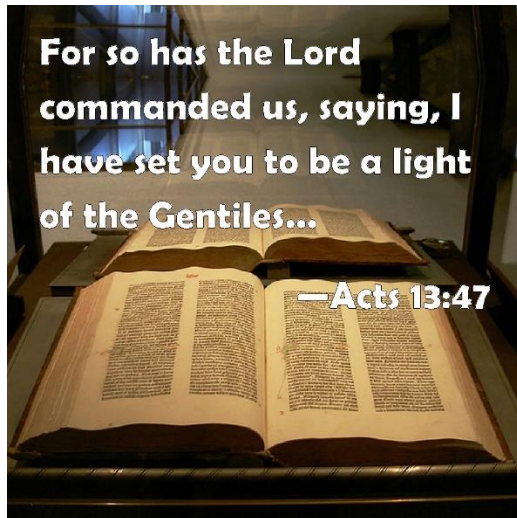
Recording:



Speaker-PM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Citizens Not of This World

Recording:



Philippians 3:20-21

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Fellowship with Christians 8/17/2025 By Josh Vinyard

There is a story or a legend about a preacher visiting the house of a member who had not been to worship services in some time. The preacher walked in without saying much of anything and went and sat down by the fire. He took the tongs and pulled out a coal and sat it on the fireplace. Both men watched as the coal lost its fire, got cold, and turned gray again. The preacher then picked up the tongs, gently grabbed the coal, and put it back in the fire. Both men sat there and watched it start to glow and get hot again. The preacher then gets up and the man nods his head and says, "I will be at church the next Sunday."

In Matthew 24, Jesus leaves the temple, and He uses this chance to teach His disciples how dark and awful the world would be when the city of Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. He left them with a warning that there would be some whose "**love will become cold**" because of all that bad stuff going on around them (vs. 12).

We should understand that it doesn't really matter what the darkness is for us in our lives that makes us cold toward the Lord and His people. For us, it could be the darkness of this world like it was for them. It is easy for us to be discouraged by a world that is trying to destroy itself. It could even be that the cares of this world have choked out our love (Mark 4:18-19). It could be darkness brought on by our own choices and our own sins (John 3:19-20). Maybe it is that our allegiance to our family is greater than our allegiance to God (Matt. 10:34-36). It could be that we just think we don't need anyone else, and we can do this on our own (see Prov. 18:1). Perhaps, we just feel like we are the only ones going through hard things (1 Peter 5).

Maybe, we just don't play well with others. We are like little kids who have a hard time having "fellowship" with other kids. It's just easier to play alone. You mean I must share my stuff with other "kids?" You mean I must be fun to play with? You mean I must play with "kids" who don't even play like I have been taught to play? God requires us to outgrow childish things and move on to maturity (1 Cor. 13:11).

Have we allowed our love to grow cold? If so, it is likely that our fellowship with other Christians is not what God would want it to be.

Do we avoid fellowship? Do we only show up on Sunday to take a hit of the Lord's Supper? Do we really want to be with the people of God? Is it hard for us to show up early for Bible study on the Lord's Day? Are two whole hours just too much to ask? Is it easy for us to miss the Sunday evening service? When Christians get together at other times in the week, do we make a real effort to meet with them? If the answer is no to most of those, the dark world is overcoming us. We are losing the battle. Our love is losing its heat.

How do we get back in the fire? How do we get warm again?

When we practice fellowship (coming together/putting ourselves together) with people on a large scale with the assembly or a smaller scale in people's homes, or joint participation with each other, it fuels us.

The Hebrew writer teaches us, "**Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let's approach God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.**"

After we confess that Jesus is our high priest (vs 21), we must hold fast to Him and to each other. The NKJV translates verse 24 this way, "And let us consider one another in order to **stir up** love and good works."

That sounds like it's stirring up fire. Have you ever taken a stick and moved around the coals of the fire and watched it burn hot again? Have you ever taken those dark coals on the outside and pushed them back into the middle where the fire and heat are?

Fellowship helps keep us burning hot. It teaches us that we are not the center of the universe (Philippians 2:1-4). If you want to learn to see others as more important than you are, go find your brethren when they are together.

Fellowship will help us keep each other sharp and work for the Lord. "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend (Prov. 27:17). Christians are to sharpen each other. Stay alone and you are in danger of getting dull.

Fellowship makes us more compassionate and empathetic (Romans 12:15).

Fellowship is valuable. When we come together and participate in godly things together, we are participating in things that are important. They are the forever or eternally important things; both to us and to others who we help keep hot for the Lord.

If I can't figure out how to make being together with you important in this world, right now, do I have the type of heart that will make me a part of the tribe of every nation that will be TOGETHER around God's throne for all eternity (Revelation 7)?

I'm sorry if this short study about fellowship seems "cold-hearted," but I think you now know how to start getting rid of that lukewarmness (Rev. 3:16).