

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.01.08

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Robbie Moreland

Title: Things Not in The Bible

Recording:

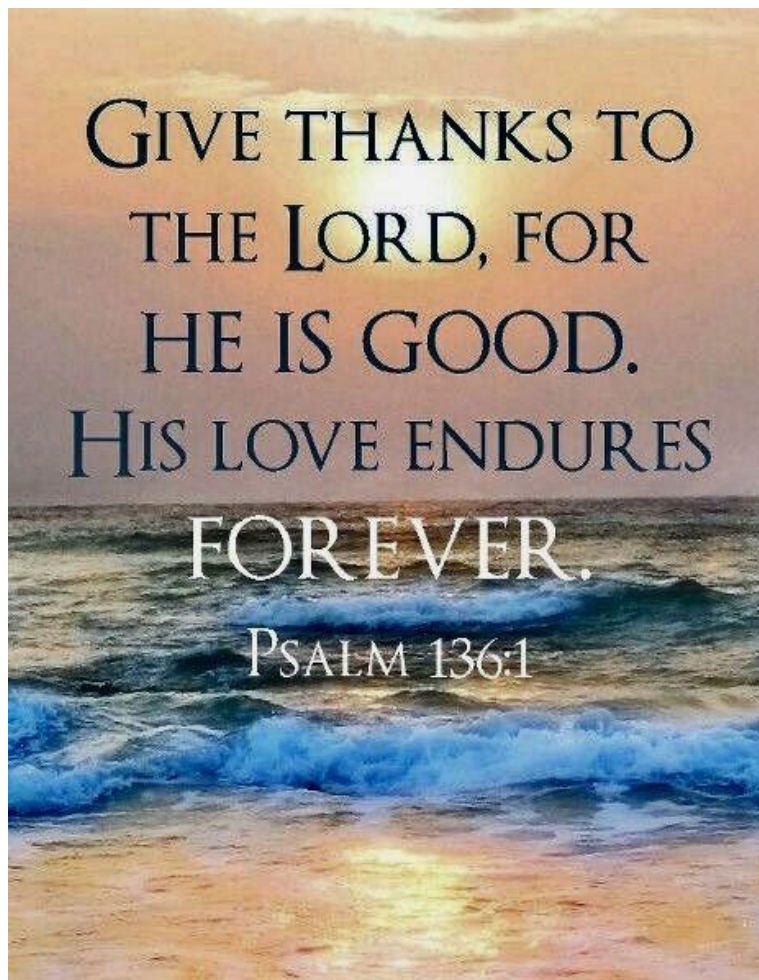
tinyurl.com/RobBible

Speaker-PM: Tyler Glidden

Title: Psalm 139

Recording:

tinyurl.com/TylerPsalm136





Articles

When it Rains it Pours, 1/8/2023, by Hayden Cathey

This famous colloquialism is often used by those who are experiencing misfortune after misfortune. It is one many can relate to; everyone has their own day in which it pours. That applies to the characters of the Bible as well, with the author of Lamentations being one of the most notable in Scripture to be stuck in a downpour. He writes in Lamentations 3.1-3, "I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the Lord's wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light, indeed He has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long."

Intense, I know, but there are days when we feel much like him. And if you haven't been through a day like that yet, trust me you will. If you feel hopeless, feeling as though misfortune and evil are raining down around you, just remember that you're not alone.

Strong men of God, men who wrote the word of God themselves, felt that way too. And in your day of distress, in your hour of trouble, remember one other thing; remember who is in control. The author of Lamentations notes towards the end of his book in Lamentations 5.19, "You Lord, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation." Through his duress, the author of Lamentations never forgets who is in control: our God. Pray that in your life, when it rains, when it pours, that you remember you are not alone; and more importantly, remember who is in control.

Checkers and Chess, 1/8/2023, By Sam Bunyard

Checkers is a simple game. All the pieces move the same way until they are 'kinged' when they reach the opposite side of the board. Chess takes a lot more brain power – patience, strategy and thinking several moves ahead. Both games have some things in common but differ in rules and difficulty. Checkers is much easier to grasp.

Sometimes, when we are living out Christ's teachings, there are works that we shun because they may bring complexity into our lives. There are simpler things we can do, so we neglect the hard stuff. We favor checkers over chess. Other times, the thought of failure or mediocrity in the difficult work of the kingdom may scare us off from working for God all together! We are so afraid of failing at chess, we don't even want to play checkers!

Such mindsets remind me of the parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30). Sometimes we may be bold and confident. We may have the wherewithal to take on the adversary in a game of chess. In these situations, we may be given five talents to use. Other times we may lack the confidence necessary to play chess, but still have the ability to play checkers. In these situations, we may be given two talents to utilize for God. Or we may be so afraid to lose that we don't even try to play the game! In these times, we are refusing to invest what we have been given by God to use for His glory!

The talents God gives us in life are not static. We have the opportunity to grow into servants who are more capable stewards than we have been. We may not be very good at chess yet, but in the meantime, let's play some checkers!

Is Everything That Happens God's Will?, 11/25/2014, By Gardner Hall

After the death of a child, a horrible mishap, or any other tragedy there are always some who say, "It was the will of God." Is that statement always true?

It Depends!

- Yes... It is the will of God to permit tragedies and trials. Everything that happens is permitted by him.
- No... However, God doesn't want everything He permits! There is a subtle but important difference between *permitting* something and *wanting it to happen!*

Illustrations

God...

- ... did not want the ancient Israelites to divorce, but he permitted it because of the hardness of their hearts ([Matthew 19:8](#)).
- ... did not want ancient people to have more than one wife ([Gen. 2:24](#)), but regulated it when Israel was a primitive society ([Deuteronomy 21:15-17](#))
- ... did not want Israel to have a king ([II Samuel 10:17-19](#)), but tolerated it and even had his prophets anoint them.
- ... does not want anyone to rebel against Him and be lost ([II Peter 3:9](#)), and yet gives men the free will to do it.

Often Christian parents will allow their teenage children to do something that they don't necessarily want them to do so that they will learn to face the consequences of their actions.

I can think of two Biblical reasons why God allows things to happen that He doesn't necessarily want:

1. He wants to give us free will ([Deuteronomy 30:15-19](#)). He wants us to have the freedom to choose. He doesn't want us to make bad choices but He allows them.
2. He allows tragedies because He doesn't want us to become too attached to this world that has become corrupted by sin. Rather, He wants us to prove our love by learning to deal with trials and then have eternal life with Him ([II Corinthians 4:17](#)).

Be Careful with Our Words!

Whenever a child dies or someone suffers horribly, we must be careful before saying, "God wants this." Yes, God allows trials and tragedies, as in the case of Job, but that doesn't mean that He wants them. When we suffer, let's blame Satan and the curses that come upon our world because of sin. Let's never blame God!