



Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.03.13

Website: oakgrovecofc.org

Facebook: facebook.com/oakgrovecofc

Sermon recordings

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

Speaker-AM: Rob Moreland

Title: Song Origins

Recording:

tinyurl.com/RobSongOrigins

Speaker-PM: Brad Bunyard

Title: Pharisee And Tax Collector

Recording:

tinyurl.com/BradPharisee

Jesus replied,
"What is impossible with man
is possible with God."

Luke 18:27

Longing For Home, 2/18/2021 By Jefferson David Tant

Have you ever been gone from home on a long journey? Often there comes a time when you long for home. My wife, Flora, and I have been on many journeys through the years in taking the Good News about Jesus Christ to nations far and near. And there are moments when there is a longing in our hearts, a longing for home. And now that we are in our ninth decade of life, there is a yearning for a home far away. Oh, we have always wanted to go to heaven, and hopefully have lived in such a way that the door will be open for us when we cross the divide. But as the day of our departure draws nearer, that longing becomes more real.

At this particular time in our nation's history, with the madness and turmoil that is in the news day after day, that certainly has the effect of creating within the hearts of many a longing for home, a home far away from violence and mayhem, that God has prepared. The writer of Hebrews named various ones who have gone before us, and wrote that...

"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them" ([Hebrews 11:13-16](#)).

Won't it be wonderful to come face to face with Jesus, the very one who endured a cruel death to make it possible for us to be in heaven? And to talk with Abraham and Sarah, and Esther, Paul, John, Ruth, Mary, and countless others who have gone before us. I am thankful that for my wife and myself, we have the hope of seeing our beloved parents, the very ones who taught us how to live so that we might come to that place that John Clements described in the song "No Night There." "In the land of fadeless day, Lies the city foursquare. It shall never pass away, And there is no night there. God shall wipe away all tears; There's no death, no pain, nor fears; And they count not time by years, For there is no night there."

And in the words of another familiar song, Robert Arnold wrote: "No tears in heaven, no sorrows given, All will be glory in that land;... There'll be no sadness, all will be gladness, When we shall join that happy band..."

Dear Reader, for what do you live? Do you live only for today, or do you live for the future? Please understand that the day of our departure will come. Death comes to the young and the old alike. We know neither the day nor the hour, nor by reason of accident, disease, or age. But it will come. If you are not ready, please make ready, even today. Your most treasured possession, your eternal soul, is at stake.



Lukewarmness, 10/31/2022 By Matthew Bassford

Lukewarmness among the people of God is hardly a new problem. Malachi warned against apathy explicitly, and signs of apathy are evident as far back as the Exodus. Unsurprisingly, preachers today also often warn their hearers about the dangers of indifference.

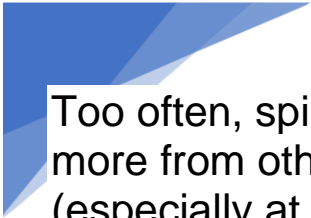
I read one such warning recently, and it led me to consider my own heart. I searched for signs of lukewarmness, and I found none. I still have plenty of spiritual problems, but a lack of emotional commitment to God is not on the list. I am blessed to be a member of a congregation with good preaching and good singing, but even if the preaching were amateurish and the singing cringeworthy, I would be determined to assemble faithfully for as long as I was physically capable of so doing.

My motivation is simple just as my life is simple. Thanks to ALS, I have no options remaining but to trust in Jesus. He is the branch that can keep me from going over the cliff. Without Him, I am utterly ruined and hopeless.

These are familiar sentiments. We sing many hymns about our need for Christ and our helplessness without Him. The problem is that while we give intellectual assent to these concepts, we don't really get them. I know I didn't before my diagnosis. It's the difference between the abstract acknowledgment that seatbelts save lives and the realization that your seatbelt just kept you from being launched into the path of an oncoming eighteen-wheeler.

Such abstraction provides fertile soil for the growth of indifference. The less we gut-get our absolute need for Jesus, the more likely we are to be apathetic in our worship and service.

I was pretty impressed with myself for figuring this out until I realized that the apostle John had gotten there 2000 years before I did. In [Revelation 3:18](#), he rebukes the Laodiceans, "For you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked." Their lukewarmness started with their conviction of self-sufficiency.



Too often, spiritual apathy leads us to expect less of ourselves and demand more from others. On the one hand, it excuses our sporadic attendance (especially at Bible class), tolerance of sin, and halfhearted worship and service. On the other, it leads us to find fault in the contributions of others. We would attend more if only the preaching were more interesting. We would have had an easier time worshiping if only the song leader chose our favorites. We would associate more with Christians instead of the worldly friends who are dragging us off to destruction if only the Christians made a special effort to include us. All this is to say nothing of how much better things would be if only the elders listened to us!

Thoughts like these are not an excuse for complaining or bad behavior. Instead, they are an urgent call to examine our own hearts. We do not fuss over details when we are rock-solid convinced that Christ is all that stands between us and eternal damnation. When we've had a massive heart attack and are on the way to the Emergency Room in an ambulance, we do not grumble that the paramedic has bad breath!

Instead, we start griping when we believe that we are in control and the other is dependent on us. We have no problem sending back an overcooked steak at a restaurant because we know the manager is afraid of losing our business, so he will accommodate us. He needs us more than we need him.

So too with a lukewarm, exacting attitude toward the things of God. The assembly is not a product, and Christians are not consumers. It is not the job of the elders, the worship leaders, or our brethren to cater to our every whim, to make sure that everything is just so before we deign to become emotionally involved. We are wretched supplicants before the throne of the great King, and we need to act like it.

If we find Christianity tiresome, we have no one to blame but ourselves. The issue is not that some Christians need God more than others; it is that some acknowledge that need more than others. The cure for the disease is not everybody else getting their act together; it is time spent in meditation and prayer about our desperate need for Christ and how much He has done for us. When we recognize the magnitude of our debt to Him, the imperfection of others can neither stifle our devotion nor prevent us from expressing it.