

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.12.17

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Matthew 24

Recording:

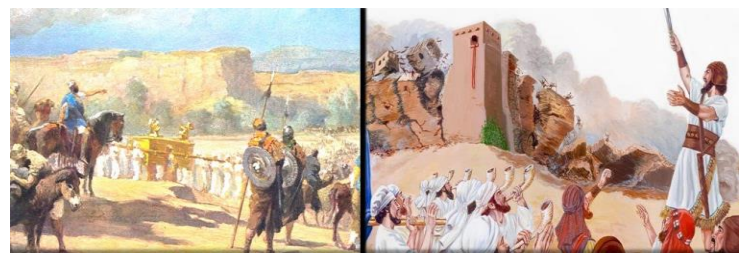
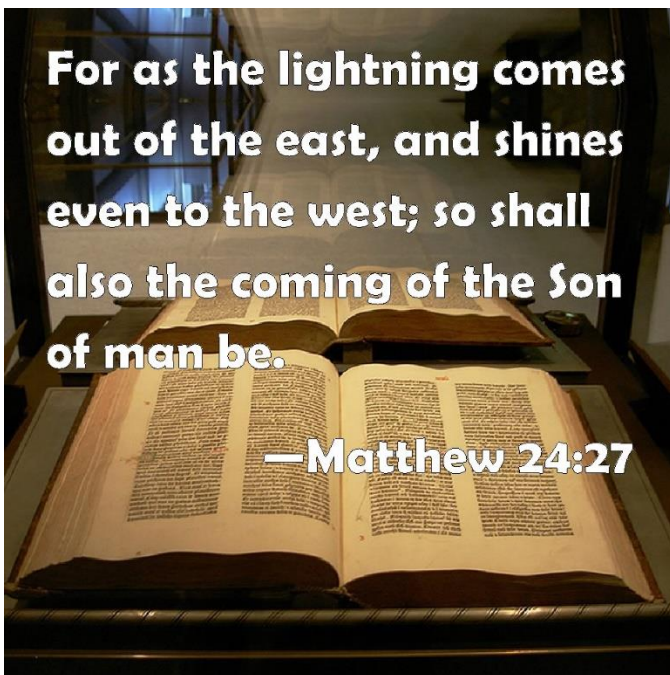
oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/matthew24

Speaker-PM: Tyler Glidden

Title: Battle Of Jericho

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/battle-of-gericho



Joshua 6 "The Battle of Jericho"

1. The LORD gives the plan (v.1-5)
2. The march for six days (v.6-14)
3. The seventh day march (v.15-21)
4. Faith and obedience wins (v.22-27)

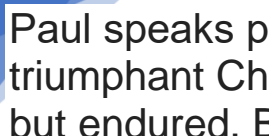
Death Is Yours! 12/15/23, by Paul Earnhart, Christianity Magazine

Solomon warns of the folly of building life on youth because it slips away like the morning mist and the once vital body turns frail and slips its earthly moorings (Ecclesiastes 11:9 to 12:7).

I remember my first intimate contact with death. As a young and largely untried gospel preacher, I was called to the bedside of an aged brother who was breathing out his last. In spite of my youthful inexperience his wife and daughter wanted me to share their painful vigil. Perhaps it was intended more for my good than theirs. James Wilson had not been “noted” among the saints. He was a man short of stature and quiet of way, but his way had been a godly life of reverent faithfulness and his wife and daughter shared his earnest faith. Their grief was quiet. He had prepared for this departure and was dying at home where he had lived and with those he loved around him. We sat and watched his already comatose body, the once ruddy skin now turned taunt and sallow. His daughter in some final gestures of love rose frequently to wipe away the cold sweat that formed on his motionless face. His shallow breathing became increasingly irregular until finally, with a few widely spaced gasps, he was gone.

As deaths go it was a quiet and gentle passing and yet there was nothing beautiful about it. There was beauty in the faith and character of this good man, but death at its best is ugly. The light just goes out of a face and body that once sparkled with vitality and love. And I have lived long enough to learn that not all die with such ease as brother Wilson. Often the body is so ravaged by disease or calamity that life ends amidst almost unbearable pain. Death may be many things to humankind but it is no friend!

Death is at the heart of that “vanity” to which God subjected the world (Romans 8:20) because of the rebellion of our first parents (Genesis 3:17–19). By one means or another, we are all headed for the dust.



Paul speaks plainly of death as “the last enemy that will be destroyed” by the triumphant Christ (I Corinthians 15:25–26). It is not something to be embraced but endured. By the power of Christ, death, like all other painful things, can become the instrument of blessing (Romans 8:28). Paul saw it, like life, as a means of magnifying Christ (Philippians 1:20).

But if death is an enemy, it is an enemy that has been disarmed in the risen Lord. That does not mean that God removes it (Hebrews 9:27) or extracts its pain and grief, but it does mean that death no longer holds us in terror (Hebrews 2:14–15) and that our grief is not hopeless (I Thessalonians 4:13). And this is true not because death has been transformed into something good and beautiful, but because it is a defeated enemy!

There are some remarkable statements in the New Testament that affirm this. Paul writes to the Corinthians that “All things are yours” and specifically mentions “death” (I Corinthians 3:21–22). Death cannot defeat us. In perhaps the most triumphant chapter in the New Testament the apostle writes confidently that “neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

Why is this true? Because He has promised never to leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5–6). This is what David knew when he wrote, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For you are with me ...” (Psalm 23:4). The “Light of the World” is not quenched by the valley of the shadow and will be shining even there. The reason? He is the one who said, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore and have the keys of death and Hades” (Revelation 1:17–18).

Because of Jesus, death cannot steal our true treasure (Matthew 6:20). Our relationship with Him will transcend death (Romans 8:35) and nothing that we invest in the kingdom of God will be lost (I Corinthians 15:58). Every relationship in Him will be secure. And therefore, like Paul, we also stand unafraid beside our resplendent, risen Lord and hurl this taunt into death’s teeth: “O Death, where is your sting: O Hades, where is your victory?” (I Corinthians 15:55). Come and do your worst. The Lord we serve “has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Timothy 1:10). Even so. Amen.