

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2024.07.14

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Ethiopian Eunuch and Principles of Our Beliefs

Recording:

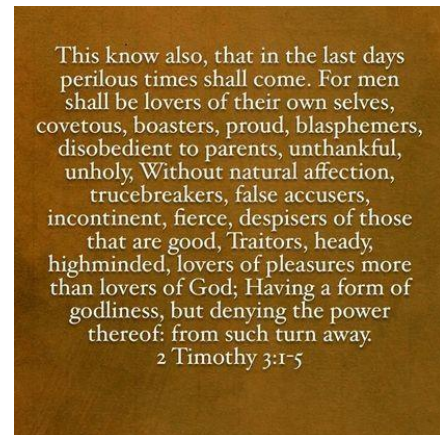
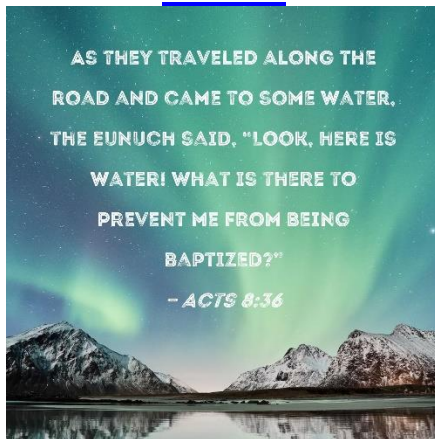
oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/ethiopian-eunuch-and-principles-of-our-beliefs

Speaker-PM: Patrick Hite

Title: Overcoming

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/perilous-times



Free Gift, 7/10/2024 by Terry Wane Benton

Some teach that “there are no conditions for salvation” because it is a “free gift.” But free gifts can have conditions for reception. I can put a free gift in the trunk of my car and tell you that if you take my keys and get it, you will have it. Look at the conditions for having the free gift. Taking my keys is one, going to the car is one, opening the trunk is one, reaching in and getting it is another. If you don’t meet any one of these conditions the free gift remains in the trunk and not in your possession. Meeting these conditions did not earn you the free gift. You can’t say, “Well, if I have to walk to the car and open the trunk, it is not a free gift because I had to do something.”

If you have to start believing in me and what I promised, does it cease to be a free gift because you had to do the believing? Was it no longer a free gift if you first had to hear what I said? Is it only a free gift if I force it into your hands? Wouldn’t you have to do the receiving and holding of the gift? Wouldn’t that make it dependent on you doing something?

With some thought, we can see that a free gift does not cease to be free if you have to do something. It is a free gift because the giver was not obligated to give you the gift. They gave it to you of their own free will. Your perfect behavior did not obligate them. They gave the gift freely, which will always make it free no matter how many conditions may be involved. When I took the keys, he offered freely; taking the keys did not make the gift an earned wage. When I walked with the keys to the car, walking with the keys did not make what was in the trunk an earned wage instead of a free gift. Opening the trunk did not make the free gift an earned wage. Reaching in and grabbing the free gift did not turn the free gift into an earned wage. The free gift remained a free gift received because I believed the giver enough to meet the conditions of faith.

Faith moved me to grab the keys, walk to the car, open the trunk, reach in, and grab the free gift. On the giver’s end it was by grace, on my end it was through faith. But each move I made (grabbing the keys, walking to the car, opening the trunk, and grabbing the gift) was something I did by faith. If I stood there before the giver and merely said, “I believe you,” but did not take the keys, walk to the car, open the trunk, and reach to grab the gift, then mere faith that does not believe enough to take action remains unbelief. You must have faith enough to act (James 2:14-24). The faith actions do not earn, and they do not turn the free gift into wages earned. It is a free gift, and the conditions to get it do not turn the free gift into wages earned.

On Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41), the people wanted to know, “What shall we do?” They were not in a position to earn salvation. Peter told them to “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Those who gladly received the word were baptized. However, notice that Peter promised that if they met these conditions, “you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The gift was conditional and was not turned into a wage earned by either repentance or baptism. Those who teach that baptism is a work that earns and cancels grace are in great error. The Spirit shows us clearly that baptism is not a work of merit that earns but rather is a condition of faith, just like taking the keys, walking to the car, opening the trunk, and reaching in to grab the gift. It is still a free gift because repentance and baptism are not works of merit that cancel grace but rather actions of faith that meet the conditions for receiving the free gift.

Do not let anyone deceive you about this matter!