

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2024.04.07

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Darkness

Recording:

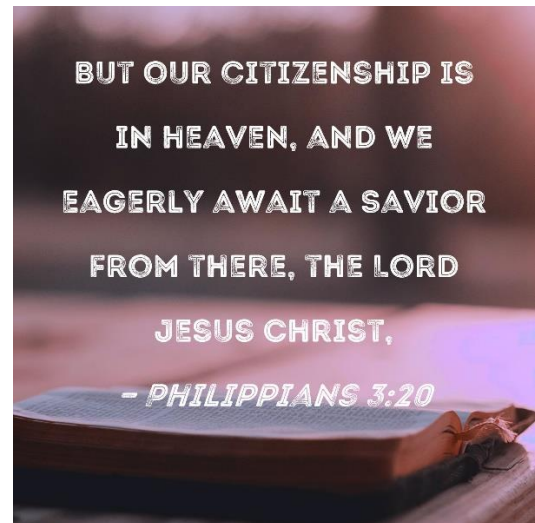
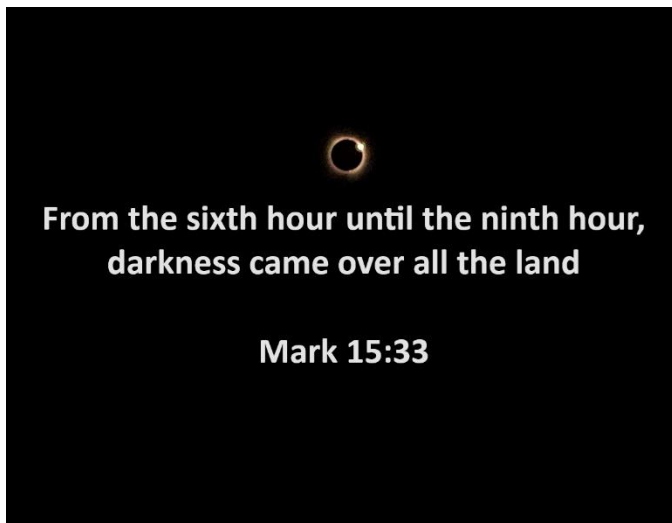
oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/darkness

Speaker-PM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Citizenship

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/this-world-is-not-our-home/



Overcome Evil With Good, 6/11/2020 By Eric Hamilton

"Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

This is one of those profound statements in the Bible, that when it hit me, it hit me hard. On the surface, it seems a no brainer: Duh! Of course, you overcome evil with good!

But notice the first part. It doesn't say "Don't overcome evil with evil, but rather overcome evil with good." It instead tells you what the consequence of attempting to overcome evil with evil is: you don't overcome anything, you instead are overcome with evil.

There is a lot of desire to overcome evil in this world, and for good reason. There is a lot of evil to overcome. But the majority of us are attempting to overcome that evil with bitterness, jealousy, threats, violence, backbiting, false accusations, hatred, etc. You will not overcome the evil you are attempting to by such means. You will only find yourself overcome by evil... you already have been.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said (I'm certain, echoing the sentiment found in Romans):

"The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy, instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."



Imagined Obstacles, 04/07/2024 by Ray Warfel, Jr.

“Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned” (Colossians 4:3).

I wonder if there is a play on the language here. Paul is in “chains” (CSB, NIV), prison but sees or at least is seeking an open door. Restricted as he was, Paul could still teach considerable numbers of people. This was certainly true in Philippi.

Meditating on this, I again wonder if we sometimes sabotage our effectiveness before we even begin to try. Do you focus on the obstacles stacked against you and your evangelist efforts? I remember sitting with a counselor several years ago when he made an observation that was so accurate and obvious, but I could not see it until he pointed it out. I had talked about my work as a small-town minister. I had shared some aspirations as a single man and soon-to-be empty nester. At some point, he stopped me and said, “Ray, you have a lot of great ideas, but as soon as you express one, you immediately begin listing all the reasons it won’t work.”

In the years since, I have tried, reached out, and explored opportunities. Some have not worked out as I had wished, but a lot have — more than I ever would have if I had refused to try because of the perceived obstacles. I truly mean this. My ministry is far more encouraging and energizing. My personal life is far more enjoyable. My outlook is so much more hopeful, positive, and rich than it was.

Does this resonate with you? What if you tried, regardless of the obstacles?
What if you succeed?