

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2025.04.06

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Speak The Same Thing

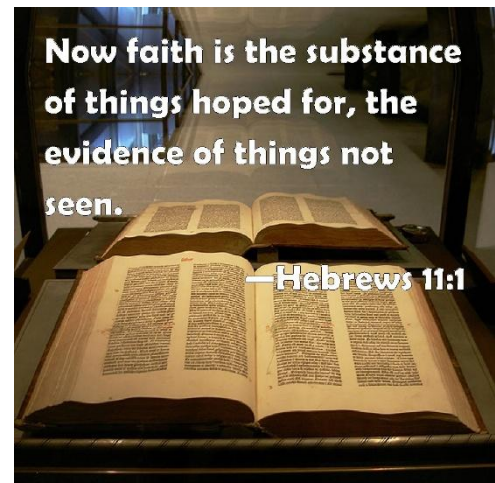
Recording:



Speaker-PM: Donovan Bale

Title: Covenant of Faith

Recording:



The Difference, 04/07/2025 by Terry Wane Benton

The difference between Christians and non-Christians is not that Christians are perfect. Sometimes, you find a Cornelius (Acts 10) who is morally just as upright as Christians. The difference is that one person has forgiveness through Jesus' blood, and the other does not. Forgiveness is available to all, but only some take the free gift into their possession and use it.

Another difference is that the Christian knows enough sin to know he needs the available remedy, while the other carries the sin-disease around without knowledge or desire for remedy. We are always sinful enough to know we need help and remedy (I John 1:7-2:2) and good enough to want it. Others are spiritually blind enough not to know they need Jesus, and evil enough not to want a cure.

Christians attend church services to hear the truth because they are sinful enough to need and give encouragement for growth and improvement, and good enough to want it. The non-Christian cares not to give or receive encouragement to improve spiritually, and is evil enough not to want to help himself or others get closer to God and each other.

So, the difference is that one person wants to grow, improve, and get cleansed, and utilizes God's gifts to that end. The other person does not see a need or want the gifts of cleansing and spiritual growth.

Neither side is perfect. But only the faithful Christian is in Christ, utilizing all His spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3ff), and that makes all the difference in the world!

Reliant on God's Mercy, 04/07/2025 By Sam Bunyard

Because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" we are all totally dependent on God's mercy (Rm. 3:23). After all, it is God who justifies (v26)!

Some would throw themselves completely at God's mercy without respect for His holiness and justice. They operate as though their unrighteousness makes God's righteousness that much more glorious by comparison. God is clear that this is not how that works (3:5-8). God's grace does not nullify the effect of continual sin. It provides a way to die to our sin through forgiveness, and transfer our loyalties to God as instruments of righteousness (6:1-14). But being reliant on God's mercy does not mean we can continue to live however we want! Rather, when we recognize the mercy He offers, we must pledge allegiance to Him to receive it (6:15-23).

In the parable of the talents, the one-talent man presented himself as totally dependent on his master's mercy. "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours" (Mt. 25:24-25). This servant's dependence on mercy did him no good because his actions did not demonstrate loyalty to his master! Rather than being profitable to the cause of his master, this servant was described as "wicked and lazy" (v26). And rather than receiving mercy, he was cast into the outer darkness (v30).

Not all who beg for mercy will receive it – and many will beg as they question Jesus' judgment of their "wicked and lazy" souls (Mt. 7:22). Those who will receive mercy are those whose actions will demonstrate their allegiance to Him, those who do His will (v21). If we want mercy, we must labor for the Master!