



Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2024.08.25

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Patrick Hite

Title: Helping Those New In Faith

Recording:

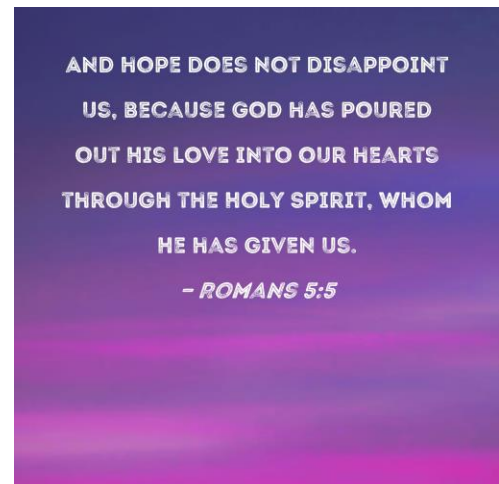
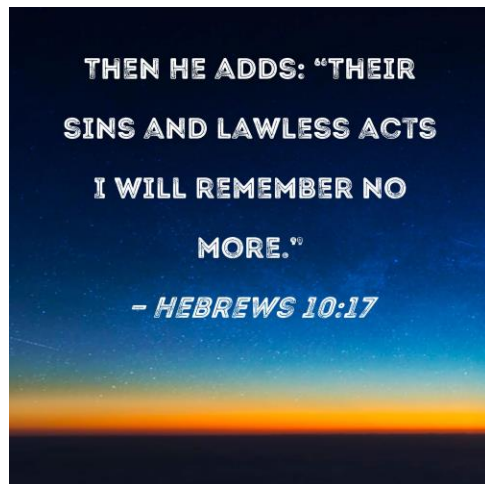
oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/helping-those-new-in-the-faith

Speaker-PM: Josh Vinyard

Title: Holy Spirit

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/the-love-of-the-holy-spirit



Examine the Scriptures, 8/22/24 by Doy Moyer


We are familiar with the attitude of the Bereans in Acts 17:11: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”

The primacy of Scripture is key to the noble-mindedness of the Bereans. Note that this statement is given between what happened in Thessalonica and Athens. Those in Thessalonica exhibited an attitude of not wanting to hear anything new, while those in Athens only wanted to hear new things. The Bereans, however, were interested in what was true, and what was true could be investigated and tested in the Scriptures. Not even Paul had a free pass in terms of not being accountable for what he was teaching, and the Scriptures provided the measuring stick for what was taught. This also shows that new revelation had its footing embedded deeply in the Scriptures they already had. Whatever traditions were passed on (2 Thess 2:6), they had to be consistent with the written word of God.

Acts 17:11 assumes that there is a standard for judging what people teach. The Bereans listened to Paul with open minds but went to the Scriptures to verify that what he was saying was the truth. We might recall that the Scriptures they could investigate were what we call the Old Testament. The New Testament had not been fully written and compiled yet. However, the principle is the same. Truth can be investigated through the Scriptures. For us, that includes the old and new.

What the Bereans did was noble-minded. We can follow this example as we go to the Scriptures to learn and test what is taught. It shows an attitude that desires to know what is right and is willing to listen, recognizing that Scripture gives boundaries. “To see whether these things were so” was determined by Scripture. We have every right to expect that teaching be conformed to and consistent with what Scripture teaches. For this, we are accountable because the twisting and perversion of Scripture cannot be ignored (cf. II Peter 3:16-18).

Implied in what the Bereans did is that they could reject a teaching because it was not true to Scripture. They had received the word with eagerness and made sure it was truth, with the result seen in that “Therefore many of them believed...” The truth expressed in Scripture leads people to faith, and this is one reason we need to be so attentive to what we teach and hear as we insist on Scripture as our primary source.



This guiding factor is vital: Scripture is the standard to measure teaching. There is nothing inherently wrong with tradition, but sometimes tradition is raised to the level of Scripture. When that happens, the tradition will inevitably swallow up Scripture and relegate it to the back seat of authority. Scripture, however, must be primary in our understanding of truth. Deviation from that should be rejected. If not, are we to ignore what Scripture teaches and trust certain men or church officials to tell us what to think? Are we to put Scripture aside and accept what others tell us about a specific, correctly interpreted historical trail among all the variations and claims made throughout history? If Scripture isn't the measure, what is? Fallible men with unverifiable teaching and their say-so? What are our options?

Paul indicated the importance of this principle to the Corinthians. They were to “learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other” (I Corinthians 4:6). We can test a tradition by Scripture and see whether it is consistent with the truth expressed therein. However, if someone argues that traditions transcend what is written, they essentially remove this ability to “see whether these things were so” based on the reception of the word. Searching the Scriptures becomes a futile effort in that case because tradition overrides what is written. Acts 17:11 becomes a side point of what the Bereans did, but they would not be an example of how to measure truth. We would have to trust other sources that, in turn, must be interpreted appropriately, but by whom?

The Scriptures maintain a unique position among God's people. Devotion to Scripture has sometimes been maligned as “worshipping Scripture” or “bibliolatry.” This is not so. The authority of Scripture is grounded in the ultimate Author of Scripture (II Timothy 3:16-17). Our attitude here should reflect not only the Bereans but also what God Himself says: “But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:1-2). If we put Scripture aside for another authority, we invite problems.

God is looking for us to tremble at His word because the authority of the word is God's authority (see Hebrews 4:12-13). The Bereans knew it. They weren't measuring what Paul said against other traditions or their feelings. The Scriptures determined “whether these things were so.” We cannot afford to let go of these foundations in our continuing efforts to serve the Lord.