

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2024.03.10

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Psalm 136

Recording:

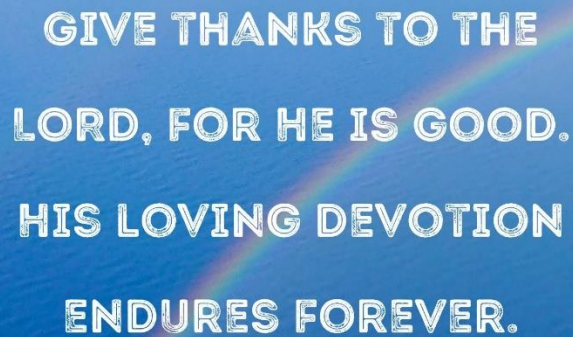
oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/psalm-136

Speaker-PM: Rob Moreland

Title: Married To Christ


Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/married-to-christ



GIVE THANKS TO THE
LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD.
HIS LOVING DEVOTION
ENDURES FOREVER.

- PSALM 136:1



*Let us be glad and rejoice
and give Him glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and His wife has made herself ready.*

REVELATION 19:7

Jesus Died First, 3/10/2024 By Sam Bunyard

It is difficult to have a boss who doesn't respect you, to have a spouse who doesn't treat you well, or even brethren who behave ungraciously to you. The true enemy behind nearly all relationship trouble is pride.

How much of conflict resolution is to get one of the parties to make the first step towards reconciliation? We tend to be too prideful to make the first move! A married couple may remain at odds because each of them refuses to be the first to apologize. Friendships can crumble because both parties refuse to be the one to reach out. Brethren may lack in fellowship because we are too prideful to accept fault in division and attempt restoration.

When a husband wonders why his wife will not submit to him, he should remember that Christ died for the church before the church was in submission (Eph. 5:25-26; Rm. 5:6-11). When a wife wonders why her husband isn't cherishing her, she should remember that Christ submitted to God before being exalted (I Pe. 3:1-6; Php. 2:5-11). When brethren fight over who is to blame for divisions, they should remember that Jesus was willing to take the consequences of other's sins to bring unity (I Cor. 6:7; Ep. 4:1-3; I Jn. 2:2).

If we want to improve our relationships, we can learn a lot from what God has done in His relationship with us. "God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rm. 5:8). We were "without strength" and "ungodly" (Rm. 6:6). We were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ep. 2:1). We were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ep. 2:12).

When we had ruined our relationship, Jesus made the sacrifice necessary to redeem it. When we have conflicts in life, let's swallow our pride and make the first move towards reconciliation!

Hosea: A Leader Who Made Great Sacrifice, 3/11/2024 By Max Dawson

One of the things I have learned about leadership is that sometimes, the best leaders are those who were reluctant to be leaders. Witness the case of Moses (Exodus 3:7-4:17). I have known men who were reluctant to serve as an overseer of the church, as a deacon, or even as a Bible class teacher; their reluctance was due to the gravity of the work. They were hesitant because they knew the work was such that, if not done well, they might do more harm than good to the kingdom.

I wonder if Hosea was a reluctant leader. There is no doubt that God chose him to bring a message to the people of Israel (Hosea 1:1). In the opening chapters of his book, Hosea appears to have no reluctance. If there was any reluctance, it does not appear in the text. But why would there be any reluctance? It would be because of what God directed Hosea to do! He was told to take a wife of harlotry, so he went and took Gomer as his wife (Hosea 1:2-3).

How it must have grieved Hosea to marry a woman who would not be faithful to him! He watched her drift from their marriage time and again. When Hosea was told to speak to the Israelites about their spiritual condition, he could do so with pain and passion in his heart, for he knew firsthand what it was like to have an unfaithful wife. He knew firsthand how God must have felt about His unfaithful wife, Israel!

Few leaders have been called upon to sacrifice more than Hosea. God told him to marry this woman, a woman who was destined to bring him lonely nights and endless heartaches. Where was Hosea's chance at personal happiness and contentment in life? How he must have agonized over Gomer—just as God agonized over faithless Israel.

Indeed, Hosea sacrificed so much in serving God and in being a leader in Israel. While his role as a leader was certainly unique, don't miss the point: Leadership is about sacrifice! Sometimes, people think leadership is about being looked up to and respected and about perks and privileges! Where were Hosea's perks and privileges? Who would look up to and respect such a man? Only those godly and devout Israelites who truly understood Hosea's role could look up to and respect him. They could appreciate his sacrifice.

An important lesson can be drawn from Hosea: Being a leader in God's kingdom is not about perks and privileges. It is not about gaining rights but more about giving them up! While God may not require leaders today to do as Hosea did, he does require leaders to sacrifice! For those men who lead God's flock as shepherds, God requires that they put time, energy, heart (and sometimes even money) into their work.

Sacrifice. You can't serve God's people without it.