

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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January 3, 2021

Turning the Page on the Calendar Won't Change Things

by Shane Scott

Has there ever been a year that more people were ready to be done with than 2020? I know a lot of churches that began the year with a theme like “2020 Vision for Christ” or some other play on the number “2020” and vision. But who could have seen what was coming this year?! Racial protests, a worldwide pandemic, and political turmoil (okay, we could see that coming!).

But as we eagerly wait for the clock to strike midnight tonight, and for a new year to begin, we should not be deceived into thinking that a tick of the clock is going to make any real difference. Racial tension will still exist, the pandemic is poised to take more lives than ever, and political turmoil promises to be a constant part of civil life. None of these problems will magically disappear just because the

calendar will say 2021 rather than 2020.

Perhaps you know someone who thinks they will manage time better if they only find the right planner, or will lose weight if they only find the right diet, or will get in better shape if they only find the right gym. I do – it’s me! And I have bought/tried/joined countless planners, diets, and gyms. But until I change my mindset, no amount of extrinsic or synthetic aids will make a difference in my life.

And the same is true with the date on the calendar. The numerals 2-0-2-1 alone will make no impact on your circumstances. What will make a difference is focusing on what you actually have an influence on, beginning with you. This is the reason that some people have had one of the best years ever in 2020 – they

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embraced the adversity presented by this year as an opportunity for growth, and they determined to focus on their choices and actions as they sought to glorify Christ.

Paul's famous affirmation of the strengthening power of Christ is especially relevant this coming year. "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13). Whatever the year was like for Paul, whether prosperous or impoverished, what did not change was his contentment in Christ. Focus on Christ fortifies us against the pride that often accompanies prosperity and the despair that often accompanies adversity. There are joyful people who live in chronic pain or poverty, and there are miserable people who live in opulence and comfort. The difference is the presence (or absence) of Christ. Christ, not the address on the map or the date on the calendar, is key.

Some of you have felt deep loss this year, and I hope this admonition to Christ-centered contentment does not seem callous. Having lost several loved ones to COVID, and having lost my wife to cancer

two years ago, the last thing I want to convey is insensitivity. To the contrary – those of us deep in grief need to anchor our heart in Christ even more. Recognizing the difference between what we cannot control (our loss), and what we can control (our response), is how we learn – through Christ – to be "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Maybe you have struggled this year (as I know I have). The one advantage to a new year, a new month, a new day, is that it provides us an opportunity to reflect, repent, and recommit to Christ. Embrace the adversity in your life as the refining fire God intends to draw us closer to Christ and inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:6-9). And then whatever 2021 brings its way, you will be ready to use it for Christ's glory.

{article published in the online publication Focus Online, December 31, 2020}

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - Next class January 12.

Services - The elders have decided to continue with the current service times of 10:45 am Sundays and 7:00 pm Wednesdays through the month of January. We will reevaluate in January. Thank you for your support and encouragement as we make these difficult decisions! --DT for the elders

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens
Jack Wilson
Jerry & Nancy Richardson
Ron Stanberry
Karen Hallmark
Morgan O'Hair
Dinah Williams
Tyler Hairston
Anna Urquhart

And continue to pray for each other

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

NOTES

ABOUT US

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization – we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

Evangelist

Darrell Trammel
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Elders

George Gresham
Jim Johnson
Darrell Trammel

SERVICE TIMES

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 A.M.
Worship 10:45 A.M.
Worship 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 P.M.