

December 6, 2020

## “In the Midst of a Crooked and Perverse Generation”

# Olney Church of Christ

220 North Van Street  
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[www.olneychurchofchrist.org](http://www.olneychurchofchrist.org)

## Services

### Sunday

Bible Study	9:30 am
A.M. Worship	10:20 am
P.M. Worship	2:00 pm

### Wednesday

Bible Class	7:00 pm
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**Elders:** Mike Gerber, Travis Hall  
**Deacons:** John Frost, Dave Goff, Roger Sholders

*Visitors are welcome*  
*We offer Bible classes for all ages*  
*We also offer in-home Bible studies*

We have Bible lessons on the radio (92.9 FM) Sundays from 8:00-8:30 a.m.

The Holy Spirit through Paul noted that the Philippian brethren were living “*in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*” (Phil. 2:15). He didn’t excuse sin because of this or promise that life on earth would soon be a utopia. Instead, He stressed the need to be “*blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish*” in the midst of such evil, being “*seen as lights in the world.*”

This verse exemplifies the principle that living in the midst of unrighteousness is nothing new. The Bible is filled with examples of people who pleased God while living in societies that were just as immoral as what we face.

Consider, for instance, the environment that *Noah* lived in. **Genesis 6:5** says, “***GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.***” Though the general state of mankind was unrighteousness, *Noah* chose to live *righteously* (**verse 8**).

Years later, Abraham’s nephew Lot lived in an environment that was likewise exceedingly evil. There were not even ten righteous souls in the city where Lot dwelt (**Gen. 18:32; 19:28-29**), and Lot was “***sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked***” (**2 Pet. 2:7**). Like *Noah*, Lot could not stop the environment he lived in from being filled with wickedness, but he *could*

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(Continued)

(and did) choose to live rightly in the midst of it (**2 Pet. 2:6-8**).

The point is that the world around God's people has long been, and continues to be, filled with immorality, but this does not excuse God's people from obeying Him. The key question for the child of God is not, “Is the world pleasing God?” Rather, the key question is, “Am I pleasing God?” While we should influence those in darkness for good, we cannot obey God for anyone else. Each of us *can*, though, control our *own* actions.

Consider the words, “**each one**,” in **2 Corinthians 5:10**. On the Day of Judgment, the Lord is not going to judge us according to the path someone else (or society as a whole) has chosen. Societal norms do not negate the responsibility *each one* has to work out his or her own salvation (**Phil. 2:12**).

Instead of conforming to the world, God shows us that we can (and must) allow *Him* to transform us (**Rom. 12:2**). This will lead us to see light and darkness as *He* defines it.

Moreover, it will lead us to zealously and unashamedly *pursue* the path of light, while *loving* the people in darkness, but *abhorring* the path of darkness (**Rom. 12:9**).

Though the path of light has fewer on it than the path of darkness, those who choose the former can lean on the *Almighty* for help.

In **Revelation 2:10**, the Lord told the saints in Smyrna, “**Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is**

***about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.***”

Notice that the Lord did not promise these saints that their temporal circumstances would soon improve. In fact, He inferred the *opposite*, noting that they would soon *suffer* additional trials for their stand for the truth.

The Christians at Smyrna were not told that the environment they were living in was so evil that all was *hopeless*.

Instead, these Christians were encouraged to be faithful even to the point of dying a martyr's death if it came to that. The Lord assured them that He *knew* what they were suffering (**verse 9**). He *cared* about them, and He inferred His *faithfulness* to provide the “**crown of life**” to them if *they* were faithful to *Him*.

The Lord's knowledge, care, and faithfulness should likewise encourage *us* to choose to do what is right. No matter the wickedness of the nation or society one lives in, life on earth always includes the *option* of taking the path of righteousness.

It is the path we must each choose in order to be lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

-Michael Hickox

## God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	James 2:24
Christian's Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	Revelation 2:10

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## Words to Consider

***“Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful.”***

**– Colossians 3:12-15**

## Prayer List

Holly G  
Sandy S  
Mabel H  
Cheryl S  
Norma C  
Raymond & Maxine  
Ken & Chris F  
Jeanette's Mother, Fontella  
Jerry S (Prostate Cancer)  
Carlyle (Hip)  
Heather's Friend, Courtney  
Barbara G (Cancer)  
June H  
Mike D (COVID recovery)  
Lyla B (Leukemia recovery)  
Roger & Family  
Mary S (Pancreatic Cancer)

## Daily Bible Reading

December 6 – Isaiah 11-13; Ephesians 4  
December 7 – Isaiah 14-16; Eph. 5:1-16  
December 8 – Isaiah 17-19; Eph. 5:17-33  
December 9 – Isaiah 20-22; Ephesians 6  
December 10 – Isaiah 23-25; Philippians 1  
December 11 – Isaiah 26-27; Philippians 2  
December 12 – Isaiah 28-29; Philippians 3

***“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...” – Colossians 3:16***

### **Prayer Leaders**

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Bible Study: Harold

Worship: Larry

Evening:

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

### **Assignments**

Sunday, December 13, 2020

Reading: Jeff

Announcements: Mike

Table: Travis

Serve: Harold

Jim

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Invitation:

### **Clean Building**

Paula

### **Prepare Communion**

Paula

### **Upcoming Reminders**

*\*Sunday afternoon services and Wednesday*

*evening Bible classes are temporarily*

*suspended, due to effects of COVID*

### **Anniversaries**

December 6 – Steve & Misty

### **Birthdays**

December 13 – Donna B

December 21 – Linda

December 21 – Christie

December 22 – Jailyn

December 22 – Lauren