

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. In **Isaiah 53**, we read about how Jesus was oppressed and afflicted; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter. By oppression and judgment he was taken away, he was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, though he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth, his life was a guilt offering for all mankind. You see, Jesus the Son of God was oppressed and afflicted for all mankind when he died on the cross. Jesus did no harm to anyone, he just spoke the Word of God to all who would listen. He raised the dead, healed the sick, received sight for the blind, and offered love and kindness to all who would accept it. You see, Jesus was not like the world, he was different or set apart from the sin in this world. As Christians today do we count it strange when our own family will turn against us when we take the name Christian and are followers of Jesus? **Matthew 10:21-26** 21 "Now brother will deliver up brother

to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. 24 "A Disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! 26 Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known." **See also Matthew 10:32-39** Jesus showed us as Christians how to stay the course, keep our faith and not look toward the world of comfort. In **Romans 8:28**, Paul said that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. In **verse 31**, we are assured, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" So don't count it strange when the world or those around you turn on you. Remember when Jesus preached to those in His days they did the very same thing to Him, He kept the faith and so can you. So next time those around you count you strange for being a strong Christian, just say, "Thank you Lord." Always remember, as a Christian, you serve God, not man.

By Bill Davis

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# Faithful Sayings

## Olsen Park Church of Christ

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## Count It Not Strange

Have you ever noticed that a person who is not a Christian or someone who is a lukewarm Christian is acceptable in the eyes of the world? Everything that they can get away with today who are worldly can do the vilest, evil, and perverted acts known to mankind and still be treated like a national hero. For example, a young lady who just recently passed away has been treated with more news coverage than the war in Iraq. This lady's character felt comfortable posing nude for Playboy, and showing off her body for the TV cameras for all to see. She lived a life of sex, loose money, drugs and alcohol. Her whole life was for pleasure and all about self.

She had no problem getting in front of the cameras posing nude or as close to nudity as she could and the world was "awe struck with her beauty and charm." When this young lady passed away all a person would see on TV was the vain glory of this world. Indeed, her death is a tragedy, but not as many in the world would think. The tragedy is that her life here was not lived in service to God. You see, this lady was part of this world and the world loved her for the sin in her life. The news stations showed her so much that their ratings went up because mostly men where watching it to see her. Another good example of how strange we see this world is in the

### Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
10:20 a.m.  
6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

### Elders:

Ken Ford  
Charles Kelley  
Pat Ledbetter

### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Pat Goguen  
Neil Ledbetter  
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movies that are made for the family to watch. Even "family" movies can have language or one scene that is not godly. We also hear it in the music that is made for our young people. A lot of the songs today are made to tell us about having an affair with another person other than our mates, how to get drunk, or how to kill a person for fun as seen in the rap music these days. Strange lifestyles are accepted in this world regarding how many people dress. It seems a lot of our culture, including Christians, accept the loose lifestyle of showing all a person can and still not be considered indecent. Divorce rates are so high, that divorce has become commonplace; it is no big deal for we live in a throw-away society. To a godly person these lifestyles are strange and make one uncomfortable to be around. We don't wish to be a part of this world and its ways; even though we must live in this world. But not all Christians will be uncomfortable. The lukewarm Christian in our world today will blend in with it because the world can tell no difference from the world or the Christian. Now a lukewarm Christian is just what lukewarm means, neither hot nor cold; they just go with the flow of life. The world will treat a lukewarm Christian as one of their own, as family. Why do I say this? The world knows that a weak Christian will go with the crowd, that is to say, they will never stand up for anything unless it is about food or money. The world knows that a weak Christian will not know the Bible very well, and half the time they will not even attend church most of the time. But most of all the world knows that a weak Christian can be intimidated when times

get tough on doing what is right in standing up for the Lord. The world knows that when times get too hot to handle the weak Christian will always go back to his former ways of the world and just blend in. A weak Christian will try to please those they associate with by social drinking, gambling, and using profane speech all week - except Sundays. A weak Christian can be easily persuaded to play golf or go fishing on Sundays. He can put off God one more day. A weak Christian is one who is neutral, and will not go against the worldly pleasures. Many weak Christians think being neutral means that they are holy and righteous. My friends, being neutral is a one way ticket to hell; there is nothing godly about doing nothing. **(James 4:4)** You see these two types of people or personalities will get along with the world in our days because the devil can control these people and use them for his own evil purposes. He can make these people rich, famous, popular and prosperous in all that they do; and the world loves them. These people are the life of the party in this world, it's all fun and games for now. Now what about the Christians who know the Bible and live by the Word of God in all that they do? Their walk is seasoned with God's words as seen in their speech, and their conduct in everyday life. They are humble toward others with compassion and pity. They pray for those they know are sick or under hard times; always ready to help a brother out when times get tough. They go to church every time the doors are open, are willing to teach when they get the chance, and are always ready to serve the Lord. Their motto is "all of Thee and none of me." They

are a blessing to have around, always giving to others and not asking for anything back. God is their God and His Son Jesus is their Savior till their dying day. What happens to these Christians when they make a stand for God's Word and follow the teachings of Jesus to the letter? Let's find out. As Christians today, do we not count it strange that a lot of people today hate the Word of God in this country? Do we not think it strange when people today seek to remove the Ten Commandments that stand in front of our court houses or in the public eye for all to see? Do we not count it strange that certain individuals will go as far as to take a cross out of a campus chapel so as not to offend those who go to "worship there"? Do we not count it strange that prayer in schools is against the law in parts of this country? Do we not count it strange that the very Word of God is illegal in some parts to speak out loud in public, and as a matter of fact in other parts of the world Christianity is against the law and is punishable by death or prison time? You see, the world hates the very word "Christian". It hates the Bible, the name Jehovah God, and His Son, Jesus Christ. Does all this sound strange to you? If one would read the Bible you will see none of this is anything new. The prophets of the Old Testament were put to death and punished for their faith in God, when it was not popular at that time. **Hebrews 11:32-40** 32 *And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:*

*33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented - 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.* You see, the people in the Bible died for their faith in God. They saw death as a blessing to be with God in Heaven. They kept the faith and fought the fight; they longed to be with God and to have the crown of life because they kept their faith. **Acts 8:1-8** *1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3*