



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

April 22, 2012

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Bobby Bear
Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary
Don Wicks

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

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GIVE GOD A CHANCE

A few years ago National Geographic carried a story about the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. Between 1908 and 1926 there was removed from this beautiful natural habitat teeming with wildlife 423 million board feet of lumber. Today the swamp has nearly returned to its pristine condition, almost as if the hand of man had never been felt there. The magazine commented that this is a good example “of what nature will do to restore herself and heal herself.”

If you substitute “God” for “nature” you have a splendid picture of the hand of God in human affairs. After all, it is God who made nature and set in order those eternal laws which govern life. It was man who scarred Okefenokee, but it is God who has healed it. There is another way that God heals the damage done by man. Many lives have been ravaged by sin to the extent that those to whom they belong despair of ever returning to their proper state. Overcome by the guilt of their wrongdoing, they have given up trying to put their lives right. Each day their condition worsens and happiness becomes more elusive. But take heart, dear friend! *“There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul!”* That balm is the cleansing blood of Jesus shed at Calvary for your misdeeds. He died for you – personally! Regardless of how deeply you are mired in sin, you may truthfully declare with David, *“Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow” (Psalms 51:7)*, with the assurance that when you give your life to Him your sins will be removed to restore your soul to the purity that it possessed when it first entered the world.

Man decimated Okefenokee. Before the swamp could be returned to its natural state by God, man’s cooperation was necessary. He had to stop the depredation that had once ruined it. And if your soul is to return to what it once was, you too must cooperate with the Great Healer by renouncing the sin with which you scarred its beauty. Your soul is worth saving. Give God a chance to do it.

Monroe Hawley

WHAT ARE YOU STILL CARRYING?

Two monks on a pilgrimage came to the ford of a river. There they saw a girl dresses in all her finery, obviously not knowing what to do since the river was high and she did not want to spoil her clothes. Without more ado, one of the monks took her on his back, carried her across and put her down on dry ground on the other side.

Then the monks continued on their way. But the other monk after an hour started complaining, "Surely it is not right to touch a woman; it is against the commandments to have close contact with women. HOW could you go against the rules for monks?"

The monk who had carried the girl walked along silently, but finally he remarked, "I set her down by the river an hour ago, why are you still carrying her?"

One of the hardest things we must do is to let go of something from the past. Someone does us wrong and seeks forgiveness, but we want to keep carrying the memory. Or maybe we made a mistake and we can't seem to stop beating ourselves up, despite the fact that we have done what God says to do to be forgiven. We don't want to keep carrying the memory (and the guilt), but we do. In fact, it often seems more difficult to forgive ourselves than to forgive others.

Paul said, *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* **(Philippians 3:14-15)**.

Paul had to forget his past achievements (as an esteemed Jewish leader). He also had to forget his past failures (which included persecuting and killing God's people).

What are you carrying today that you should have set down a long time ago?

Alan Smith