



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

September 23 , 2012

P.O. Box 416  
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.  
Rockwood, TN 37854  
865-354-0855

**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

**Email:**

rockwdcc@earthlink.net

**Website:**

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

## ARE WE SELFISH?

Selfishness is one of the ugliest characteristics one can have in his life. This is a problem everyone has to deal with to some degree. Selfishness is “caring unduly or supremely for oneself, concentrating on one’s own comforts, advantages, etc., without regard for others” (Webster).

It is the common attitude of “Me First!” This attitude is so far from the attitude that Christ had or that He wants us to have. This kind of attitude interferes with one’s spirituality, and defeats the Christian’s influence they may have in the world.

God’s word doesn’t per se have the word “selfishness,” but the attitude of the heart is both seen and condemned by God. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus shows how the Levite and the priest had to struggle with selfishness (**Luke 10**). The older brother in the story of the prodigal son who came home (**Luke 12**), were both dealing with feelings of selfishness.

The life that is to be Christ-like is the life that is built upon sacrifice (**Romans 12:1-2**). Selfishness is the exact opposite and it stands opposed to sacrifice. It is the attitude of selfishness that leads us to never carry our cross (**Luke 9:23**). It is that attitude that keeps us from loving others, more completely. The hardest thing for “self” to do is to be “put out” or inconvenienced, so we do whatever we can to not hear the cries of those who legitimately want help.

When we crucify self (**Galatians 2:20**), then Christ can reign in our hearts. If He resides in our hearts then we will have the attitude that He desires for us to have and not the attitude of selfishness. It is God’s will for us that we look beyond self and lovingly reach out to others with His word and His grace. It would be a shame for us not to spread the word because of our selfishness. Are we selfish with the things that God gave to us to share with the world around us? May it never be!

**Bulletin Digest**

## WAS STEPHEN'S LIFE WASTED?

You'll gather from the title and Scripture of this article that one question arises – why did God let all this happen? Why allow someone as gifted as Stephen to be “wasted away” like that? I guess this is the sort of question that we often ask when something happens. We ask this often times when we see someone die in their prime, sometimes even before their full potential is revealed. Often we are left with little to no answer yet here in **Acts** there are some distinct clues that cannot go without notice.

It would have been a simple thing for Christianity to remain a sect surrounded quietly by Judaism wouldn't it? After a while the situation might well have calmed down to the point where they were accepted by the majority and Christianity would have remained centered in and around Jerusalem. But God had other things in mind. He wanted to see it spread to the ends of the world. So He used the opposition of Satan as well as the work of His own Holy Spirit to begin the spread of the Gospel beyond the confines of Jerusalem to the rest of the world.

Now on the scene comes Stephen. It's interesting to note how Stephen comes to prominence so soon after being appointed to his newfound role. The next thing we find is that this ordinary man is doing great wonders and signs among the people. Clearly the Holy Spirit is at work in him in an impressive way. And it isn't just miracles that he's doing. It seems that he's also teaching the people from the Scriptures, explaining them in a way that upsets and threatens the religious hierarchy. With such, it would not be long before they would resort to false witness to have him convicted. Sound familiar? Even more familiar were the words he uttered before breathing his last. *“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”*

The stoning and death of Stephen is a watershed moment for the Church. The Gospel is now being sent forcibly to the wider world. The persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen caused the scattering of the Gospel and thus began to further the effort of taking the Gospel to all of God's creation. I can't also help but feel that Stephen's defense on that day went a long way with Paul after his encounter with Jesus while upon the road to Damascus.

Up close Stephen's death may seem as a waste, yet the blessing of time is that we see the grandeur of God's plan. Stephen's martyrdom held long term ramifications for growth for the Church in the first century.

**Jonathan Sanford**