



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

April 14, 2024

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Kendall Bear
Dana Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Larry Brackett
Aaron Evans
Larry Hill
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Dale Barger

Service Times:

Sunday

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

Wednesday

Bible Study 7 pm

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Stephen and Cancel Culture

Stephen was a man of tremendous courage who preached God's Word with great boldness. On the occasion of Acts chapter 7, Stephen preached that he saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (**Acts 7:56**). In the audience that day were unbelieving Jews who rejected Christ. When they heard Stephen preach Christ, they were enraged and "stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him" (**Acts 7:57-58**). Notice from this text that the Jews "*stopped their ears.*" They refused to listen to what Stephen preached. Rather than listening, they stoned to death an innocent, godly man.

We live in a time when some refuse to hear any opposing view. Rather than granting others freedom to express opposing views, the culture "*cancel*" them. "*Canceling*" often involves some type of punishment against those—mostly conservative—who attempt to express controversial views. One may lose business, be fired, or publicly shamed if one dares to share an opposing viewpoint. Much like the unbelieving Jews "*stopped their ears,*" some "*stop their ears today*" and cancel all opposing views.

However, the unbelieving Jews who stoned God's faithful preacher, Stephen, did not change the truth about Jesus. They refused to listen, even stopping their ears, but their rejection of Stephen's message did not change the truthfulness of the message.

Likewise, refusing to listen to opposing views today will not change the truth. Refusing to listen to the pro-life position that abortion is taking innocent, human life, does not change the truth about abortion. Silencing the voices of those who oppose homosexuality, does not change the truth that homosexuality is a perversion of God's plan for human sexuality (**Leviticus 18:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10**). "*Canceling*" those who affirm that there are only two genders, male and female, does not change the truth that being transgender is a distortion of God's original plan (**Genesis 1:26-27**).

Christians must always speak with love and compassion for others (**Ephesians 4:15**). However, if ever there was a time when bold, brave, Christian voices were needed, that time is now! "*And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word*" (**Acts 4:29**).

Mark Lindley
Chapman church of Christ
Ripley, MS

Why is Our Society So Sinful?

Why will a man throw away the wife of his youth and the children she bore him, all for a “*one night stand?*” Adults use profanity in public and in front of children. Society is plagued by constant news reports of murder, abuse, rape, and theft. Even in a small community, the gossip stays hot on social media. In America, we behave badly.

One reason we behave badly is because we live for ourselves, and we live for the moment. When God is taken out of life’s equation, so is any motivation to live for eternity. Paul alludes to this way of life when he says, “*If the dead do not rise, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’*” (1 **Corinthians 15:32**). He goes on to describe those who live for the here and now as “*evil company*” (33). When a person denies the existence of God, a future resurrection and eternal life, they have only themselves and the moment for which to live. That perspective lends itself to gross immorality; and fellowshiping with that kind of people “corrupts good habits” (33).

Paul admonishes Christians to “*awake to righteousness and do not sin*” (vs. 34). The inspired apostle indicated a direct correlation: deny the resurrection, live only for the present, equals sinful life, or believe in the resurrection of Jesus, we will be resurrected one day, live a righteous life. Atheists would have the world to believe that as a general rule they are just as concerned about morality and doing good toward their fellow man as Christians. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The debauchery and crime of our society is directly linked to our secularization. If we believe there is no God; if we believe that we are the product of a series of accidents and no more important than animals and if we have no hope of an afterlife where we will be rewarded or punished accordingly, then we have nothing to live for but ourselves. And being surrounded by people who think and behave so ungodly can have a profoundly negative influence on otherwise good people.

Know this, there is a last day on the horizon. Jesus is coming. We will stand before Him. We will spend eternity in hell or heaven. Live for eternity.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”

(1 Corinthians 15:58).

Brent Smith
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