



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

April 23, 2023

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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I've Got to Start...

You may actually know someone who has begun a sentence using the above words. The words that this preacher has heard used most often to complete this sentence are “exercising” and “*eating right*.” It appears that most of us have a sense of what it will take to improve our health.

The key to accomplishing the desired improvement is truly given in this statement. It is the word “*start*.” We may be playing mind games with ourselves when we utter these words, because if we never start, we will not have to continue the process. Perhaps we feel that we can handle the guilt better than the discipline.

What about spiritually? Have we not also heard someone (ourselves) say, “*I've got to start studying my Bible regularly?*” We believe what Jesus said about those who “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” (**Matthew 5:6**), but we are still waiting to start.

What about the one who says, “*I've got to start visiting like I should?*” We believe what James wrote about “*pure religion*” consisting of visiting the “*fatherless and the widows in their affliction*” (**James 1:27**), but we just cannot seem to get started.

In reality, when we make these statements, we are taking the first step; i.e., admitting the personal need/responsibility. Now all we need to do is specify. Instead of repeating the “*I've got to*” part, say, “*I will start (an activity) today at (a time).*” Next, set a reminder and then START! Change for the better will become reality when we do. Paul exhorted, “*For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (**2 Corinthians 6:2**). Let's get started today.

J. Brooks Boyd Jr.
Livingston church of Christ
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Go Forward

In the account of the crossing of the Red Sea in the Exodus of the Israelites, we can learn some important things about God and His people. As the Egyptians were in hot pursuit and the Israelites' fears are growing, God said to Moses, "*Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward*" (**Exod. 14:15**). Moses was then to lift up his rod, stretch out his hand over the sea, and it would be divided (**Exod. 14:16**). When Moses did this, **Exodus 14:21** records that "*the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.*"

Here is the important thing for us to remember concerning God and concerning His people: God's commands require only an affirmative response to be effective. The means of success are always provided by God. It was the responsibility of the people to go forward, and it was God's part to divide the sea.

It took faith for the Israelites to go up to the sea believing that God would do His part. There is a great lesson in that account for us, as well. God has asked us to "*go forward*" with true faith. But are we really doing so?

In **Mark 16:15**, the command of Jesus for His followers is to "*go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" We are asked to "*go forward*" and teach lost souls. How many times do we refuse to do our part because we don't think God will do His part? We may justify to ourselves, "*Oh, no one will ever be saved, so it will do no good for me to evangelize.*" All God has asked us to do is "*go forward*" and preach; He is the one who will give the increase (**1 Cor. 3:6**).

In **Heb. 6:1**, Christians are reminded to leave the elementary principles of Christ and "*go on to perfection.*" In other words, we are to "*go forward*" in the maturing of our faith and holy practice before God (**2 Pet. 3:18**). How many times do we justify sin in our lives with such weak faith that we never even give God an opportunity to deliver us from evil (**Matt. 6:18; 2 Tim. 4:18**)? If we will make an effort at purer lives, and put our faith in God, He will see to it that it will happen.

It takes faith to go forward. Abraham was asked to "*go out*" to a place never before seen by him. He did so, trusting that God would provide, and He did (**Heb. 11:8**). Christians, we are asked to "*go forward.*" We are to go forward and preach, and we are to go forward and live better, more righteous lives. If we do this with complete faith and trust in God, He will use His mighty powers to do marvelous things. Let's all resolve to set our fears aside, have greater faith in God, and "*GO FORWARD!*"

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