



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

August 7, 2016

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Todd Houston

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

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HAVE YOU EARNED YOUR PLACE IN HEAVEN?

After making a whopping \$50 million donation to a gun control initiative, and because of his work against obesity, and smoking, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg was quoted as saying: "I am telling you, if there is a God, when I get to heaven I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in...I have earned my place in heaven. It's not even close."

How does that sound to you? Presumptuous? Arrogant?? The very idea that Mr. Bloomberg could think he could "buy" his way into heaven must be offensive to God. How less offensive is it when we believe and act like we can earn our way into heaven by:

- ❖ Going to church three times a week.
- ❖ Reading our Bibles daily.
- ❖ Giving generously each first day of the week.
- ❖ Helping the poor.
- ❖ Being a good father/mother/husband/wife/son/daughter.

The above list could go on and on. Do we, along with Mr. Bloomberg need to be reminded that after all we could possibly do, we are still unprofitable servants (**Luke 17:10**)? Do we also need to be reminded that our righteousness, the best we can offer, is as filthy rags to God (**Isaiah 64:6**)?

You see, heaven isn't a matter of attainment; it's a matter of atonement. If we're in heaven some day, it won't be because we earned it. It won't be because we wowed God with our own morality and righteousness. And it won't be because God's indebted to us. On the contrary, it will be because we're indebted to Him!

Steve Higginbotham

FAITH & OPTIMISM

When your cup runs over, is it a blessing, or a mess? Is your glass half full or half empty? Do you make difficulties out of your opportunities, or opportunities out of your difficulties? Are you the kind that complains about the noise when opportunity knocks? Do you claim to be an optimist who doubts that being one really helps?

I was reading **Psalm 23** this week, and it occurred to me that King David was a true optimist. “I am never in need...green pastures...peaceful waters...paths of righteousness...my cup overflows...even though I walk through the dark valley of death, because you are with me, I fear no harm...your rod and staff give me courage.” His faith in God enabled him to overcome obstacles that would derail our faith. His faith in God allowed him to see winning possibilities in horrible circumstances. Remember how he faced a lion, a bear, a giant, and a mentally unstable king? Remember how he faced the death of a child, and rebellion within his own family? His faith empowered him to live with optimism and assurance of victory.

When faced with setbacks and difficulties, our reactions reveal whether we are people of faith and optimism, or people of pessimism and defeat. There are three basic differences in the way optimists and pessimists react.

The first is that the optimist sees a setback as temporary, while the pessimist sees it as permanent. When David’s infant child died, he saw it only as a temporary separation. Even after praying and fasting that the child would not die, his faith in God never wavered. He could not bring the child back, but he said, “*I will go to him*” (**II Samuel 12:23**). Even death is not permanent for those with faith in God.

The second difference is that the optimist sees difficulties as specific, while the pessimist sees them as pervasive. David’s sin with Bathsheba was not allowed to destroy his whole life and eternity. He messed up big time, but he dealt with it as the specific sin it was, repented, and went on to live as a man with the heart of God. His failure with Bathsheba did not cause his whole life to be a failure.

The third difference is that optimists view events as external, while pessimists interpret events as personal. King Saul’s repeated attempts to kill David was seen by David as rebellion against God, not him personally. He would not raise his hand against Saul because he still saw him as the Lord’s anointed. Difficulties are most often simply external circumstances, not personal attacks.

Learn from David to live by faith and optimism. Look upon the inevitable setbacks that you face as being temporary, specific and external.

Joe Chesser