



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

Dec 11, 2022

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Elders:

Kendall Bear
Dana Carter
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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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The Power of Our Silent Influence

On a recent beautiful warm Saturday morning, a Christian friend and I were having breakfast at a local restaurant. At a nearby table, we noticed a young woman sitting quietly reading her Bible. She was absorbed in the text, occasionally looking up to consider what she had read. She never said a word, but her heart and priorities were visible to everyone in that restaurant. It was a gentle, positive, and silent influence.

She was not ashamed of Christ nor of His New Testament (**Heb. 9:11-15 KJV**). She neither preached a sermon nor sang a song. She was willing to be identified with the Savior, yet she did not need to announce that allegiance.

In our attempts to share the message of Jesus, we must eventually use words, because ultimately words are needed to present the gospel (**John 14:23; Acts 2:14 KJV; Acts 11:11-14 KJV; Acts 16:14 ESV; 2 Pet. 3:1-2 KJV; Jude 1:17 KJV**). But we can also learn from the example of this woman.

There are times when the quietness of our everyday actions speak louder than our words, revealing our love for the Lord (**Phil. 1:21-27**). In our desire to share Christ with a sinful world, let's not ignore the power of our silent influence (cf. **1 Thess. 1:5-8**).

Mike Riley
via Monticello church of Christ
Monticello, AR

What Kind of ‘Sorry’ Are You?

While growing up in middle Tennessee I often had occasion to hear expressions used by country folks. Since many of them came from small communities, where everyone knew his neighbors’ foibles and failings, country folks could be unsparingly candid in their evaluation of others. One descriptive phrase that I particularly remember is the word “*sorry*.”

When the community viewed an individual as morally deficient because of a failure to live up to accepted standards of decency and personal responsibility, that person earned the contemptuous epithet “*sorry*.” For example, a mean-tempered alcoholic who beat his wife could be described as “*just plain sorry*.” A woman who frequented honky-tonks and bars while her small children roamed the neighborhood, unattended and dirty, might be termed “*a sorry excuse for a mother*.” A shiftless or dishonest employee would be labeled “*about as sorry a worker as there is*.” While rambunctious kids who filched an occasional watermelon might be tolerated, thieves who stole the flowers off a child’s grave earned the disgusted appraisal of “*extra sorry*.”

In our current age of moral relativism such descriptions may seem harsh or politically incorrect, but they are not without scriptural precedent. The Bible freely speaks of “*worthless scoundrels*” (**2 Chronicles 13:7, Proverbs 6:12**), “*bad characters*” (**Acts 17:5**), “*rabble*” (Numbers 11:4), “*sluggards*” (**Proverbs 6:6**), and “*fools*” (**Romans 1:22, Proverbs 1:7, Matthew 23:17**, etc.) These terms remind us that not every social aberration can be dismissed as an “*alternative lifestyle*.” While our gracious God loves everyone and wants to see them saved (**2 Peter 3:9; John 3:17**) the fact of the matter is, some individuals will consistently make foolish, ungodly decisions; some people will choose to live self-centered, squalid, superficial lives. Not all choices are morally neutral – not all lives are equally noble. The lifestyles chosen by some folks really are “*sorry*.”

However, before we write any individual off entirely, we should recognize that there is an alternative meaning to the word “*sorry*.” The apostle Paul wrote the carnal, quarrelsome Christians in Corinth a letter so stern that it shocked them into changing their ways. Consider this passage from **2 Corinthians 7:8-11**, in which Paul comments on their response:

“Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

Notice there are two kinds of “*sorrow*.” “*Worldly sorrow*” is the self-centered regret that comes from experiencing the painful personal consequences of our sin. Worldly sorrow brings only bitterness and resentment. “*Godly sorrow*” is the recognition that we have displeased God. Such an awareness of God can convict us so strongly we resolve to “*repent*,” to turn our life around, a step which leads ultimately to the joy of salvation (**Psalms 51:10-12**).

Since the Bible teaches the universality of sin (**Romans 3:9-23**), it occurs to me that all of us are “*sorry*.” Lives that are “*sorry*” are lives that are wasted. Hearts that are “*sorry*,” as people recognize their sinfulness and truly repentant, can be redeemed. So, what kind of “*sorry*” are you?

Dan Williams
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