



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 13, 2015

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

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

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I MADE A PROMISE!

Many years ago we were in the midst of a Bible School attendance drive. I visited a nearby home where there was a third grade girl. I asked her if she would be in Bible School next Sunday morning. She replied, "I have to be. I made a promise!"

Somewhere this child had picked up on the idea that one must keep his/her promises. How refreshing!

There is an old saying about "a man's word is as good as his bond." It should be that way, but likely never has been.

Recall the story about Jesus and His disciples on the night of His betrayal. He said they would all forsake Him.

"Peter answered and said unto Him, 'If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended.' Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' Peter saith unto Him, 'Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' Likewise also said all the disciples." Matthew 26:33-35.

Likewise also said all the disciples. Yes, they all made a promise! They promised their loyalty, their courage, and their determination to go with Jesus through danger and even death, if need be.

They made a promise when feelings were high and emotions were strong. No doubt but that each was sincere in his promise. In the shelter of the upper room, in the solemnity of the Passover feast, in the strength of Jesus' example of love and humility, each found courage to make this promise.

"Promises are easier made than kept." How true. When the disciples found themselves surrounded by a bloodthirsty mob in the darkness of the garden, their courage failed them. ***"They all forsook him and fled."*** Jesus was the same friend and the disciples were the same men, but circumstances had changed.

What about your promise to the Lord? Did you promise to be faithful, obedient to every command? Did you mean to be faithful in your attendance in worship and active in His church?

Remember how clean and pure you felt when you became a Christian? You made a promise. Be faithful in keeping it.

Lewis Hale

BE HONEST. IS YOUR GOD A BURDEN?

I may be wrong, but from my perspective, most people feel that God is a burden. I think most people realize they have a need for God, but they struggle with it. For them, God often gets in the way of life, and especially the fun things. God seems to be more tolerated than enjoyed. And there seems to be a lot of guilt and fear and dread in connection with God. Religion that has been reduced to ritual and obligation has become burdensome. People feel obligated to go to church, but they don't really enjoy it. They've fulfilled their duty, but that's about it. It's the same with giving and evangelism and just about anything else God expects. They are just heavy burdens to be borne, more like slavery than freedom.

That kind of a God is not much different from the gods Isaiah wrote about 3000 years ago: **"the images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary."** (Isaiah 46:1). We don't have images of stone, wood and metal to tote around, but we do have false concepts of God that are heavy and tiring. Instead of allowing God to carry us, we feel like we have to carry Him. A god like that robs us of the joy that the true God intends for us to experience. They think, "There are so many rules and restrictions. How can anyone possibly keep them all?!" And if you did, what a miserable life that would be.

God, any god, is a burden if we make them ourselves. If our concepts of God are restricted to what we can visualize and design, our God is way too small to lift our burdens, and, in fact, becomes a burden Himself.

How grateful we must be to learn that our God is much greater than our concept of Him. He can do more than we can imagine (**Ephesians 3:20-21**). He knows more than we can fathom (**Deuteronomy 29:29**). He didn't begin when we first thought of Him, but is eternal (**Hebrews 13:8**). A God like this is not a burden, but instead invites us all to **"come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"** (**Matthew 11:28**). A God like this does not rob us of life's pleasures, but instead has come **"that they may have life, and have it to the full"** (**John 10:10**). A God like this does not make rules that are a burden, but instead guides us to victory (**I John 5:3-5**). A God like this fills us with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

When you get out of the way and let God be God, He is never a burden!

Joe Chesser