



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 15, 2019

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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Larry Hill
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 7:00 pm

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THE URGE FOR REVENGE

When the poet Edwin Markham reached retirement age, thinking he was set for life, he discovered he was penniless. So the story goes, his banker had defrauded him. From that point on, he was obsessed with the evil done to him by a man who was supposed to be his friend.

We are told that Markham was so bitter that he could no longer write poetry. However, one day, while suffering the pain of resentment, the thought came to him that bitterness and the desire for revenge was eating him up, and that he must forgive the man. It was then that he wrote his best poem:

“He drew a circle and shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win;
We drew a circle that took him in!”

Augustine once wrote, “If you are suffering from a bad man’s injustice, forgive him lest there be two bad men.” Forgiveness is much better than revenge. In my judgment, it is the sign of a gentle nature. On the other hand, to seek revenge is the sign of a savage nature. We are not animals, but human beings made in the image of God. The brave know how to forgive; but, a coward never forgives. It is not in his nature to forgive.

I’m convinced that the same grace of God that heals us demands that we forgive people who hurt us the most. Revenge does not work, but forgiveness does.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”
(Ephesians 4:32).

Kenneth Broyles

Let Patience Work!

The Christian life can be very challenging. Due to the many obstacles and trials Christians encounter, we need to “let patience work.”

James wrote the following about the need to let patience work: “*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*” (James 1:2-4). Notice the statement: “*let patience have her perfect work.*”

James informs Christians that we need patience when facing various kinds of trials. “Patience” means “endurance.” Christians may have to cope with the criticism of non-Christians, financial loss, family problems, failing health, and many other trials. Patience is the virtue needed in such times.

The passage teaches that Christians must “*let patience have her perfect work.*” If we do this, then we will be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” This sounds appealing, so how do we let patience work? First, consider that we do not let patience work when we hinder or interrupt the process of enduring trials. When facing challenges, we may feel tempted to panic. Sometimes people try to run from problems, and escape through drug abuse and alcohol. Others may turn to illicit relationships with the opposite sex to find comfort. However, turning to these things to escape problems only creates more problems.

What, then, is the solution? How does one allow “*patience to have her perfect work*”? There are three basic things we can do to let patience work: 1) Do not try to squirm out of trials. Since trials present an opportunity to grow, we should face them. Rather than running from problems, the psalmist wrote: “*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth*” (Psalm 46:10). Just be still; 2) Trust that God will work things out in His own time. Trials will not last forever. Rather, than rushing God, we should be patient, listen, and learn lessons as life is happening (James 1:19); 3) We should pray that God would use this trial to make us stronger. Prayer is an act of submission, showing that the one praying relies on God (James 1:6-7).

By remaining calm, trusting God, and praying to God, one allows patience to work. After patience completes her work, then one will be “*perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*” So, in trials, let patience work!

Mark Lindley