



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

February 18, 2018

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Deacons:

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Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

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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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THE BEST HE COULD

T.B. Larimore (1843-1922) is quoted as saying, "When my hand is still, my tongue silent and my eyes closed; when friends come to look on my pale face, I want them to be able to say, at least, 'He did the best he could.'"

Jesus told a parable in which one man failed to do the best he could (**Matthew 25:14-30**). Three men each with differing abilities were given talents. One received five talents, another two, and the last, one. Those who had received five and two talents increased their capital. Each was praised by his lord, "*well done, thou good and faithful servant.*" The one talent man was a different story. He failed to gain any more talents for his lord. When the lord returned he was rebuked, "*Thou wicked and slothful servant.*" He was cast into outer darkness. He had failed to give his best. The point of the parable should not be lost on any of us.

The prophet Malachi rebuked the people of his day for their failure to do the best they could. They failed to bring God the best in sacrifice, but were content to bring the lame and sick (**Malachi 1:13**). God deserved and desired better. We must be careful that we don't become content in offering God less than our best.

Are we really doing the best we can? If we attend one service of the church during the week, is that the best we can do? Is our contribution to the work of the church the best we can do? Is our involvement in the local congregation, to the extent that it is, the best we can do? Are we living our life in such a way that it is the best we can do? Are our efforts to share the gospel with others the best we can do? Is our service in the kingdom the best we can do, or are we satisfied with half-way measures?

Even when we do our best it is important to remember these words of Jesus: "*So likewise when you have done all those things which are commanded of you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do*" (**Luke 17:10**). God gave the best of Heaven (**John 3:16**). What will we give Him in return? Think about it.

By Randy Baker

THOUGHTS NOT TO ENTERTAIN

If Paul had thought like some today, he would have written to the Ephesians like this:

“Paul the apostle to the saints at Ephesus. Brethren, I rejoice when I went into the theater in your city to behold the shows. That play of Aristophanes was a magnificent story of a man who overcame poverty and poor health as a child to become a famous warrior in Greece. Such zeal! Such courage! I commend this show to the church for your edification, for Christians can learn much from it. Yes, a pagan influence prevailed during the performance. The crowd praised Zeus and blasphemed God. The actors took God’s name in vain and poured out filthy words. The women on stage displayed their nakedness with immodest apparel. But be of good cheer, brethren! Evil associations will not corrupt good morals if you look for the good and ignore the bad.”

Who can imagine Paul writing such words? Plays and concerts were common forms of entertainment in the ancient world of the New Testament. People then had no televisions, giant screens, or sound systems, but they enjoyed drama and music. Perhaps not all of these shows were bad, but many were. In the second century Tertullian said Greek drama was filled with scenes of lust and perversion. He scolded “the father who carefully protects and guards his virgin daughter’s ears from every polluting word” and yet “takes her to the theater himself, exposing her to all its vile words and attitudes.” Shows then were no different from movies today.

The Bible teaches that what you put into your mind affects you. The cares, riches, and pleasures of this life choke the Word in our hearts (**Luke 8:14**). Evil comes “*from within, out of the heart of men*” (**Mark 7:21**). Truly as a man “*thinks in his heart, so is he*” (**Proverbs 23:7**). A Christian who denies this is arguing in vain. We can no more put rotten food into our stomachs without feeling the effects than we can put ungodliness into our souls without weakening our faith.

The old warning “*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*” (**Exodus 23:2**) often goes unheeded by God’s people. People put pressure on us to go along with this world. Ancient Greeks would ask each other, “Have you seen this show? You’ve got to see it!” Today we hear the same question, “Have you watched this movie? You’ll love it!” Everybody seems to be excited about it, including some members of the church. Few are concerned about the sex scenes and God’s name being taken in vain.

Many religious people get their spirituality from movies and song lyrics. They get excited when they talk about a film of victory that brought them to tears. Never mind the nudity and profanity. The movie made them feel spiritual. “But I don’t pay any attention to the bad parts. I look for the redeeming qualities.” That is like rummaging through a garbage bin to find a penny.

Nothing the world offers should thrill our hearts and lift up our souls like the stories of the Bible. May we read it with joy and have a discerning eye toward the pleasures of this world.

Kerry Duke