



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

February 25, 2024

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
865-354-0855

Elders:

Kendall Bear
Dana Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

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

Email:

rockwdcc@gmail.com

Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

The Disease of Discouragement

dis·cour·age·ment

- a loss of confidence or enthusiasm; dispiritedness.
- an attempt to prevent something by showing disapproval or creating difficulties; deterrent.

Where does discouragement come from? Let's consider an interesting comment in the book of Ezra.

The book of Ezra tells the story of the rebuilding of the temple. Though the act is brought about by God and authorized by King Cyrus, it does not come about easily. In Chapter 4 we see those that are attempting to thwart the efforts. In **Ezra 4:4** we read, *"Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build."*

Notice how they discouraged them? They made them afraid. Where does discouragement come from? It's right there in the etymology:

DIS = not

COURAGE = overcome fear

MENT = the state of

Discouragement comes when we fear. Fear is a powerful motivator but more often than not it's one that stops us from doing something. That is why when fear is our primary motivator it usually doesn't last long and doesn't keep us motivated to go forward.

Don't let fear rule you or you will find a lot of discouragement.

Barry Haynes
Hope church of Christ
Hope, AR

Our Need of Encouragement

We are at a time in world history where we are more “*connected*” than ever before (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). Due to the advances of technology, we are able to do things that previous generations could not even imagine. Ironically, our ability to connect digitally has not solved our pressing problems such as isolation and loneliness. Sadly, such seems to have actually exacerbated the problem. The world seems more lonely than ever. Two examples of how desperate our world is for encouragement, fellowship, and belonging:

First, in the United Kingdom, they recently created a new governmental position. They are calling it the “*Minister of Loneliness.*” This government official is tasked with dealing with the ever-growing problem of isolation. One out of every ten people in the UK say that they feel lonely “*always.*” This is a problem for many reasons, among them is health risk. Some studies have shown that isolation is worse for our health than smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The isolated have a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression and anxiety.

Second, Japan is experiencing a crime wave of sorts among the elderly, especially elderly women. Otherwise, law-abiding senior citizens are resorting to things like petty theft because they are lonely and scared. They long for the community and stability that jail offers them. They have no one to turn to when they need help. They steal something small hoping to get caught and quickly thrown in jail.

Let us use these examples from places far away from us—from cultures very different from our own—to wake up to and to recognize the fact that all people everywhere long to feel like they belong and that they are safe.

This is where the Good News of Jesus Christ shines like the beacon of hope that it is! Those who know the love and mercy of Jesus must be about the business of sharing this glorious hope with others. We do not have to be or feel alone. “*...be content with what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’*” (**Heb. 13:5**). We should help others to be and to feel connected to the body of Christ. “*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works*” (**Heb. 10:24**).

Somebody is counting on you to show them kindness and to connect them to Jesus! “*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing*” (**1 Thess. 5:11**).

Bart Warren
Glasgow, KY