



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

February 28, 2016

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

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 10:00 a.m.

Email:

rockwdcc@gmail.com

Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

PRAISING GOD FOR HUMBLING OPPORTUNITIES

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’”
(James 4:6).

Life is filled with humbling circumstances. Some of these are instances that we bring upon ourselves, while others are out of our control. They are moments when the right thing to do is to swallow our pride and humble our spirits, yet to do so can be the most difficult part of the entire ordeal.

Pride is a strange emotion in that it often seems disconnected with logic and reason. People can be filled with pride when they are right...or when they are wrong...or when they don't even know if they are right or wrong! It is the root emotion of peoples' most negative and destructive motivations: envy, bitterness, rage, vengeance, and above all, rebellion. The opposite of pride is humility, which is rooted in the more practically defined spirit of submission. It is a willingness to give to another, even to the point of self-sacrifice.

The scripture could not be clearer concerning God's view of pride. He hates it! He loves submission. In fact, a plethora of scriptures make it abundantly clear that God actively works against the proud, and promotes the humble. Perhaps this is why we are told to “rejoice in suffering” **(James 1:2-4)**, in that such times provide us for opportunities to choose the path of humility. In the end, we may even be able to thank God in our troubles, by showing gratitude for opportunities to grow in humility.

Kerry Williams

CONFORMING TO THE WORLD

One of the most horrific crimes in the history of Israel took place in the days of the weeping prophet Jeremiah. The people built *“the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal”* (**Jeremiah 19:5**). How could God’s people have done something this barbaric?

The Lord had warned the Israelites hundreds of years before Jeremiah not to *“follow a multitude to do evil”* (**Exodus 23:2**). They were not to follow the ways of Egypt where they had been or customs of Canaan where they were going (**Leviticus 18:3**). In spite of all the miracles they had seen, they were subject to peer pressure.

Not long after they entered the Promised Land the Israelites gave in to the temptation to be like others. When Joshua’s generation died, *“there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim”* (**Judges 2:10-11**). This apostasy set the stage for the book of Judges. For the next 450 years the Israelites went through cycles of leaving God, coming back to God, and leaving Him to serve idols. As the period of the judges came to an end, the Israelites again showed their desire to fit in with others. They demanded a king so that they could be *“like all the nations”* (**I Samuel 8:20**). God gave them a king, and their most prosperous king let his foreign wives influence him to go after idols (**I Kings 11:4-7**). When the nation divided and Jeroboam gave government sanction to idolatry, the worship of heathen gods became entrenched in Israel. Though the temple remained in Judah, pagan worship became so common that by the time of Jeremiah the people were actually sacrificing their children to Baal.

It is easy to see that the people of Judah were influenced by others. We are so far removed from the situation that we quickly perceive where they went wrong. We may even think that people today are so aware of more recent atrocities like the holocaust that nothing remotely similar could happen again. But those thoughts vanish when we open our eyes to the real world. Compromise is gradual but the damage it causes is permanent. Our culture has been in a state of decay for several generations, but many have been too busy to notice. Many have been too selfish too care. Now our civilization is crumbling before our eyes and we feel powerless to keep it from falling.

Should we be surprised? Some in our land wanted sexual liberation in the 60’s and 70’s, and now we have same-sex marriages. They wanted freedom of choice, and 56 million babies have been massacred as a result. They wanted tolerance and diversity, and now there is jihad. They said we must teach evolution to meet academic standards, and now they have no standard of right and wrong. They have fallen into the age-old trap of following a multitude to do evil.

Not everyone in Judah bowed the knee to Baal. Jeremiah, Josiah, and others went against the flow. This was hard for them and it will be hard for us, especially when we have to stand against friends, family, and even brethren. May God give us strength to follow the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Kerry Duke