



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

January 4, 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 10:00 a.m.

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FOR THE JOY OF IT

The Hebrews writer advised his readers to always be *“looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (**Hebrews 12:2**).

Notice that phrase, *“for the joy that was set before Him.”* It suggests the sustaining power of joy. Jesus endured the hostility of sinners and the humiliation of the death on the cross for the sake of the joy that was set before Him. One who is motivated by joy finds the strength to do mighty things.

But what is meant by *“the joy that was set before Him?”* The writer seems to be referring to the Lord’s being the author and the finisher of the faith by which we may come to God, and to His sitting down at the right hand of God, having completed His work. Jesus had come to do His Father’s will (**John 6:38**), and to seek and save the lost (**Luke 19:10**). The accomplishing of these purposes was to Him *“by unspeakable and full of glory.”*

What if we today would act *“for the joy set before us”* in a similar way? What if doing of our Father’s will and helping people to come to Him was real joy to us? What if worshipping our wonderful God and serving our fellow man were things we did for the joy of it? I suspect that we would find the strength to accomplish more than we ever thought possible. We would be able to endure until the victory is won. Perhaps the church today needs to do fewer things for the pleasure of it and more things for the joy of it. We need hearts which find joy where Jesus did.

Bill McFarland, Poplar Bluff, MO

ELEMENTS OF A DEPRAVED CULTURE

No God. People have many gods, but not God. They have the god of pleasure. They worship the god of money. Their “god is their belly” (**Philippians 3:19**). Though the creation plainly declares God (**Psalm 19:1**) they still refuse to acknowledge Him.

No Fear. When men turn to themselves, they become presumptuous, self-willed, and “are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” (**II Peter 2:10**). “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (**Romans 3:18**), and they are capable of just about anything.

No Respect. Because they have no fear of God, they have no regard for others. Respect for authority, respect for parents, and respect for elders disappear. We should not be surprised when “a child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient” (**Isaiah 3:5**).

No Love. In a godless society, people have love, but they are “lovers of their own selves” (**II Timothy 3:2**). They even lose the love for their own flesh and blood and are “without natural affection” (**Romans 1:31**). Human kindness vanishes and the law of the jungle prevails.

No Restraint. Men who turn from God become like animals, and animals don’t have self-control. All that matters to a beast is satisfying its desires. It is no wonder that the Bible describes some men as “dogs” and “swine” (**Deuteronomy 23:18; Matthew 7:6**). Some people act like them.

No Limits. The very idea of God means that we are accountable to Him, and that accountability means there are limits to our behavior. Take away the thought of God and in the mind of man there are no real limits. Read the description of the Canaanites in **Leviticus 18-20**. Read the book of **Judges**. If a godless mind conceives a thing, it is likely to happen.

No Conscience. Men without God become so hardened by sin that they are “past feeling” (**Ephesians 4:19**). Their conscience is “seared with a hot iron” (**I Timothy 4:2**). They develop a reprobate or worthless mind utterly incapable of remorse for sin (**Romans 1:28**).

No Shame. Because they have no conscience, they are not embarrassed over their sins. Like the people of Judah, they are neither ashamed nor able to blush because of their abominations (**Jeremiah 6:15**). “They declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not” (**Isaiah 3:9**).

No Meaning. What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? Is there any purpose for all this? Is there any reason for being born or dying and for all the sorrows, pains, and tears? A godless view of life is a meaningless world. Is it any wonder that so many people are restless and depressed?

No Hope. Before they were baptized the Gentiles in the church at Ephesus had “no hope” and were “without God in the world” (**Ephesians 2:12**). How tragic! What hope do people without God have? “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die” (**I Corinthians 15:32**)!

Kerry Duke