



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

January 6, 2019

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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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WHAT IF JESUS HAD RETURNED YESTERDAY?

The title of this article is a question of no little importance. And when we reflect upon Jesus' own words that "many" will choose to walk the way of eternal destruction and that "few" will ultimately make it to the gates of Heaven (**cf. Matthew 7:13-14**), this question becomes even richer in significance. While our busy schedules might often prevent us from doing so, we should actually reflect upon His return every day! Could it be that the Lord has chosen tomorrow as the day of His return? If that be the case, in what condition will you find yourself to be in the day after tomorrow? Only the wise will bother to seriously ponder this thought.

We all need to live every day as if we actually had access to information that told us that Jesus' return was imminent; that it could occur at any moment "*in the twinkling of an eye.*" But it is most interesting to consider the fact that in a very real way, that is actually true. We know that Jesus promised us that He would return, and we know that we are closer to that day than any day that has yet dawned upon this earth; but we also know that this very day could be that day!

The world is nearly 2000 years closer to His return than it was during His earthly walk when He often spoke of that fateful day involving His impending return. "*Watch*" was the word of caution that Jesus often used when He spoke of that inevitable day of His assured return. Later today, we will close out another day on earth (Lord willing!). Each of us will then welcome the dawning of a new day. May we all be living our lives as if we knew for a guaranteed fact that tomorrow would be that final day of mankind's existence in this rapidly passing world.

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (**Matthew 25:13**).

By Milton Smith

IS MY CHILD READY TO BE BAPTIZED?

Introduction. Parents sometimes feel stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to guiding their children toward becoming a Christian. On one hand, we would never want to cause them to stumble (**Matthew 18:6**). On the other hand, obedience must be from the heart (**Romans 6:17**), so just being able to repeat the plan of salvation doesn't necessarily mean a young person is ready.

This lesson takes for granted that the plan of salvation has been taught to your children, by you or a Bible class teacher, and that they understand these things (**Romans 10:17; John 3:16; 8:24; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 2:38**). But since it is possible to know the plan, but not obey from the heart, how do I know if my child is ready? Here are some concepts from the Bible that will help you answer this question.

Knowledge. In the introduction, we talked about the knowledge of God's plan for salvation, but does your child also have a knowledge of good and evil (**Isaiah 7:16**)? We frequently refer to the time a young person begins to recognize good and evil as the "age of accountability." Does he or she understand that all have sinned (**Romans 3:23**) and that this sin separates us from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2**)? Does your child apply these concepts to him or herself? Innocent children (**Matthew 19:14**) are not condemned. However, once a child realizes the depth of their sin, and realizes that he or she has such sin that separates from God, perhaps they are ready to obey from the heart.

Faith. Does your child exhibit faith that God can and will save them from the consequences of sin and give them eternal life (**Hebrews 11:6**)? Do they realize that God is a rewarder, and not just a "punisher?" Obedience from the heart includes faith that God will do what He says!

Commitment. Does your child understand that becoming a Christian is a "forever" commitment, and not just a quick fix for the "sin of the day?" Are they able to "count the cost" (**Luke 14:27-33**)? Obedience from the heart includes commitment.

Sorrow. Does your child express sorrow for transgressing God's law (**II Corinthians 7:10**)? Not just a sorrow that they "got caught" disobeying, but a sorrow that they have disappointed God. The men in **Acts 2:37** were "*cut to the heart*" regarding the knowledge of their own sin. Godly sorrow is also a heart issue.

Urgency. Examples of conversion in the New Testament show that believers didn't wait to be baptized. Remember the eunuch in **Acts 8** and the jailer in **Acts 16**. One preacher suggested asking a child if they would be willing to wait to be baptized for a "more special time," such as Christmas or a birthday. If they can wait for such a "special" time, it may be that they do not fully understand what baptism is about. This is a heart issue too. The heart won't wait, once knowledge, faith, commitment, and sorrow for sin coincide!

Conclusion. One of the most wonderful moments in a person's life is seeing those whom they love become Christians. Let's pray for strength to be an encouragement to them always, and to be alert for the signs that indicate readiness to obey from the heart.

By Matt Clifton