



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

July 19, 2020

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Deacons:

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Aaron Evans
Larry Hill
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 pm

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This is Just the Elevator

The story is told of a farmer who called into a radio station during a contest, and being the fifth caller, he was given an all expense trip paid to New York City. The farmer was absolutely overwhelmed by his trip and the new experiences. A stretch limo picked him up and took him to the airport; his first flight; his first glimpse of New York City, etc.

As the bell hop carried this farmer's luggage into the five star hotel, they opened the door and entered a room. The bell hop noticed a look of disappointment on the farmer's face and asked, "Sir, is something wrong? You don't look like you're satisfied." The farmer said, "I shouldn't complain because I haven't paid for any of this, but I am a little disappointed that my room is so small and that I have to share it with two other people (there were two other people in the room also). The bell hop looked at the farmer with a puzzled look and said, "Sir, your room is 60 floors up. This is just the elevator to take us there."

Well now, before we chuckle at this farmer, we may find that we are making the same mistake that he made. Sometimes people will question whether or not God really loves them. They wonder why pain, suffering, and sorrow are a part of their lives if God loves them.

The answer is simple. We, like the farmer, have confused our journey with our destination. Friends, God never promised Heaven on Earth, but he did promise Heaven after Earth to all who are faithful.

Next time you're tempted, due to less than ideal circumstances, to question whether God loves you, remember that this life is the journey and not the destination.

Expressions of Faith

Isn't it frustrating when our plans get hindered? As the apostle Paul was writing the letter to the Romans, he told them that he had often planned to come to them, but had been hindered (**Romans 1:13**). Many of us today during this current crisis are feeling the weight of altered plans. Careers, education, social lives, and even grocery shopping is off track for many. But we must be careful not to let the practice of our faith get sidetracked. Let's notice how even in what was surely a frustrating time for Paul, faith was still flourishing and being expressed outwardly, upwardly, and inwardly among Christians.

Outwardly. **Romans 1:8** shows that the faith of the church in Rome was expressed outwardly so that all the world knew! In **Romans 16:9** Paul says their obedience had become known to all. This is what the Lord wants from His people (**Matt. 5:16; 28:19-20**)! Christian, are you expressing your faith outwardly?

Upwardly. **Romans 1:9** shows that faith is also expressed upwardly through prayer. The apostle Paul was a man of constant prayer, as he said he prayed for the church at Rome "*without ceasing.*" He prayed constantly for other Christians (**1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Tim. 1:3**) and instructed Christians to follow his example (**1 Thess. 5:17**). Christian, are you expressing your faith upwardly?

Inwardly. **Romans 1:10-12** shows that the church also expresses faith inwardly by edification and fellowship. Paul was praying fervently in hopes that he would be able to visit the Christians in Rome, longing to see them, to impart some spiritual gift, so they may be strengthened and encouraged by their mutual faith. With this current crisis, we are desiring that same thing right now. We want to be together. The Christian assembly gives great opportunity to encourage one another toward love and good works (**Heb. 10:24**). Until that day when we can meet again in person, are you taking steps to express your faith inwardly to your brothers and sisters in Christ?

This present distress we are under is certainly frustrating and trying. But if we will make an effort to express our faith outwardly, upwardly, and inwardly, we can make it through and come out stronger on the other side, Lord willing.

Matt Clifton