



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

July 30, 2023

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:

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Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

Finding Joy in a Joyless World

Media outlets bombard us 24 hours a day with graphic accounts of depravity in our neighborhoods, cities, and schools. Thousands of ads per day tell us we must buy stuff in order to achieve self-worth, happiness, and fulfillment. And pharmaceutical companies will gladly treat whatever ails us, for a price that many cannot afford.

It's no wonder that people of the world feel lost, depressed, and unhappy. Their only hope of joy comes from earthly events, circumstances, or possessions, which Jesus tells us are temporary (**Matt. 6-19**).

As Christians, our joy is not rooted in the outcome of a golf game, a promotion, or shiny new sports car. It comes from who we are and Whose we are. It comes from personally knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through our repentance and baptism (**Acts 2:38**). And it comes from His resurrection that assures our Heavenly inheritance (**1 Peter 1:3**) and obedience to His commands (**John 14:21**).

That does not mean, however, that we are immune to pain or sadness. As Christ's followers, we should experience sadness when a friend or family member denies Christ or dies without knowing Him. We should grieve with others who've lost a loved one. And hurt when they've been hurt. After all, they're God's creations, too.

And, like everyone else, we are frail and flawed humans who live in a sinful, imperfect world. We're vulnerable to accidents, malevolence, and painful – even terminal – diseases. We aren't immune.

Thankfully, through our relationship with Christ, we can rise above the trials and tribulations. Look at the Apostle Paul... he was whipped, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and imprisoned, among many other extreme hardships (**2 Cor. 11:24-27**). Yet, he found joy: *"In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy."* (**2 Cor. 7:4** ESV)

We can find joy, too. As that beautiful hymn reminds us, *"This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through."*

Dan Biby
Garriott Road church of Christ
Enid, OK

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 worshiping 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
via Highland Drive Church of Christ
Poplar Bluff, MO