



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

July 9, 2017

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Dana Carter  
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Larry Brackett  
Roger Carter  
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**Minister:**

Todd Houston

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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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## HOW TO FACE FIERY TRIALS

By Edd Sterchi

The Roman Emperor Nero began persecuting Christians on a very horrible and violent level. Tacitus, the Roman historian, records that “Nero falsely accused and executed with the most exquisite punishment those people called Christian...And perishing they were additionally made into sports: they were killed by dogs by having the hides of beasts attached to them, or they were nailed to crosses or set aflame, and, when the daylight passed away, they were used as nighttime lamps. Nero gave his own gardens for this spectacle...” (*Annals, translated by Richard Hooker*).

It was during this time that Peter would have written his first epistle to Christians who would undergo some of these executions. His encouragement to them was to stay faithful to Christ. He wrote in **I Peter 1:7** that some of them would have their faith “*tested by fire*.” The thought of being torn apart by dogs, crucified, or burned as torches to light the night would be enough to panic the bravest of souls. So in the first ten verses of chapter one, Peter reminds his readers of three principle Christian truths that would serve to strengthen them in times of difficulty. These are good for every Christian to take note of when facing trials.

First, Christians must not forget what God has done in their lives. God has “sanctified” (1:2) and “begotten” (1:3) us. This was done at our baptism where the blood of Jesus (1:2) was contacted. The power in our hope is through His resurrection (1:3). (Note also **I Peter 3:21**).

Second, Christians need to remember what God has promised to do. He has promised salvation (**1:10**), an inheritance that will never fade away (**1:4**), and the reservation of a place in heaven (**1:4**).

Finally, Christians should bear in mind what God is doing. He is in control of every situation and is regulating it so that our faith can be purified and strengthened (**1:7**). He is making it so that we can always express joy (**1:6, 8**).

The thought of persecution or difficult times can cause one’s heart to miss a beat. But knowing what God is doing through the trials helps God’s people not to miss a step.

# INTO TEXTING?

The word “text” has taken on a different meaning in this generation. In light of our familiarity with texting, we should be able to relate to a few lessons about the most important text message that has ever been sent.

**Context.** A text of Scripture must be understood in its context. The verses that come before it and the verses that follow it usually shape its meaning. The text of **Ecclesiastes 9:5** reads, “*The dead know not anything.*” But the next verse explains this statement: The dead do not know anything about what is happening “*under the sun.*” Also, we should read a text in light of the setting of the book in which is found:

*“I had six faithful friends, Who taught me all I knew.*

*Their names were when, where, and how, What why and who.”*

Many times we learn much about a text just by asking who wrote it and to whom was it written. Then there is the overall context of the Bible. Verses in other parts of the Bible shed light on the text we are reading.

**Pretext.** This is what Peter called “*wresting*” or twisting the Scriptures (**II Peter 3:16**). The old adage is “a text taken out of its context becomes a mere pretext.” The devil himself is the master of pretexting. He quoted the words of **Psalms 91:11-12** to Jesus, but he applied this passage in a way God never intended (**Matthew 4:5-6**). We must never give to a passage a meaning that contradicts another passage in the Bible. **John 3:16** says we must believe to be saved, but **Mark 16:16** shows that this believing includes being baptized. **Romans 7:1-3** says a woman who remarries while her first husband is living is an adulteress, but **Matthew 19:9** gives an exception.

**Proof text.** This can be a loaded term. Usually it means a specific passage is being used to prove a belief but the belief is against or out of proportion with the rest of the Bible. Obviously, this word is given a meaning similar to the word pretext just discussed. But in recent years the charge of “proof texting” has been hurled at anyone who makes a habit of giving book, chapter, and verse for what he says. Some say we are guilty of this when we quote **Acts 2:38** to prove a person must be baptized or when we cite **I Timothy 2:12** to show that a woman should not preach to men. The complaint “that’s proof texting” is often made by those who do not want to be tied down in their beliefs by Scripture! They don’t want to hear the direct words of passages that go against what they do; they would rather use their own vague words or some catchy saying they’ve heard and claim “This is what God tells us.”

**Failed text.** There is no failure on God’s part in the sending of the Biblical text. The Bible is inspired of God (**II Timothy 3:16**). Jesus promised that we do not have to worry about the text being corrupted with no way to retrieve the original message (**Matthew 24:35**). But the stubbornness of unbelief and cares of the world can keep the text from getting through to our heart. People stay glued to their cell phones waiting for text messages. They get anxious when they text a friend and don’t hear back from that person. Wouldn’t it be great if Christians were more into reading the greatest text message of all – a text sent from God Himself?

**Kerry Duke**