



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

March 13, 2016

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
865-354-0855

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

Email:

rockwdcc@gmail.com

Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

FULL OR EMPTY

As they rode home, the father grumbled about the long sermon, the teenage daughter complained about the dull announcements, the mother griped about the song leader selecting songs she didn't know. The seven-year-old son said, "I thought it was pretty good, considering we all got in for a dollar."

When a person stumbles out of the church building fuming about the shoddy service, he had better examine himself. The service probably had its weak spots – but surely the whole service wasn't bad. Leaving worship without being blessed is like going into a huge department store where millions of dollars of merchandise is displayed and coming out with a 49 cent item. You come out with what you went in to get.

When you go to worship expecting to receive a blessing, you're likely to receive it. When you go to worship to be a blessing to others, you're likely to achieve it. But you're bound to leave empty if you entered with a critical attitude. You expect the song leader to miss the pitch. You expect a shallow sermon. Neither of those guys is on your "favorite people" list anyway. You decided before they ever started, if you'll be truthful about it, that you weren't going to like "the performance." And that's part of the problem – you view it as a performance. You came as a spectator, not a participant.

You're to be pitied if you receive nothing. You keep going because you're duty bound, but you go as a critic, not as a worshipper or an encourager. In that frame of mind there's no way you can praise God or build up others.

The spirit that wins in worship is the one that goes saying "*I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord!'*" (**Psalm 122:1**). If you want to be spiritually fed, you've got to bring the appetite. Did you go away full or empty? It's not the church, friend, it's YOU.

Joe Barnett

APPRECIATING OUR FREEDOM

Some historians estimate that up to one-third of the population of the Roman Empire in the first century was enslaved. Think about it – if you would have lived during that time, you had a one in three chance of being a slave. The slave market was obviously a thriving sector of the Roman economy.

When a person was a slave, of course, they were completely subject to their master. They had no choice. They had no opportunity for freedom. And, believe it or not, in the days of the Roman Empire, there were some good people who didn't believe in slavery. They knew what kind of life people would live in slavery, and they wanted to do anything possible to alleviate the problem. Some of these people were rich, so they would go to the slave market and buy slaves for only one purpose, to set them free. Because the price of the slave had been paid, the slave could be set free. There was even a word used for this practice in first century times. It was "apolutrosis" which meant "releasing affected by payment of ransom; redemption; deliverance" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

It is no wonder to a society very familiar with this practice that Paul used this word in **Romans 3:24** in describing Christians as, "*being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" Paul begins the thought with a reminder in the previous verse, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (**Romans 3:23**). And so it was with us when we were in sin. We were slaves. We had no choice. We had no opportunity to be free from the penalty of sin. While we were enslaved to sin, we were completely under the control of sin. We were being sold on the open market to the highest bidder.

But then Jesus came, had compassion on us, and paid the required price, which was His own sinless life's blood. Paul confirms this in writing about Jesus "*whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed*" (**Romans 3:25**).

But we must still accept Him as our new Master. In doing so, Jesus will set us free. We are no longer under the control or penalty of sin. Sin no longer rules our lives, and we are free to escape its deathly grasp.

The problem is that some people do not feel like they are free from sin. They continue to live as if Satan is still their master. They let sin control their decisions and lives. In doing so, they are going back to a life of spiritual bondage, disaster, and death. Christian, we need to remember that we have been purchased and set free. "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage*" (**Galatians 5:1**).

Edd Sterchi