



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

March 22, 2015

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**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

**Monday**

Ladies class 10:00 a.m.

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Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

## HIS NAME IS CHRISTIAN, BUT HE ISN'T ONE

Various and odd instances brought me into contact with a man whose first name is Christian. He had been through some trying times and needed help. In the process of things being done, I asked some of the usual background questions and in so doing received answers which seemed to indicate a possible openness to the gospel. He is from a large family and from a different section of the country than me. He is about a year older than me and has been retired for several years. He is conscientious and does a lot of volunteer work. When asked about church background, he replied that he was not necessarily against any sort of church affiliation; he just had never had much interest in it.

Since he was in transition, I did not have time to have a deep conversation about Jesus. I did, however, provide him with some tracts and other materials to read. I have also corresponded with another preacher about someone contacting him with the gospel.

My encounter with this man has caused me to do more thinking and pondering about people and their spiritual condition. Here is a man whose name is Christian, but he is not a Christian. How ironic! He has just quietly gone about his life for years, apparently without ever really seeing the need for Jesus in his life. As far as I know, he is not an open opponent of Jesus; he just does not have the interest. You and I might cry out, "Oh, but you really need Jesus to save you from your sins!" That is true, but until a person sees it for themselves, they will do nothing about it. We need to be open and attentive to such people.

Another matter that comes to my mind is the condition of those who call themselves Christians, but whose actions in attaining that name do not match up with Scripture. I know people may shrink back with unbelief at such an assertion, but we must consider such things. For example, would you just treat a man as a "Lion" (member of the local Lions Club), who called himself a "Lion" but never paid the dues and never attended the meetings? He just acted like one. Or, how about a woman who claimed to be an alumnus of the state university, but never attended there? People may indeed act in ways consistent with the message of Christ, but not be Christians.

These things seem rather simple when broken down in illustrations like those above, but the emotionally-charged and heavily "personal" nature of modern-day religion make things so much more complicated. The fact of the matter is, evangelism can be difficult. It takes patience and a genuine concern for other people. In this, as in all things spiritual, may we remember the words of Paul: "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth*" (**I Corinthians 3:6, ESV**).

**Lance Cordle**

# SALVATION OR A BOWL OF SOUP

In Biblical times the birthright of the first born son was a precious commodity. The first born son was entitled to several special privileges. Upon the death of his father, the firstborn son would receive a double-portion of his father's wealth (**Deuteronomy 21:17**). Also, he would receive a special blessing from his father that the rest of his siblings would not receive (**Genesis 27:27**). The leadership of the family would fall upon his shoulders (**Genesis 43:43**).

The father of the firstborn could not, by law, give the rights to another (**Deuteronomy 21:15-17**). However, the firstborn could lose his rights. Reuben, the son of Israel, lost his rights because of his immoral relationship with his father's concubine (**Genesis 35:22; I Chronicles 5:1-2**). The most dramatic story that demonstrates the forfeiture of one's birthright is that of Esau.

In the **twenty-fifth** chapter of the book of **Genesis**, we read of how Esau treated his prized possession profanely. After a long day in the field, Esau came in famished. His brother Jacob had just "cooked a stew" (**Genesis 25:29**). Hungry Esau then agreed to sell his birthright for some stew. The text says "*Thus Esau despised his birthright.*" (**Genesis 25:34**).

What Esau did would be comparable to a man mortgaging his future for a hamburger or a millionaire giving away his fortune for only one meal. The Hebrew writer stated that Esau sold his birthright for "*one morsel of food*" (**Hebrews 12:16**). Unbelievable! How could anyone be so shallow, so carnal and worldly, so careless with something so precious?

When we consider what Esau did, should we really be surprised? People are doing the same thing today with something more precious than a birthright. Jesus points out to us that the soul of man is his most precious commodity (**Mark 8:36-37**). However, people are willing to forfeit having a right relationship with the Lord over things that aren't any more valuable than a bowl of soup. People are willing to forfeit their souls for recreation, for jobs, for carnal pleasure, for earthly relationships, for money, for treasure or whatever it is, that at least at the time, seems so important. However, all these things perish with the using (**Matthew 6:19-20**). Why is it that people value the temporal over the eternal? Why is it that so many times people are willing to sell their souls for things that value wise do not even compare? Perhaps, like Esau, they don't see the big picture. They don't realize how short life is (**James 4:13-14; Psalm 144:4**), and how unending eternity is. Instant gratification is the rule of the day, yet the wise individual will store up treasure that will last (**Matthew 6:19-21; I Peter 1:3-4**).

The legacy of Esau lives on. He has gone down in the annals of history as a "profane person" (**Hebrews 12:16**). However, he will not be the last. Let us beware that we never settle for "stew" when salvation can be ours.

Which one will you choose?

**Bill Burk**