



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

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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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Ask For the Old Paths

By Jason Gann

In **Jeremiah Chapter 6, verse 16**, the great Prophet, Jeremiah, is inspired by God to pen these words, *“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”* It is interesting that the prophets of old, who we look to for examples, often begin what they say with, *“Thus saith the Lord.”* This is important. Why is it important? It is important, because God’s Word is what saves. **Acts 20:32** says, *“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”* The power of any sermon preached or lesson taught is the fact that it is based upon a *“Thus saith the Lord.”* **Romans 1:16** says, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

This life here is challenging, as we face persecution, temptation, and sickness. The thing is though that all of these things are just temporary and light when compared to the eternal joy that awaits us in Paradise, where there is no persecution, no temptation, and no sickness. II **Corinthians 4:17-18** says, *“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

In our efforts to go to our eternal joyous place of abode, we must stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and we shall find rest for our souls in this life as we have an abundant life here and eternal rest in glory (**John 10:10**).

We must not do as so many of Jeremiah’s time on the earth did and say, *“We will not walk therein.”* Those people were already in captivity to sin, and they would find themselves in captivity to a people who would show them no mercy.

Friends, by Christ’s Words we will be judged. Jesus says in **John 12:48**, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”* Let us seek to be guided by those Words in all

ways. We must be faithful unto the very point of death (**Revelation 2:10**).

Not Exactly

Perhaps you've seen the TV commercial in which businessmen are walking through an airport terminal on their way to an important meeting. The one who had made the travel arrangements is questioned by his superior about their car rental.

"*Did you go with Hertz?*" he is asked. A timid, "*Not exactly*" is the reply. This is followed by a series of questions related to efficiency and comfort, each evoking the same, "*Not exactly*" reply. Finally, the boss asks the man if he's expecting a promotion. You know the reply: "*Not exactly*."

Suppose we were to pose the same type of questions to members of various sectarian churches:

"*Is the Bible your only guide?*" would be one question to ask. If they were honest they'd have to say, "*Not exactly*." Though they might give lip-service to the authority of the scriptures, they'd have to admit they rely on creeds, manuals and constitutions. Some rely on church leaders or scholars, others on tradition, feelings or human logic. The apostle Peter showed us the true guide. (**II Pet. 1:2-3**) Exactly!

"*Is your church organized like the churches in the New Testament?*" would be another question. Again, they'd have to admit, "*Not exactly*." Some have the minister in charge (called the pastor system). Often women exercise authority over men. Many have regional, national or international headquarters. The Lord's will is to have elders in every church. (**Tit. 1:5; Acts 14:23**) Exactly!

"*Is your church's work the same as we see in the New Testament?*" With churches involved in social causes, recreational activities, educational ventures and day-care businesses, they'd have to say, "*Not exactly*." In the New Testament we find the church's primary mission in the area of evangelism and edification, and a secondary work in benevolence toward needy saints in emergency situations. Exactly!

"*Is your worship the same as it was in the New Testament?*" Here again, "*Not exactly*." Everything from unauthorized ritualism to unrestrained emotionalism is the norm. Additions such as the use of instrumental music (sometimes full-fledged bands), rhythmic clapping and performances are common. Many have abandoned weekly communion. On the other hand, the New Testament requires "worship in spirit and in truth."**(Joh. 4:23-24)** Exactly!

"*Do you teach the same plan of salvation as did the New Testament Christians?*" Once again, if honest, "*Not exactly*." They teach faith only, grace only, the "*believer's prayer*," and shout that water baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Then they declare that once you're saved, you can't fall from grace. The Bible tells us how to be saved. (**Jas. 2:24; I Pet. 3:21; I Cor. 10:12**) Exactly!

Even the appeal that many make to sinners to "*join the church of your choice*" is not exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote about "*one body*". (**Eph. 4:4**)

Before we get too smug, perhaps we ought to examine our own beliefs and practices. (**II Cor. 13:5**) It's possible a list of questions could be drawn up to which we might be embarrassed to have to reply, "*Not exactly*." **Remember I Pet. 4:11**--Exactly!