



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

May 20, 2018

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Todd Houston

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

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STOKE THE FOLK!

Have you ever just sat around a fire? It is incredibly therapeutic. A fire seems to bring out wonderful moments of reflection and conversation. Fires are beneficial in many ways with the heat, light, and mood it produces.

God's word is compared to a fire in **Jeremiah 23:39**. Like a fire it enlightens and penetrates. I believe that the gospel also is a fire, and the church needs to be on fire to spread it properly. I also believe that the church that is on fire for the Lord shines brightly in many ways and glorifies Him (**cf. Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 3:21**). How I wish more brethren would take advantage of the times we burn brightly for the Lord in work and worship.

Have you ever been sitting around a fire that was beginning to dwindle, took a stick and stoked the coals, and the fire would burn brightly again? It is amazing that just moving the burning coals around a little makes such a big difference in the fire.

There's a lesson for all of us in this. It is important to keep moving about serving, working, fellowshiping, and encouraging one another in the church. Doing this breathes needed oxygen into the church and helps the gospel fire to burn in our hearts and lives. The more of us "burning coals" who move around, the brighter we will burn together for the Lord!

So, stoke the fire – stoke the folk!

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:14-25).

“...and your zeal has stirred up the majority” (II Corinthians 9:2).

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NATIONAL CLEAN YOUR DESK DAY

Cathy brought to my attention Monday morning that January 8 was National “Clean Your Desk” Day. Now just for clarification, I did not clean the desk because of a “National Day,” but I did recognize that it was long overdue. When you find papers at the bottom of a pile dated 2013, then it is really long overdue! Maybe this should become one of my New Year resolutions!

As I looked at my clean desk I started thinking about our lives in Christ and how that through the year we may allow burdens and sins to build up to a spiritually unhealthy level. (Sin is always unhealthy!) When we reach that point in our lives, we need to stop and “clean out” those burdens and begin fresh. To accomplish a thorough cleaning, it is necessary to “*examine ourselves*” (**II Corinthians 13:5**) to determine what is necessary in our lives and what has truly become a burden. Much of what I had allowed to pile up on my desk was really of no importance and could easily be tossed in the trash. It may very well be the same with the burdens and sins in our lives.

Once the desk is clean, perhaps the greatest challenge begins: keeping the desk clean! Jesus tells a parable of an unclean spirit going out of a man, only to return and find that the “house” has been swept and put in order. The spirit then proceeds to bring in seven other spirits more wicked than itself and “*the last state of that man becomes worse than the first*” (**Matthew 12:43-45**). Once we have relieved ourselves of our burdens, we need to take steps to keep ourselves free from those burdens. Spend time in prayer, read God’s Word, be faithful in worshipping with the saints, and find way to fill your time with service to others. When we fill our time with those “good things” for the Lord, we have no time to take on burdens that only tend to weigh us down and keep us from being productive for the Lord.

One last thought: Burdens and sins in our lives separate us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**). To allow those burdens and sins to keep us separated from God will only lead to eternal damnation. We don’t have to have a “clean your life” day to rid ourselves of our burdens and sins. We can seek and receive forgiveness from our Father each and every day (**I John 1:9**).

Paul Mowrer, revised