



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

May 21, 2017

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Steve McCreary

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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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THE LEFTOVERS

At the risk of appearing snobbish or ungrateful, I've got a confession to make: I don't like leftovers, i.e. cold food that is in need of being reheated. I always have the best of intentions to pull last night's meal out of the refrigerator, throw it in the microwave, nuke it, and consume it, but I fail to do so time after time again. Now, don't get me wrong. I've eaten my fair share of leftovers, but I can't honestly say that I enjoy eating leftovers. The food never seems to taste or look the same. It lacks something.

With respect to your Christian walk, do you realize that God is not interested in your leftovers? In fact, Jesus says that we are to "*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" (**Matthew 6:33**). Among other things, this means that God should come first in every aspect of our lives. Indeed, we should NOT give God our leftover love (**Matthew 22:37-38**), time (**Ephesians 5:18**), thoughts (**Philippians 4:8**), service (**Galatians 5:13-14**), or money (**Proverbs 3:9; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8-9**). In the mind of God, such leftovers lack something.

Being content with giving God the leftovers reveals something about the person who has this attitude. John said, "*We love because He first loved us*" (**I John 4:9**). God loved us all so much in the midst of our sin that He took the initiative by sending His Son into the world to die in our place (**John 3:16; Romans 5:8**). God gave us His very best; in return, He expects the same. Indeed, contentment in giving God the leftovers exposes an ungrateful, selfish attitude.

Leftovers are fine when it comes to nourishing our physical bodies. At times, leftovers are unavoidable, even necessary. However, with respect to God and our spirituality, a life of leftovers is unacceptable, especially when we take into account the example of His Son (**cf. Philippians 2:5-11**).

Jacob Evans

THE WRONG KIND OF DETERRENCE

Anti-death penalty groups argue that capital punishment does not prevent further crimes. They are wrong. The Bible says the death penalty is a strong deterrent (**Deuteronomy 13:6-11; Ecclesiastes 8:11; Romans 13:4**).

If anyone thinks fear of reprisal doesn't work, then let him consider the effect of fear in a different context: the fear of being punished for doing good. Fear of punishment, whether physical or verbal, keeps a lot of people from doing what is right!

Hollywood and the news media belittle and criticize any group that claims to believe in Christ and the Bible. But movie makers and newscasters will not dare mock the religion of Islam. Why is there a double standard? Intimidation works! Network executives don't want to incur the wrath of Muslims. Politicians are reluctant to tell the truth about this dangerous religion because they are paralyzed by the fear of Muslim retaliations.

But Muslim terrorism is not the only or even the worst form of reverse deterrence we're facing. People are dissuaded from saying and doing the right thing because they fear being humiliated and criticized. They are deterred from speaking the truth for fear of being fined or sued. The Supreme Court has ruled that same-sex marriages are legal. President Obama told state schools to allow students to use any restroom they choose. If states don't comply, they are being warned that they could lose federal funding or face a lawsuit. These high-handed tactics remind us of just how much freedom we have lost.

The Jewish leaders told the apostles not to teach the gospel anymore (**Acts 5:28**). Peter replied, "*We ought to obey God rather than men*" (**Acts 5:29**). This was the same Peter who said we should obey our rulers (**I Peter 2:13-14**). But when man's law tries to nullify the law of God, we must go with the will of God.

These intimidations tactics are even in the church. It occurs when members threaten to leave a congregation if the preacher doesn't lighten up his preaching. They try to put pressure on elders to keep them from withdrawing fellowship like the Bible teaches. They warn, "You're going to divide the church" or "A lot of people are upset and are thinking about leaving." They are spiritual terrorists who do their best to spread fear and compromise in the church.

Sadly, many give in to scriptural terrorism. King Saul said, "*I have sinned...because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice*" (**I Samuel 15:24**). Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but he allowed the Jews to intimidate him into sentencing Jesus to die (**John 19:8-16**). The Jewish leaders were spiritual terrorists. They bullied and intimidated anyone they could. Though the common people had opinions about Christ, the Bible says at the temple, "*no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews*" (**John 7:13**).

There is a right and a wrong kind of fear in the Bible. It is good to be afraid of disobeying the Lord (**Matthew 10:28**). It is wrong to fear man and compromise the truth. John said the "fearful" will have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (**Revelation 21:8**). If you fear God as you should, you will not give in to the demands of spiritual terrorists in the world, in the church, or even in your own family.

Kerry Duke, revised