



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

May 5, 2019

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
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 7:00 pm

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YOU GOTTA BE DEAD!

Overheard in Sunday school:

Teacher: “If I sell my house and my car, have a big garage sale, and give all my money to the church, will that get me into heaven?”

Children: “No!”

Teacher: “If I clean the church building every day, mow the yard, and keep everything neat and tidy, will that get me into heaven?”

Children: “No!”

Teacher: “Well, then, if I treat animals kindly, give treats to all the children, and love my wife, will that get me into heaven?”

Children: “No!”

Teacher: “Well, then how can I get into heaven?”

One brave five-year-old boy: “You gotta be dead!”

This little boy gave a theologically profound answer and he didn't even know it. He spoke the truth, though he didn't fully understand it. It is true that doing good deeds will not get us into heaven (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). It is also true that if we desire to spend eternity in the presence of God we must be dead – we must die to self so that we might live for Christ!

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20).

In **Mark 8:34-36**, Jesus said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” Commenting on this passage in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”

The long answer to the teacher's question: One must die to self in order to live exclusively for Christ. The short answer:

You gotta be dead!

Bart Warren

THAT'S THE WAY I AM

God made people with abilities to change their ways.

By Don R. Carroll

“Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13).

The statement, “That’s the way I am,” often is expressed as an attitude among people – even in the church. “That’s just the way I am, and I can’t change the way I am.” It usually is used as an excuse for not making a correction in living that really needs to be made.

People argue, “I was raised believing that people of certain races are naturally inferior. That’s the way my ancestors believed, and I grew up feeling that way, too. Now, I can’t change the way I feel about the matter.”

Or they argue, “I was born with a hot temper, and I have just never been able to control it like I would like to. That’s how I am, and there’s nothing I can do about it.”

Or perhaps the argument is, “I just have to get even when someone wrongs me. It may not be right, but if I’m wronged, I’ll get revenge. That’s how I am.”

We all have heard people make statements like these: perhaps we have even made them ourselves. The real fallacy in all this is that God is the only “**I AM**” being; the rest of us were created to become. God told Moses centuries ago that He was to be called “**I AM**” (**Exodus 3:14**). God’s nature is such that He does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We, on the other hand, are not unchanging creatures. We were made in God’s image, but with the power to become better than we are now.

Excuses like those mentioned are used by people who are unwilling to make necessary changes. Either they honestly are ignorant about whether they are capable of make changes in their lives, or they simply are too stubborn to do so.

Paul was a man of considerable prejudice. He was narrowly nationalistic. A strict Pharisee, he had little use at all for the Gentiles. They were surely inferior to the Jews. Yet Paul became the apostle to the Gentile people. He was not locked into an “I am” concept, but knew God created him to become something better than he was. To argue that we cannot shake loose from racial prejudice is to argue that God will hold us eternally responsible for something over which we have no control. That would make God unjust and unfair.

Peter was a man of quick temper. He drew his sword to fight against people who would take his Master. This aspect of Peter was obviously a part of his character, but he was not locked in. He became a man of steady control over his life and actions – a rock.

John was a man who liked revenge. When a certain village refused to hear the peaching of Jesus, John’s response was to call down fire from heaven and destroy them. He wanted to get even because they hurt him. That is the way he was, but not the way he remained. He became the man who wrote so much about love and patience about other people.

When we claim that we cannot change the way we are, we are placing serious limitations on God’s power that really do not exist. He has not made us to be “I am” beings, but beings who can become more and more like the One who truly is the “**I AM**.”