



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

November 16, 2014

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:

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 am

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YOUR PROBLEM IS YOU!

Who is your biggest opponent? Who gives you the most trouble? From whom do most of your challenges and struggles come? You may already have the culprit identified. Chances are, you may be wrong.

You likely have looked this person in the face today, probably more than once. It was that person looking back at you in the mirror. The greatest challenge any of us face is self. Really.

Think about Jesus' fundamental instruction about following Him. He said, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny Himself and take up his cross and follow Me"* (**Matthew 16:24**).

Most people never get past the very first requirement to follow Jesus: deny self. Our culture is certainly of absolutely no help. All day every day we're told that self is to be indulged and satisfied and served and fulfilled. Self is moved to the front of the line and made the highest priority. Happiness itself, we're told, depends on satisfying self; that is, getting what we want. And there stands the lonely voice of Jesus with His unwanted message of self-denial.

Think about it, though. Was Jesus successful? Was He happy? Was He contented and fulfilled? We often talk about being like Jesus and walking in His footsteps. Doing so doesn't mean attempting to do what cannot be done, rather, it is achieving what is within reach of us all.

That doesn't mean it's easy. Christ did not please Himself and so neither should we (**Romans 15:1, 3**). The attitude that Christ had, which we are to have is that we *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves"* (**Philippians 2:3, 5**).

The first step to follow Jesus is the biggest; deny self.

David Deffenbaugh

WE STILL PLAY IN THE RAIN

Last night I saw a commercial from an insurance company that showed people playing in the rain. In the commercial, a little girl is talking and says, “Every second somewhere in the world lightning strikes, but we still play in the rain.” The point of the commercial is that even though there are scary things in our world, we still have to enjoy it. We still have to take the chances that make life worth living!

I wonder if we should apply this commercial to our lives. There are dangers associated with being the type of person God would have us to be, but the risks are worth the joy we can receive. For instance, there is great danger in reaching out to others with the Gospel. People may reject you and mock your beliefs. They may start avoiding you and relationships may become distant. Some may even try to destroy your faith just to justify their own bad behavior. On the other hand, sharing Christ’s message of hope is the only way for you to ever experience the joy of having a part in someone’s salvation. The raindrops of persecution, stress, and rejection should not stop us from playing in the rain of evangelism.

Likewise, only by opening up and trusting one another as brothers and sisters can we ever truly gain the rewards of fellowship as God intended. However, doing this means allowing for the possibility that someone may get close enough to actually hurt you. You may share things that become fodder for gossips. You may grow close to someone only to have them betray you in some way. Someone may reveal something about themselves that shatters your image of them. As Christians, we have to understand that this risk is truly worth the gift that God gives us in our relationships.

Other examples could be given, but I think you get the point. The Christian life is one of calculated risks. Taking those risks might mean being hurt in one way or another. Not taking those risks means you can never truly gain all the benefits God offers to His people. Every second, lightning strikes somewhere in the world, but don’t forget to play in the rain.

Walter Rayburn