



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

November 23, 2014

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
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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

Email:

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Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Psalm 100

This is an exciting time of year as we anticipate the holiday season and the family functions, decorations, and the festivities that it brings. I am especially thankful for the Thanksgiving holiday that reminds us all to pause from our busy lives, and to give thanks to God for everything with which He has blessed us. I am reminded of a song that we often sing:

I'm rich! I'm saved! I am happy! I've health and prosperity! I've friends! I have doors ever open! The Lord has been mindful of me! The Lord has been mindful of me! He blesses and blesses again! My God is the God of the living! How excellent is His name!
(L.O. Sanderson, Hymn: "The Lord Has Been Mindful of Me")

Our heavenly Father blesses and blesses again! It is a beautiful thought. Consider, now, the words of **Psalm 95**: *"O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.*

For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw My work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways: Unto whom I swear in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest.

We are a blessed people, who should give thanks – this week and every week.

Robert Hatfield

HAVE WE MISUNDERSTOOD GRACE?

Perhaps the subject of grace has been neglected in some pulpits and congregations. Undoubtedly, it has been misunderstood and improperly taught since the first century (**cf. Romans 6:1; Galatians 5:4**).

It is vital to properly emphasize and explain such a huge concept within the gospel message. Why? Because of what it is – the completely free and underserved expression of God’s loving-kindness and favor toward mankind; because of what it does - brings salvation (**Titus 2:11; Ephesians 2:5**) and comfort and hope (**II Thessalonians 2:16**); and because of what it cost to make available (**II Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 2:9**). Perhaps some try to restrict God’s grace, making the requirements of Christ more stringent than Scripture teaches. If we forbid what God permits, we are distorting grace.

However, our age tends toward the other extreme. Far more people try to make God’s grace extend further than Scripture teaches. This is not novel to our times. From the time of the early church, some apparently wanted to make God’s grace embrace things it simply does not cover. Jude contended against some who attempted to have grace cover excessive indulgence in sensual pleasure (**Jude 1:4**). By leaving Christ’s grace for another gospel, teachers contradicted the gospel message distort not just the gospel but also grace (**Galatians 1:6-9**). Paul also contradicts the idea that continuing in sin, without repentance, is an attempted abuse of God’s grace (**Romans 6:1**). Passages like these serve as a warning not to try to make God’s grace cover what it simply will not.

Grace will not cover willful disobedience or a refusal to repent; it will not cover a lifestyle, habit, or relationship that violates the expressed will of God. Some in adulterous marriages defend their relationship, trying to hide behind grace. Some feed addictions, sure that God’s grace will sweep away the guilt. Some refuse to follow God’s plain plan of salvation, claiming that they will ultimately be saved by grace on the Day of Judgment. Such ideas and claims are tragic misunderstanding and ignorance of revealed truth.

The source of grace is divine. So are the explanation and terms of it. Paul’s teaching is definitive when he says. "*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" (**Romans 6:2**). The life in Christ is a new life (**Romans 6:4**), a life characterized by turning away from sin, lust, and unrighteousness (**Romans 6:12-13**).

Let us never restrict God’s grace. By the same token, let us never redefine it – especially to excuse or validate sin. How that disgraces and cheapens the act that brought grace, Jesus’ painful sacrifice. May each of us grow in knowledge and appreciation of this great Bible doctrine!

Neal Pollard