



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

November 25, 2018

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Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

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Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

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Secretary:

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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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A TRANSFORMATION OBLIGATION

During Jesus ministry, there was once a group of people who approached Philip and said, “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus*” (**John 12:21**). At that time, Philip could take these people and introduce them to Jesus in person. But Jesus’ physical body is no longer on this planet. When people wish to see Jesus today, they can see Him in one of two places: in the Bible or in believers; in the Word or in our walk. Those of us who follow Christ have an obligation to be transformed into Christ’s likeness so that we will be able to introduce inquiring people to Jesus, not only by our lips but also by our lives.

This transformation to Christ’s likeness is the ultimate goal of discipleship. On one occasion, Jesus says to His followers, “*A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master*” (**Matthew 10:24-25a**). Paul tells the Galatian Christians that the goal of his hard work is for Christ to be “*formed in you*” (**Galatians 4:19**). Similarly, Paul tells the Colossian Christians that he diligently labors to “*present everyone mature in Christ*” (**Colossians 1:28**). John put it this way: “*Whoever says he abides in (Jesus) ought to walk in the same way in which He walked*” (**I John 2:6**). Likewise, Peter reminds his Christian readers of their obligation to “*follow in his steps*” (**I Peter 2:21; cf. I Corinthians 11:1**). While Christians look forward to complete conformity to Christ in the future (**Romans 8:29; I John 3:2**), they realize that their ultimate transformation begins in the present (**II Corinthians 3:18; I John 3:3**).

On a wall near the main entrance to the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a portrait with the following inscription: “James Butler Bonham – no picture of him exists. This portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for their freedom.” No literal portrait of Jesus exists either. But the likeness of the Son who makes us free can be seen in the lives of His true followers.

Jacob Evans

OUR NEED OF ENCOURAGEMENT

We are at a time in world history where we are more “connected” than ever before (Facebook, Instagram, Twitters, etc.). Due to the advances of technology, we are able to do things that previous generations could not even imagine. Ironically, our ability to connect digitally has not solved our pressing problems such as isolation and loneliness. Sadly, such seems to have actually exacerbated the problem. The world seems more lonely than ever. Two examples of how desperate our world is for encouragement, fellowship, and belonging:

First, in the United Kingdom, they recently created a new governmental position. They are calling it the “Minister of Loneliness.” This government official is tasked with dealing with the ever-growing problem of isolation. One out of every ten people in the UK say that they feel lonely “always.” This is a problem for many reasons, among them is health risk. Some studies have shown that isolation is worse for our health than smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The isolated have a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, and depression and anxiety.

Second, Japan is experiencing a crime wave of sorts among the elderly, especially elderly women. Otherwise law-abiding senior citizens are resorting to things like petty theft because they are lonely and scared. They long for the community and stability that jail offers them. They have no one to turn to when they need help. They steal something small hoping to get caught and quickly thrown in jail.

Let us use these example from places far away from us - from cultures very different from our own – to wake up to and to recognize the fact that all people everywhere long to feel like they belong and that they are safe.

This is where the Good News of Jesus Christ shines like a beacon of hope that it is! Those who know the love and mercy of Jesus must be about the business of sharing this glorious hope with others. We do not have to be or feel alone. “...*be content with what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’*” (**Hebrews 13:5**). We should help others to be and to feel connected to the body of Christ. “*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works*” (**Hebrews 10:24**).

Somebody is counting on you to show them kindness and to connect them to Jesus! “*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing*” (**I Thessalonians 5:11**).

Bart Warren