



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

November 26, 2023

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
865-354-0855

Elders:

Kendall Bear
Dana Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Larry Brackett
Aaron Evans
Larry Hill
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Dale Barger

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7 pm

Email:

rockwdcc@gmail.com

Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

Understanding with the Heart

He had been to a funeral during which he began thinking about the condition of his soul. He knew that he was lost and wanted to be saved. Now, sitting on the shoulder of the highway in his truck, sin-burdened and guilt-ridden, he looked up into the sky and began pouring out his heart to God. On the radio a preacher was encouraging the listening audience to pray for salvation. The sky was the deepest blue he had ever seen. He could “*feel*” God’s presence. Then, it happened. In an instant, the Almighty filled his heart with peace. All the sin and guilt were taken away, and a sense of relief flooded his soul. He wept. He knew he was a changed man—saved from sin.

This is the “*salvation experience*” one man related to me. As he spoke, I noticed that something was conspicuously missing. He had not mentioned hearing the Gospel, being taught God’s Word, understanding God’s Will, or obeying the Gospel. His lack of Scriptural knowledge was obvious. He had never heard what the Scriptures teach about being saved from sin.

“*But is that really necessary?*” one may ask. “*Does one really have to understand God’s Will?*” The Bible answer is, yes. Jesus said, “*For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them*” (**Matthew 13:15**). Observe that these people would not convert because they failed to “hear with their ears” and “understand with their heart.” The implication is that one must hear and understand God’s Word in order to be converted.

Therefore, no one can be saved by feeling emotional, having an “*experience*,” crying, praying, kneeling at the mourner’s bench, pleading with God for salvation, or shouting. Rather, one must hear the Gospel, understand it, and obey it. Jesus said, “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (**Mark 16:15-16**). The man who told me his “salvation story” later did as the Lord instructs in this passage.

Mark Lindley
Chapman church of Christ
Ripley, MS

Commands from Christ are Not Optional

I recently received a daily devotional email sample from a denominational organization hoping I would be interested in signing up. After the devotional, they answered a question. The question was: “*Can you go to heaven if you trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior but you are not yet baptized?*”

They began their answer by saying: “*Yes. Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.*” Later in the answer they stated, “*Baptism is an ordinance instituted by Christ until the end of the age.*” Clearly this command was not only for the apostles who heard it but for His followers throughout the entire age. Finally, they concluded with, “*One is saved without, apart from and before baptism. Those who are saved should desire baptism as a public profession of faith, but please realize that it is not necessary for salvation. If a person believes in Jesus as Lord and is never baptized, they will still be saved.*”

I would like to analyze how they answered this most sincere and important question about baptism and see if it really “*holds water.*” I think it is very interesting that they admit that baptism is a command from Christ and then declare that it does not have to be followed. Imagine that! The command from Jesus Christ to be baptized is optional (so they say)! I wonder what other commands from Christ would be optional? I guess all that are not in line with man’s teachings.

All facetiousness aside, listen to what Jesus Himself said of what our attitude should be toward every command He gives:

- **John 14:15**, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*”
- **John 14:21**, “*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.*”
- **John 15:10**, “*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love*”
- **John 15:14**, “*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*”

Note that there is no room for options, opinions, or omissions. That’s because Jesus is the One with all authority in heaven and on earth (**Matt. 18:18**). Whatever He has commanded, we’d better do. And Jesus commanded baptism as necessary for salvation (**Mark 16:16**) and declared it as the process for making disciples (**Matt. 28:19**). The apostles went about baptizing “*in the name of*” Jesus Christ (i.e. in the manner and for the purpose He authorized, **Acts 2:38; 10:48**). They knew something we should never forget. If it is a command from Christ it’s not an option.

Selected
via Beech Grove church of Christ
Spring Hill, TN