



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

September 11, 2016

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Deacons:

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Steve McCreary

Minister:

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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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ABSENCE AND ALARM!!!

There is a correlation, you know. When a Christian is absent from the worshiping assembly, there is a cause for alarm.

“Why? Whose business is it?” says the absentee. “If I want to miss, let me be – what does it hurt anyway?”

Glad you asked the question – it hurts a lot! It hurts you, first. Fellowship of the saints in the presence of Christ is a stirring experience. Sharing exhilarating emotions with those who love the Lord as together you sing, pray, teach, commune and give is an uplifting exercise. What better could you do? The Bible states to absent yourself only if there is a matter to be straightened out with you and your brother, doesn't it? The assembly certainly takes priority over the ordinary life.

Secondly, you hurt those closest to you. Helpmate or children quit because you do. Your lack of zeal and interest telegraphs to them, “CHURCH IS NOT IMPORTANT.” They love you – you are the big one in their life. You thus take from the Lord instead of to Him, those you love most.

Thirdly, the relationship between absence and alarm is further heightened by the fact that the surest path to backsliding is absenteeism. There is more to being a Christian than attending services, but the attendance can never be minimized. It is a vital part of our duty.

Nothing is equal to the church of the Lord – to leave is to go downhill. Nothing is dearer than the duty to REMEMBER ME. Jesus demands it. Absence lets you remember self. Why would no one be alarmed when even one member is absent? He is selling short his opportunity – he's disobeying his Lord. Be certain about your attendance. When one is absent willfully, he is going the wrong way!

Turn around, brother, come home.

Jim Bill McInteer

WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE

We often wonder what the world is coming to; just how long will evil progress in our world? The Bible ought to be at the forefront of our focus when we have such questions. That God wrote the Bible is evident from many of its characteristics, one of which is its controlled way of describing evil in the world. There is no shocked helplessness at the evil acts of men, but rather a reminder that God is in control over the kingdom of men and works according to His own timetable (**Daniel 4:25**).

Just as farmers wait as long as it takes for their crops to mature before they harvest them, God waits until the time is ripe to punish wicked nations. Often we can become anxious and impatient about evil, wondering when God will deal with it. Men in the Bible did this as well. Jeremiah questioned how long God would allow the wicked to prosper (**Jeremiah 12:1-4**). Habakkuk knew that God was of purer eyes than to behold evil (**Habakkuk 1:13**), but was troubled because to him it seemed that God was idly looking at wrongdoing (**Habakkuk 1:2-4**). John saw the souls of them who were slain under the altar crying out, “*How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*” (**Revelation 6:10**), an evident representation of God’s sense of justice being so sensitive that innocent blood screams out to Him (**cf. Genesis 4:6**).

God will punish when the time is ripe. In **Genesis 15:16**, God promised Abraham that his descendants (Israel) would inherit the land where Abraham was sojourning (Canaan), when the iniquity of the present inhabitants (the Amorites) was full. However, before the time Israel would be a servant in the land of Egypt until the time was right for God to judge them (**Genesis 15:13-14**). God had plans to bless Israel and to punish Egypt and the people of Canaan, but it was all according to His time.

When will the iniquity of our nation be full? God alone knows. He sent His Son to save the world “*when the fullness of time was come*” (**Galatians 4:4**). **Revelation 14:13-20** portrays an angel being sent forth with instructions to reap the earth with a sharp sickle gathering God’s people for deliverance and the wicked for punishment. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 came when the time was ripe. Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the tares in **Matthew 13:24-43** gives a glimpse of the harvest that will take place at the end of time.

God harvests when the time is ripe for individuals and nations. He will issue His last and greatest harvest at the end of time. It is up to us to make sure we are prepared for the reaping when the time is ripe.

Mark Day

The Sweetest Story Ever Told

by Todd Houston

Last week, we recounted the events of the saddest day in human history. As you may recall, Adam and Eve were convinced by the serpent (i.e. Satan) that God was wrongfully refusing them their rightful status as gods who were coequal with Him. The end result was the first couple betrayed God and rebelled against Him. This morning, we want to consider how God responded to the open rebellion of this pampered couple for whom He had provided everything.

Because He had given them sufficient reason to trust in Him, as well as fair warning of the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit (**Gen. 2:15-17**), God was well within His rights to destroy Adam and Eve and bring humanity to an end. Indeed if He were to give us our just comeuppance He would have destroyed us on the spot. However, another of God's infinite attributes (**i.e. His love, cf. Jn. 3:16**) prompted Him to offer us redemption rather than the destruction we deserve. But why did His only Son have to die in place of sinful man? Why did God not simply declare man forgiven and spare Jesus the suffering of the cross?

The answer lies in the reality of the nature of God. In **Isaiah 6:3**, we read that God is "*holy, holy, holy.*" The term holy means that which is intrinsically good and pure. John declared that "*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*" (**1 Jn. 1:5**). Jesus said "*...No one is good but One, that is, God...*" (**Mt. 19:17**). Our concept of goodness and holiness is derived from our understanding of the nature of God for He is the essence of goodness and holiness. Righteousness and justice are the foundation upon which God's throne rests (**Psa. 89:14**). This is why the wages of sin is death (**i.e. separation from God, cf. Rom. 6:23**).

However, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus (**Rom. 6:23**). **Romans 3:21-26** answers the question we are considering. God had to give His Son to die in our stead in order to maintain His justice while extending mercy to the ungodly (**Rom. 3:25-26; cf. Rom. 5:6-8**). For this we join Paul in saying, "*Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (**Rom. 7:24**).