



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

September 24, 2023

P.O. Box 416
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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

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Trials

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you (1 Peter 4:12-14).

Scripture does not tell us that we should enjoy trials and hardships. What it does tell us is that if we suffer for our relationship to Christ that we can be assured that we will also share in His glory. Some suffering is because of our actions, some are just the facts of life and others are because we are serving God. In any case the relationship we have with Christ will help us to endure all trials that come our way.

Being patient, having endurance and steadfastness are characteristics that come from knowledge of God, knowing that He is always near. Later verses show us that we should avoid sinful ways that cause us to suffer, like evil-doing and meddling. There is no question that we will have trials that are caused by our relationship with God. They are trials that are to test us, making us better able to cope with life. We should always rejoice in the fact that God sees our needs and supplies accordingly.

Charles Willis
via Church of Christ at Curry
Jasper, AL

Are You in it for the Long Haul?

A very interesting word occurs in a familiar Bible passage that helps us to understand something of our Christian lives upon the earth. The passage is Heb. 12:1-2 and the word translated “*race*.”

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:1-2)

The Greek word for “*race*” is the word “*agon*” from which we get the English word “*agony*.” This reveals some information about the race we are to run for Christ.

First, we can see that the Christian race is a marathon, not a sprint. We are to run with endurance. It is a race that lasts our whole lives upon the earth. Paul ran this race to the very end. He finished the course Christ set for him. That is why he could write, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*” (2 Tim. 4:7). We must not give up the Christian race, but make sure we endure to the end (Matt. 10:22). It is not the order of our finishing it that is important, it is simply a matter of finishing it. If I were ever to run a 26-mile marathon, simply finishing would be victory. And so it is with everyone who endures and finishes the Christian race.

Secondly, we can see that the Christian race is agonizing at times. We need to remember that God has not promised an always smooth journey, but He has promised a safe one. The Christian life is a battle at times. It is not always easy. There are often many difficulties accompanied with it. It is often grueling and there are many temptations to quit. And, sad to say, many do bow out. But the victor’s crown only comes at the finish. We are guaranteed that all the pain is worth it. “*But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you*” (1 Pet. 5:10). “*Blessed is the man who endures...for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him*” (Jas. 1:12).

So don’t give up! Keep running the race. The finish line’s in sight!

Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
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