



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

September 3, 2017

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Todd Houston

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

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“FOLLOW ME”

The last eleven verses of **John 21** contain an enlightening conversation between Jesus and Peter. It is in this section of Scripture that Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Him. After Peter's third response to the question, Jesus states: *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst wither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.” This spake He, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, “Follow Me.”*

Peter, somewhat surprised by the implications of Jesus' statement, asked what would happen to the disciple behind him (apparently John). Jesus' reply was very straightforward: *“If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.”* Basically Jesus told Peter that his most important concern was to follow. John's fate might be very different from Peter's, but that should not really make any difference to Peter. His main focus should be to follow Jesus regardless of where it would lead and regardless of what happened to other followers.

When the passage was read Sunday morning in the worship assembly, this thought really hit home with me. Some followers of Jesus will have, what may appear to me, relatively easy and trouble-free lives. Others may find life to be filled with difficulties. (It is always easier for me to see my troubles than it is to know what others really face.) Regardless of what life may bring, instead of worrying about how easy someone else has it, my chief responsibility is to follow Jesus. Instead of complaining that someone “got away with” something, I should simply follow Jesus. Instead of lamenting that someone else is more blessed than I have been, I should concentrate on following Jesus. While accepting responsibility for my own relationship with Jesus may be harder than comparing my plight with that of others, it is the way to be blessed.

Patrick Hogan

THE PREACHER DOESN'T WANT TO TELL YOU TO GO TO CHURCH

There are some interesting things that go with the job of being a preacher. Some people act differently around you when they find out what you do for a living. There are also some assumptions about your vocation. People think you are different than them. They expect you to say and do certain things that they believe naturally coincide with your position. One of the things they expect is for you to ask them why they haven't been to church lately. (I could go on a tangent here and talk about how it's not "go to church, it's go to worship" and how people are the church, etc. which is what you would expect the preacher to do – but I will refrain for the moment.)

I would like to clue everybody in on something about church attendance. The preacher doesn't really want to talk about it. He also doesn't want to ask you where you have been, as if you were reporting to your college professor. He also doesn't want to make you feel guilty for not coming. You see, it's not that the preacher doesn't care. He cares about you a great deal. And he cares about the church, and every person in the world. That's why he's preaching. But the preacher just knows that his job is not to help you check a box by filling a pew. His job is to preach the gospel so that you will fall in love with God.

In a church family, we are going to have our ups and downs. People are going to have struggles that will cause them to miss worship. Sometimes these are physical struggles and sometimes they are spiritual. These struggles may last for extended periods of time. When this occurs, it would be natural for the members of a local congregation to have enough concern or care for each other to notice when people are missing. In that context, it is often a blessing when people ask us where we have been.

But I never look forward to that awkward moment when I run into a member who has been out of services for a long time. It's as if they wished I hadn't seen them. We both know they haven't been there, so I try not to mention it at all. Instead I ask them about their life. It makes me wonder how many people have seen me coming and quickly walked around the corner. I don't want to be one of those people others hide from. I don't want folks to say in their heart when we make eye contact, "Oh, no, it's the preacher."

Individual Christianity has absolutely nothing to do with the preacher. While the preacher must proclaim the message it is only the message that carries weight. I want people to disassociate me from the message as much as possible. I want them to see me as a regular guy, just like them. I want them to realize that I don't think anyone answers to me. To be considered an authority figure is in reality the very last thing I would ever want.

If we are doing our job as preachers, when we have finished our sermons the only person people will see is Jesus. When we talk about worship, it will not be considered a chore but rather a privilege. When we check up on missing people, it will be determined that we are loving, not scolding. When we talk of righteous living, we will be encouraged, not judging.

Take my word for it. The last thing the preacher wants to do is to tell you to go to church. He just wants to tell you about a love that is so transcending, and so wonderful, that you will never want to miss it.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." **Psalms 122:1**

Jeremiah Tatum