



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

September 5, 2021

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

Secretary:

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

If You Stand Firm

Paul was worried about the brethren in Thessalonica. He barely had any time with them before circumstances have driven him from the city. Paul had wanted to return to them but Satan had kept that from happening. All he really wanted to know was ‘were they faithful’?

Finally, when he receives the news from Timothy that yes they were, Paul is overjoyed. It had been a tough time for him. Mistreatment, suffering, accusation, setbacks had plagued his efforts. Yet when he hears from the brethren are on the right track, he is comforted. He says in **1 Thessalonians 3:7-8**, *“for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.”*

Do you want to make a minister quit? Do you want to break an elder? Do you want to burn out a preacher? It’s not the long nights or the hard choices that do it. It isn’t tight budgets or difficult questions. Sure those can wear you down and make things hard, but it’s when the people you are serving give up, that you want to too.

When a person leaves the church they don’t just hurt themselves. They harm everyone that has tried to teach and guide them along the way.

Yet when a person is found faithful, that’s when they really live. It restores purpose, it gives inspiration it provides comfort.

It has been easy over the past year to get out of the habit of assembling together. Don’t just think of yourself in that situation, however. Your faithfulness might be what helps the church to have life.

Your absence may just kill it.

Barry Haynes
Hope church of Christ
Hope, AR

Expressions of Faith

Isn't it frustrating when our plans get hindered? As the apostle Paul was writing the letter to the Romans, he told them that he had often planned to come to them, but had been hindered (**Romans 1:13**). Many of us today during this current crisis are feeling the weight of altered plans. Careers, education, social lives, and even grocery shopping is off track for many. But we must be careful not to let the practice of our faith get sidetracked. Let's notice how even in what was surely a frustrating time for Paul, faith was still flourishing and being expressed outwardly, upwardly, and inwardly among Christians.

Outwardly. **Romans 1:8** shows that the faith of the church in Rome was expressed outwardly so that all the world knew! In **Romans 16:9** Paul says their obedience had become known to all. This is what the Lord wants from His people (**Matt. 5:16; 28:19-20**)! Christian, are you expressing your faith outwardly?

Upwardly. **Romans 1:9** shows that faith is also expressed upwardly through prayer. The apostle Paul was a man of constant prayer, as he said he prayed for the church at Rome "*without ceasing.*" He prayed constantly for other Christians (**1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Tim. 1:3**) and instructed Christians to follow his example (**1 Thess. 5:17**). Christian, are you expressing your faith upwardly?

Inwardly. **Romans 1:10-12** shows that the church also expresses faith inwardly by edification and fellowship. Paul was praying fervently in hopes that he would be able to visit the Christians in Rome, longing to see them, to impart some spiritual gift, so they may be strengthened and encouraged by their mutual faith. With this current crisis, we are desiring that same thing right now. We want to be together. The Christian assembly gives great opportunity to encourage one another toward love and good works (**Heb. 10:24**). Until that day when we can meet again in person, are you taking steps to express your faith inwardly to your brothers and sisters in Christ?

This present distress we are under is certainly frustrating and trying. But if we will make an effort to express our faith outwardly, upwardly, and inwardly, we can make it through and come out stronger on the other side, Lord willing.

Matt Clifton

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