



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

January 6, 2008

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

Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Omer Collins
Albert Griffin

Deacons:

Bobby Bear
Kendall Bear
Roger Carter
Don Chandler
Steve McCreary
Don Wicks

Minister:

Brad Tate, B.A., M.A.,
D.MIN

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

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

Web Site:

www.discoveret.org/rockwdcc

Email :

rockwdcc@discoveret.org

BRUISED REEDS AND SMOKING FLAXES

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”
(Matthew 12:20)

Beginning today, we will study a new series. The series will be just what the title indicates. Let me explain.

Imagine it is a Saturday afternoon and you are finished with all your obligations. You have a free afternoon. “What do I do?” You exclaim. You see an ad in the paper for an art exhibit that reads, “Bruised Reeds and Smoking Flaxes.” You think it might be some nature stuff, but you decide to go anyway. As you walk in, you are greeted by the smell of books in the library. You see the librarian behind the counter, a boy with a backpack scrolling the catalogue, and you see a table with *Life* magazines that interest you; but then, you see the sign, “Bruised Reeds and Smoking Flaxes.”

You enter the room, bookshelves lined with books covered the walls, and a fireplace with a fire crackling is in the center. Placed around the room are paintings, all framed and colorful. As you move towards the first set of paintings, you notice the portrait of a leper, the center of the canvas is a man stooping, hunchback, fingerless with his hand in rags. His hand reaches for you with pain filled eyes, face wrapped. In the back ground, you see a father grabbing his child, women tripping over their feet to run, and a man glaring over his shoulder is running. The painting is entitled, “If you will, you can...”

The next painting portrays the same leper, but a great change takes place. The title of this one is, “I will.” The man is standing tall, unwrapped, with fingers! He is smiling. There is no crowd, just a wife and child hugging and loving him; oh, two arms are wrapped around all of them, but you cannot see the face of the person, but you can see the hands wrapped around them because the leper is healed.

You realize this is not a nature exhibit. Many other scenes are viewed, such as a man who knows he is lost. His face is messed up, stretched, and swollen from boiling of flames. His eyes in amazement at knowing the pronouncement, “Depart...” His mouth is open in a frozen scream for reality that has captured him. He is imprisoned by the fast-moving, fire-bound, and clawing and pulling of hell. The man realizes he must obey God only to tell the claw pulling fire, “Please do not torture me!”

Moving to the next painting, you see the same man. Before eternity takes him, he obeys God and His commands. The man overcomes hell because of the truth revealed as to how one can be saved in order to have eternal life – his freedom from clawing, pulling, covering, eternal fire. No longer does this man have the same features. He has a closed mouth and eyes of peace that breath, “Released.” The man is leaning forward listening, and he carries a chain, broken from bondage.

The next picture a woman with few clothing is seen. She is being threatened and all around her have stones ready to put her to death. Moving to the next painting, the stones lie on the ground, and to the woman’s amazement, she feels no pain and sees the smiling man who has drawn in the sand. She realizes she is free. He tells her not to sin anymore.

In another painting, there is a paralytic on a bed begging his friends not to give up as they stare at all the people around the house, but the next painting shows a father holding his son on his shoulders as he skips around the room and out the door of the house.

Several paintings can be seen in this gallery, one after another of the touch of the Master’s hands. Can he still do this today? Alone in the center of the room are two sets of paintings. There are no faces or people on them. The artist has dipped his brush into prophecy and sketched two objects on the first set – a bruised reed and a smoking flax.

Is there anything more fragile than a bruised reed? This was once a slender and tall stalk but now is bent, broken, and bowed. Think about yourself, “Are you a bruised reed? What do I mean? You were once upright and sturdy, nourished and rooted, but then something happened, and you were bruised...maybe by harsh words, a friend’s anger, a spouse’s betrayal, your own failure, or maybe religion’s severe commands. God’s commands are not grievous, and what He requires must be done because, after all, if we obey His commands, He will save us – He promised. Maybe you have felt like this. We will study this in the next series.

Maybe you feel like a smoking flax. What do I mean? There is nothing more close to death than a smoking flax. Once it burned, but now flickering and then failing. Think about a candle as one’s life. Yesterday, you were on fire for God, obeyed Him, promised Him you would live for Him; but today, no fire. Not yet cold but far from hot; or maybe you have just given up completely and have become cold – cold-hearted. Was it that long ago you blazed? Have you ever wondered how you could blaze? Illumination was your path and illumination could and can still be your path. The wind may have taken you; the cold, harsh storms and troubles out blew your fire. People scolded you, people said you were not smart, people doubted you, or maybe you decided His commands were too hard, or His expectations were not easy, so you decided to retreat and let the wind bow out your flame.

There are many smoldering weeds and smoking flaxes in this world. Society knows what to do with you. They will beat you, break you off, and will snuff you out, if you give up, give in, or give out. God will not give up, give in, or give out. God will not give up on you obeying Him. God will not give in when it comes to obeying His commands and God will not give out when it comes to continual begging and pleading of you to come to Him on His terms.

As we begin this study, we will see the moments when Christ met people at their points of pain. We will see prophecy revealed, and we will see bruised reeds straightened and smoking flaxes ignited.

Remember in the middle of the room was two sets of paintings. The other set was your canvases. They are white, and they are waiting for you to show how you feel now or are now, and how you will feel once you have obeyed Him and have decided to come, take, and learn of Him. Your name is at the bottom, and oh, by the way, beside it is a table with paint and a brush, waiting for you to change your life for Him...what will it look like?

Brad