

The Narrow Road

1 Peter 4:1-4

We probably came into recovery because we'd had enough! We'd had enough of the pain, the lies, and the destruction that resulted from our sinful behavior. One day at a time, we learned the principles on the road to recovery. Now we are at a place we weren't sure we could ever reach. Now we are encouraged to share the message with others even though not everyone will welcome it.

Peter pointed out: "You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy-their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties.... Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you" (1 Peter 4:3-4).

Jesus said: "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Our message won't be accepted by the masses. The people on the "highway to hell" won't eagerly restrict themselves to the clearly defined steps on the road to recovery. But for those who do listen, our stories could be the difference between life and death for them.



Our Story

Mark 16:14-18

Each one of us has a valuable story to tell. We may be shy and feel awkward about speaking. We may think that what we have to share is too trivial. Is it actually going to help anyone else? We may struggle to get beyond the shame of our past experiences. But our recovery stories can help others who are trapped back where we were. Are we willing to allow God to use us to help free others?



Jesus left us with this vital task: "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mark 16:15). The apostle Paul traveled the world over telling everyone of his conversion. He ended up in chains, but his spirit was free. He presented his defense (and his own story of redemption) before kings. King Agrippa interrupted him to say, "Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?" Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains"" (Acts 26:28-29).

Within each personal journey from bondage to freedom is a microcosm of the gospel. When people hear our stories, even if they seem trivial, we are offering them a chance to escape their chains and begin their own recovery.

Judging

Romans 3:10-12

We may feel that we are different from other people-either much worse or much better. We may look down on ourselves and continually compare ourselves with "good" people. Or perhaps our sins are more socially acceptable than the sins of other people we know. So we console ourselves by looking down on others whose sins seem worse than ours.

"As the Scriptures say, 'No one is righteous-not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless'" (Romans 3:10-12). The first chapter of Romans is often used to condemn sexual sins or sexual addictions. People tend to skip over the last few verses, which condemn the more "acceptable" sins such as backbiting, disobeying parents, or bragging. In the second chapter the apostle Paul speaks to people who see themselves as better than others: "You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things" (Romans 2:1).

Every one of us is made of the same stuff-both good and bad. We may act out in different ways, but in God's eyes we are all the same. When we focus on admitting our wrongs, it helps us remember that we are not so different from others after all. As we call on God and admit our helplessness, we can begin the steps toward healing and recovery.

Don't Let Down Your Guard!

Romans 7:18-25

We may have begun to realize that we have character flaws that are beyond our control. Deep down inside there is a sense of brokenness that is a constant reminder of our humanity. Hopefully, we will get to a place where our behavior is under control, and we will be able to maintain our Christ-like behavior. But as long as we are in a human body, we will have to contend with our sinful nature.

Paul said of himself, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. . . . There is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me" (Romans 7:18, 23). King David described God's tenderness toward us because of our human condition: "The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust" (Psalm 103:13-14).

No matter how far we progress in our spiritual walk, our sinful nature will always be susceptible to the lure of our addictions. We can't afford to forget this or let down our guard. Maintaining a Christian balance is something we will need to nurture for the rest of our lives, one day at a time. But we also have a reason for great hope. By trusting Christ and recognizing our helplessness against the power of sin, we open our lives to the transforming power of God.



CALENDAR

Sunday	10:00 am	Bible Study	At the building and live stream
Sunday	11:00 am	Worship	At the building and live stream
Sunday	4:00 pm	Walking the 12 Steps with Jesus	TBD
Wednesday	10:30 am	Breakfast with the Seniors	At Perkins Restaurant
Wednesday	6:30 pm	Bible Study	At the building
Saturday	7:00 pm	Teen Group	At the building
May 18-20th	Montana Men's Retreat: "Creating Communities of Conviction" at the C-N Camp near Augusta, MT. Cost is \$150 for adults, \$90 for under 19, with a late fee of \$15 after May 10th. Make checks out to Great Falls Church of Christ and mail them to Great Falls Church of Christ, 1300 6th Street NW, Great Falls, MT 59404. See Bob Queenan with questions.		
May 20 th	Senior Breakfast <u>CANCELLED</u> (3 rd Saturday each month.)		
June 3 rd	Family Days in the Park – 11:00 am – 7:00 pm. Bring games, sports equipment, and food is picnic style. Sunnyside Park (next to EIRMC)		
June 4 th	Family Days in the Park – 10:30 am – 5:30 pm. Worship starts at 10:30, then a potluck, then games and fun –Sunnyside Park (next to EIRMC)		
Aug 6 th	Area Singing with the Pocatello Church of Christ. Details to follow.		

PRAYERS

- For Jade's brothers, whose house burned down Friday while he was away.
- For Gary Brush, being treated for cancer.
- For Briley, coping with Marfans syndrome.
- For Bobbie Knight. Bobbie Knight, IDOC # 113912, PWCC - 2 C, 1451 Fore Rd, Pocatello 83204.
- For Gary, Rob, Kyle & Andy as they lead our congregation.
- For Ryan Burns, Jordan Allbritten, and Thomas Mullinaux, serving in the armed forces.
- For our widows: Myrna, Ella, Miriam, Louise, Sallye, & Carolyn.

LEADERSHIP

Web Page: Idahofallschurchofchrist.org

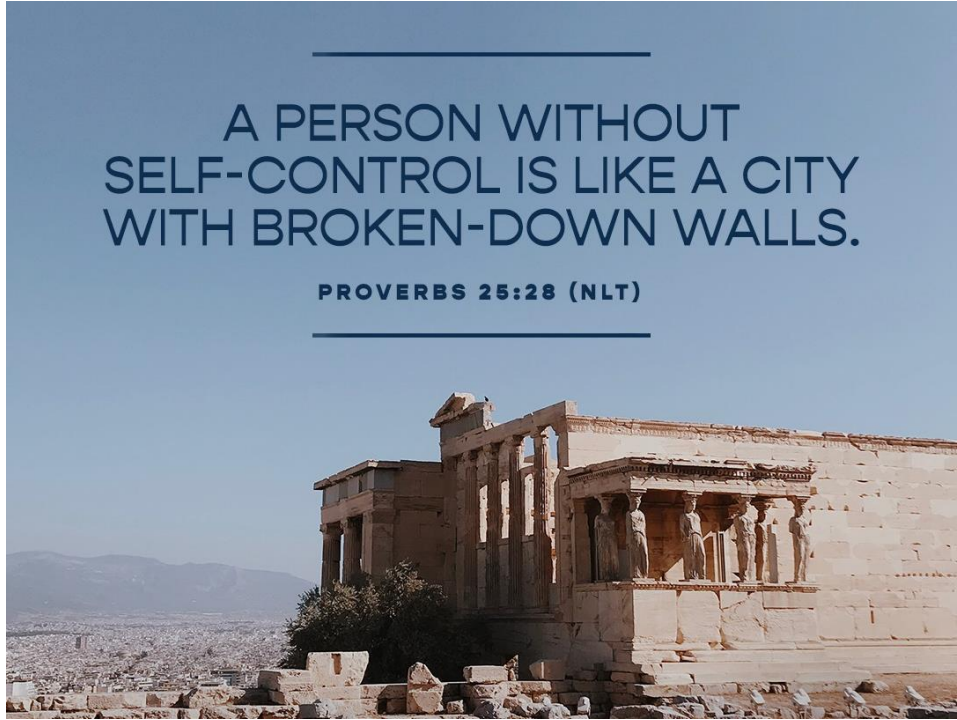
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The Church of Christ in Idaho Falls

April 30, 2023

Welcome!

We're a bible-based congregation of Christians meeting in Idaho Falls to praise and worship the one God and to support and encourage each other. All are welcome! Please join us in our worship services and classes.



Meditation for Today

Turn out all thoughts of doubt and fear and resentment. Never tolerate them if you can help it. Bar the windows and doors of your mind against them, as you would bar your home against a thief who would steal in to take away your treasures. What greater treasures can you have than faith and courage and love? All these are stolen from you by doubt and fear and resentment. Face each day with peace and hope. They are results of true faith in God. Faith gives you a feeling of protection and safety that you can get in no other way.

I pray that I may feel protected and safe, but not only when I am in the harbor. I pray that I may have protection and safety even in the midst of the storms of life.

Online Bulletin is available at our website <https://ifcocminister.wixsite.com/mysite>