

## Youth NEWS

Thank you to Steve Randle for hosting the Jr./Sr. High Devo.



We appreciate you!

### F. U. E. L. Youth Rally 2017

There will be a youth rally hosted by MidTown May 5-6 with Joe Wells entitled, "Confronting Culture." Plan to attend Friday at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

**AIM Peach Valley Christian Youth Camp**  
July 16th-21st, 2017. Camper (9-15 year olds) applications available online.  
Camper drop off Sunday 2 p.m. Camper pick up Friday 2 p.m. Priority registration is now through June 8.

## Education NEWS

### In Search of the Lord's Way

The lesson for Sunday, April 23 at 7:30 a.m. on KMOL is entitled, "Worship in Song." Music is a powerful influence in the church and in our lives. God desires that our worship in song glorify Him in spirit and in truth. How we worship God matters. Since we seek to please Him, let's hear how He wants us to worship in song.

### SUNDAYS

Bible Classes .....9:00 AM  
Morning Worship .....10:00 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 5:00 PM

*Tuesdays (September through May)*

Men's Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Ladies' Bible Study..... 10:00 AM

### WEDNESDAYS

Midweek Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

### EVANGELIST

Ronnie Scherffius

### SUPPORTED WORKS

James and Emily Cammock  
*Hamilton, New Zealand*

John Moore  
*Bible Land Passages*

Cecil Shaw  
*Ocho Rios, Jamaica*

Student Support  
*Southwest School of Bible Studies*

THE MIDTOWN MESSENGER IS THE WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST, 5901 N. MAIN, VICTORIA, TEXAS 77904 . 361-573-0030  
[www.midtowncoc.org](http://www.midtowncoc.org)

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR MID-TOWN MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

# The MidTown CHURCH OF CHRIST Messenger

APRIL 16, 2017

"THE THIEF ON THE CROSS" by Ronnie Scherffius

### *The New Testament Of Christ—Without Strength Until His Death*

To further expand upon the thought that the thief was not amenable to the law of Christ consider the words of the Hebrews writer:

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth (Heb. 9:15-17).*

Prior to His death, Jesus found occasion to extend forgiveness of sins—an action for which He was severely attacked. Mark's account of the man sick of the palsy is a clear illustration:

*And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house (Mark 2:4-11).*

Abundantly clear is the certainty that, because of the great faith exhibited, Jesus forgave this man of his sins. Furthermore, the reaction of the scribes was both immediate and expected, and in part correct: "who can forgive sins but God only" (Mark 2:7). Jesus' declaration, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10), was not a rejection of their conclusion but rather an ascent to the truth of it and a profession of His deity. Finally, the demonstration of power over the physical realm through the miraculous deed served as conclusive evidence to His claim.

Though this passage is not an example of Christian conversion, it does demonstrate that Jesus, as Deity in the flesh (cf. John 1:1-3; John 1:14; John 5:18; et al) had the power, authority, and right to offer forgiveness while on this earth. As long as Christ lived He could extend that gift to any He chose, but after His death and the declaration of His will, all who come to Him seeking forgiveness must obtain that precious gift according to His last and final will and testament. What then does the last will and testament of Christ say regarding that blessed and treasured gift of forgiveness? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16); "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Forgiveness for the thief on the cross was not conditioned upon baptism. Jesus extended forgiveness to this man by divine right, i.e., because Jesus was Deity, He had the divine right to offer it as He saw fit. Were that thief alive today his forgiveness would be, of necessity, according to the will of Jesus Christ, which will is set forth in the preaching of the gospel. In their superb

commentary, The Fourfold Gospel, J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton rightly reasoned,

*Many thoughtlessly make this dying robber the model of death-bed repentance, arguing that others may also be saved in this irregular manner. But Christ had not yet died, and the new testament or covenant was not sealed. Jesus then could change its terms to suit the occasion. It is therefore no evidence whatever that after his death and in his present glorified state our Lord will in any way change the covenant so as to do away with a single one of the terms required for obtaining remission of sins. (728)*

The Protestant doctrine that “no more than a request for salvation made in faith is required by God” is not found in the inspired record of the thief on the cross, nor any other passage of Scripture. Salvation by faith only is a false, fallacious, soul destroying doctrine that should be rejected and opposed at every instance.

**The Thief On The Cross—Some Lessons Learned**

While the biblical account of the thief on the cross does not teach salvation by grace through faith apart from works, there are many timeless truths found within the inspired record that are worthy of consideration. The need for repentance is clearly taught by the account of the thief on the cross. Early on it seems that both thieves accosted Christ as they hung suspended between heaven and earth (Matt. 27:44), but as the day drew dark and circumstances developed one of the thieves demonstrated in his words the fruits of repentance: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” (Luke 23:42).

The kingship of Jesus and the spiritual nature of the kingdom are seen in the words of the thief on the cross:

*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom (Luke 23:40-42).*

There can be no doubt that the thief understood Jesus’ life on this earth would soon come to an end, and yet he readily acknowledges Jesus would receive a kingdom! Such a remarkable admission reveals a faith that exceeded many of the disciples (cf. Luke 24:19-21).

Another great truth highlighted by the thief is the sinlessness of Jesus: “But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but **this man hath done nothing amiss**” (Luke 23:40-41). The Hebrews writer declared Jesus’ sinless life (Heb. 4:15; Heb. 7:26), as did the apostles Paul (2 Cor. 5:21) and Peter (1 Pet. 2:22). Such an acknowledgement by this thief, at the least implies that he was familiar with Jesus’ life and work.

Further, the thief confessed the clearly taught truth that punishment for wrongdoing is just: “we receive the due reward of our deeds” (Luke 23:41). This divine principle is found throughout both Old and New Testaments (Lev. 10:1-2; Heb. 2:1-2; Rom. 6:23).

Finally, the words of the thief on the cross make known that he believed in the established truths of life of the soul after death. There are many who suggest that this life is all there is for man, that when we pass from this life we pass not into eternity but into history. King David found peace in the truth of life of the soul outside of the body (2 Sam. 12:18-3); this truth was taught often by Jesus (Jn 5:28-29; Matt. 25:31-32; et al).

**Conclusion**

Paul admonished the elders of the Ephesian church to be watchful for grievous wolves that would teach “perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30-31). He warned Timothy the time would come when men would no longer desire to hear “sound doctrine” but would “turn away their ears from the truth” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The doctrines and traditions of man are many, but few are more popular and have led more souls down the path of destruction than the false doctrine of salvation by faith only. Faith without obedience to the divine command of baptism is no faith at all and a salvation hoped for on the grounds of a faith not made perfect by works is no salvation.

There were those of Jeremiah’s day who cried “Peace, peace” when there was no peace (Jer. 8:11). The false teacher today who seeks to twist the inspired record of the thief on the cross into salvation apart from obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and cry “peace to your soul” is not one particle different from the false teachers of ancient times. Of these false prophets Jehovah revealed, “The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart” (Jer. 14:14).

How do we combat false teachers? How can we turn men from the error of Protestantism to the truth of God’s Word? Simply this: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).

**News**

**& ACTIVITIES**

**Today!**

There will be a Teacher’s Meeting following evening services for all ladies’ interested in teaching children’s classes.

**Sunday, April 23**

You are encouraged to submit bible questions in a “mail box” in the foyer to be answered during a monthly Q&A session. Ronnie will answer the bible questions each fourth Sunday during the evening service.

- Brookdale Team #3 will meet today.
- Check out MidTown’s updated website at [www.midtowncoc.org](http://www.midtowncoc.org) to listen to sermons including the recent gospel meeting lessons.
- The Tuesday Men’s and Ladies’ Bible Studies will break for summer with the last class on May 9.
- The Leadership Development class is now on break for the summer.
- Congratulations to James and Emily Cammock on the arrival of their daughter Shiloh weighing 7 lbs., 10 oz. Proud grandparents are Kevin and Imelda Sheeran.



Records You Helped Make  
For the Week of  
APRIL 9, 2017

**Attendance**

Sunday Bible Class.....133  
Sunday Morning Assembly.....176  
Sunday Evening Assembly.....100  
Wednesday Attendance.....107

**Offering: \$5,889.48**

**Keep in PRAYER**



**MidTown Members:**

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Buster Bailey  | Betty Mabe        |
| Jeff Cannady   | Sandy Malone      |
| Les Daltry     | Ann Pantel        |
| Jan Farris     | Glenodine Pitts   |
| Dee Gilpatrick | Angela Sneeringer |
| Betty Key      | Mickey Tisue      |
| Kathy Laws     | Clark Withers     |

**& Friends Family:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Victor Benitez,<br><i>brother of Virginia Escojido</i> | Amanda Mueller<br><i>sister of Amy Harris</i>              |
| Bert Haynes,<br><i>father of Pam Stryker</i>           | Fred Porter,<br><i>brother-in-law of Della Rampley</i>     |
| Kim Neel-Farthing,<br><i>daughter of Joyce</i>         | Madeline Posey,<br><i>family of Julie Posey</i>            |
| June Green,<br><i>mother of Janice FitzSimmons</i>     | Sarah Randle,<br><i>mother of Steve</i>                    |
| Amy Jamison,<br><i>daughter of Terry</i>               | Polly Ray,<br><i>aunt of Connie Cleveland</i>              |
| Keith Lempa,<br><i>son-in-law of Larry Nuckles</i>     | Scott Reeves,<br><i>son of Sam and Leta</i>                |
| Rose Leske,<br><i>sister-in-law of Sandra Marie</i>    | brother of Sherry Lynch                                    |
| Barbara Lopez,<br><i>mother of Rosalba Barton</i>      | Gary Rush,<br><i>friend of the Arnos</i>                   |
| Liz Lopez,<br><i>friend of Nina Siegel</i>             | Sammy Snead,<br><i>brother-in-law of Ronnie Scherffius</i> |
| Janell Marshall<br><i>mother of Karon Barton's</i>     | Agnes Sergel,<br><i>grandmother of Athena Scherffius</i>   |
| <i>sister-in-law</i>                                   | Prem Verma,<br><i>father-in-law of Archana</i>             |
|  | Kennedy Young, Sr.,<br><i>uncle of Naomi Flonnory</i>      |