

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

April 29, 2018

Issue 7

PRETEND IT IS EASTER

Ronnie Scherffius

An oft heard comment regarding church attendance is, “The largest crowds will be on Easter Sunday, Mother’s Day, and Christmas.” Driving through town recently, I noticed the sign at one of the area denominations which read: *PRETEND IT IS EASTER AND COME BACK AGAIN THIS SUNDAY*. Pretend..... While one might find some comfort in the thought, “that is typical of the denominational world,” I sometimes wonder if it is the case that even among members of the body of Christ when it comes to the worship of our God, we are not simply pretending.

Are we not pretending when we attend worship when it is convenient? One of the most recognizable statements from the New Testament is from the heathen governor Felix whose response to Paul’s preaching was: “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, *convenient* means: “personally suitable to ease of action or performance.” Therefore, something is convenient when it is easy to be accomplished, or when it suitable to one’s own schedule. When we consider some of the great men and women in Scripture we should ask ourselves, “Was their worship and service to God grounded in convenience?”

God commanded Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Gen. 22:2). How convenient should we suppose such a command was to the life and plans of Abraham? Yet we read, “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and

Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you” (Gen. 22:3-5). Not focusing our attention on the heart wrenching thought of sacrificing his own son, note the fact that Abraham “rose up early in the the morning” (v 3); travelled for three days (v 4), all for the purpose of worshipping God (v 5). Do we diligently follow the example of our father Abraham (Gal. 3:29), or do we sometimes find it inconvenient to arise (well after the sun is up), drive a few miles across town and, in a well cooled and comfortable building, worship our God who does not require us to sacrifice our son, but desires us to worship Him who has sacrificed His only begotten Son for us?!

Are we not pretending when we attend worship services but do not actually worship? In strong rebuke for worshipping and serving God according to the traditions and doctrines of men, Jesus condemned the Pharisees and scribes saying, “Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mark 7:6; cf. Isa. Isa. 29:12-13). How often we hear sermons highlighting the necessity and importance of worshipping God according to truth! How diligently we strive to insure that our worship strictly follows the divine pattern! And yet, how often is our worship just as vain and just as empty (Mark 7:7) as that of the Pharisees and scribes of old **because** our minds are wondering and our hearts are

far removed. Some are present in body, but only because they will be visited by the preacher if we miss. Some warm the pews, but only so the elders will not pursue them as lost sheep. Perhaps we are always present on Sunday morning, but is the underlying motivation ease of conscience and sense of duty rather than love of God and joy for the opportunity to worship our Savior!

David sang, "I was **glad** when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalms 122:1). In essence David sang, "I was full of joy and greatly rejoiced" for the opportunity to worship my God! David was "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22), and David's heart delighted in worshipping and serving God (Psalm 1:2). Yes, worship should be decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40), but is worship truly in order when one is pretending? When we gather together to worship, what is our motivation—where is our heart?

Are we not pretending when we pick and choose the acts of worship in which we will participate? Some choose not to sing songs of praise because "I can't carry a tune in a bucket with a lid on it." Some choose not to pray, but take advantage of the fact that everyone has their eyes closed. Some choose not to give heed to the heralding of God's Word and instead read the bulletin, interest themselves with what is going on around them, settle in for a nap, or pass the time with their electronic device. And some, very reverently and with deep appreciation, partake of the bread and fruit of the vine, keeping the memorial of Christ's death, but choosing not to give cheerfully, willfully, or as they have prospered, and instead pretend, convinced that their involvement in the other "acts of worship" will make up for their allowing the collection plate to pass.

"PRETEND IT IS EASTER..." yes that is typical of protestant denominationalism — substituting, changing, modifying, pretending...but when we worship God only when it is convenient; when we offer up to God a heartless worship; when we choose to worship God only in the way we desire...are we not also pretending? How convenient was it for Jesus to

endure the shame and suffering of the cross? How full of love was the heart of our Savior when He spoke, "It is finished"? Aren't we thankful that Jesus said, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

An Unruly Poison

By: Dean Kelly

The inspired writer, James, talked about the tongue and spoke of how hard it is to control (James 3). All of us need reminding of the poisoning that the tongue can do from time to time. A reminder of a few basic concepts will be good for us all. I know that I need this reminder from time to time.

Always ask, "**How will what I say make others feel?**" Way too often we "let our mouths run before we put our minds in gear," as the old saying goes. It is one of the most desperate feelings when you realize you have said something that should not have been said, and you realize that once it is said it cannot be "unsaid."

Always ask, "**Why am I saying what I am saying?**" In other words, what is my motive for saying this? Sometimes, we talk just to be talking. Sometimes, we really want to communicate with others. Sometimes, if we are not careful, we speak to hurt others. At those times, we use words as weapons, and they can be weapons of destruction—even mass destruction!

Always ask, "**What is the best thing I can say in the present circumstance?**" If I am going to speak, I need to carefully consider what the most beneficial words will be. I have often thought that we ought to have training classes on how to speak to people who are ill or in the hospital, to children, to expectant mothers, to those who are mourning, etc. Too often, our words cause more harm than good, if not well thought out.

Always ask, "**Is this a time when silence will be better than talking?**" I think that one of my biggest problems is feeling like I have to say something and forgetting that sometimes "silence is golden."

The bottom line is simple; we need to think seriously before we talk—all the time. That is a simple idea, but it is hard to put into practice. We would be much better off if we would think seriously first—before saying anything.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of April 29, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Kevin Sheeran
Scripture Reading: Curtis Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Tom Pitchford
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford
Offering: Mark FitzSimmons
Assist: Richard Tisue; Bryce Dolan; Sammy Scherffius

Sunday Evening: Tom Pitchford; Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Doug Jobs
A.M. Closing: Jeff Cannady
P.M. Opening: Dennis Bryson
P.M. Closing: Will Cleveland

Ushers: Steve Randle
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Bryant Siegel

Open/Close Building: Will Burleson

Sound System: Bryant Siegel

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Steve Randle

Prepare Communion: Sneeringer-Gonzalez

Congratulations to our graduate for 2018! Christian Sneeringer will be honored at the Sunday Fellowship on May 20th. Please make plans to attend!



Bible Q&A

This evening, Ronnie will answer the following Bible questions:

1. Explain 1 Corinthians 11:10; "because of angels"
2. Joshua 20:6 — What is the reason for: "until the death of the high priest?"
3. Hebrews 10:26 — What does it mean to sin willfully?
4. Is there any reason given as to why the tribe of Mannaseh split
5. Please comment on 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; what is meant by "then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (v 28)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

PAUL PURSWELL, recovering from foot surgery; ELLIE PURSWELL, mother of Paul Purswell, who past away last week; BILL YOUNG, who was hospitalized last week; JEFF LAWS, awaiting rescheduling of brain surgery; SANDRA MERICLE, recovering from gallbladder surgery; DELLA RAMPLEY, who has an appointment early May for more information about her cancer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 8: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 12: Jr/Sr. High Devo @5:30pm @ the home of Barbara Withers
May 15: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 20: Fellowship meal honoring 2018 graduate

IN THE AREA

May 6-9: Gospel Meeting @ Port Lavaca; various speakers 7pm nightly
May 5-10: Focal Point @ University (San Marcos)
May 23-28: Young Men's Development Conference @ Bryan-College Station

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Caley Hunter (May 1); Jack Fielder, Allen Clifton (4); Ryan Stryker (5)
Happy Anniversary: Clifton & Jackie Rutherford (May 1)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady	Sandy Malone
Les Daltry	Ann Pantel
Pat Davis	Glenodine Pitts
Dee Gilpatrick	Bob Smith
Lucille Hawkins	Clark Withers
Faye Henderson	

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Mary Lou Arguelles (sister of Virginia Escojido)	Cole Ohrt (friend of Ann Pantel)
Bert Haynes (father of Pam Stryker)	Vikram Gottam (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Victor Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)	Mary Younglove (grandmother of Naomi Flonnory)
Kim Neel-Farthing (daughter of Joyce)	Cynthia Sneeringer (mother of Angela)
Scarlet O'Neill (friend of Yvonne Smith)	Antonio Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)
Sarah Randle (mother of Steve)	

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders:

Will Cleveland
Tom Pitchford

Deacons:

Adrian Cannady
Mark FitzSimmons
Doug Jobs
Bryant Siegel

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius**Secretary:** Nina Siegel**TIMES OF SERVICES**

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of April 22, 2018

Bible Class.....134
A.M. Worship.....162
P.M. Worship.....104
Wednesday Bible Study.....99

Offering \$4,582

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Assurance

Power, not fear.....2 Tim. 1:7, 12
All things work.....Rom. 8:28
Heb. 6:11; 10:22; 1 John 5:11; 13

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

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