

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

December 2, 2018

Issue 38

BACK TO THE BIBLE (PART II)

Ronnie Scherffius

Last week we noted the many “Christian churches” in the world today and considered how it would be possible for all professed Christians to be united. It is not man who directs his steps but God the Creator (Jer. 10:23). The only way for man to be truly united in Christ and in fellowship with God is to put down manmade traditions and doctrines, put away subjective feeling, and go back to the Bible! Only then will man’s life be morally upright and pleasing to God for it is God’s Word that is to be man’s final authority. Let’s note three more particulars that make clear for man to be truly united in Christ and accepted by God, he must go back to the Bible.

Man must go back to the Bible for right and acceptable worship. How do you prefer to worship God? Do you want your worship to be modern or contemporary? Do you enjoy a full band so your worship “experience” truly brings you right into the very presence of God? Perhaps you would prefer to tone it down a bit and just sing along with a piano/organ or with the church choir. Or better yet, perhaps you have a fondness for ol’ time gospel singing without any additions — just a cappella! What is your preference?

And what about prayer? Shall we bow with a quiet and reverent tone in the congregation or “lift up holy hands” crying out as the Spirit moves us? Of course, we will need to determine when we will direct our minds to the cross by partaking of the cup and unleavened bread; the Lord’s Supper is certainly an important part of the “Christian experience” but should we partake of it weekly? Would that not become so redundant that it would lose its meaning and fail its purpose? Perhaps monthly or even quarterly would be preferred. Regardless of the regularity with which we observe the Lord’s Supper we must absolutely keep it during the Easter and Christmas holidays because, as everyone knows, these are the most important dates on the “Christian calendar!” Of course, we don’t want to change how often we give our contributions! That must absolutely be

every first day of the week because that is what we find in the Bible (1 Cor. 16:1-3).

Here is a novel idea — why not go back to the Bible for all of our worship? Does not the Scriptures teach that our worship must be “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)? Solomon affirmed, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 16:25). Would this apply to our worship? Ask Nadab and Abihu! (Lev 10:1-3) Jesus affirmed “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt. 15:9). Without question, it is not man who determines how he is to worship God BUT man must go back to the Bible for right and acceptable worship.

Man must go back to the Bible for God’s plan of redemption. Some teach salvation is by grace alone through faith alone and there is nothing man must do, in fact there is nothing he can do, to save himself. What does the Bible teach? “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, **Save yourselves** from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2:40); “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that **feareth him, and worketh righteousness,** is accepted with him.” (Acts 10:34-35); “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth** the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Mt. 7:21); “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?** Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:37-38). Much more could be said regarding the traditions and doctrines of men versus the Word of God when it comes to man’s salvation. Perhaps the words of Jesus himself best sums up the discussion: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

Man must go back to the Bible for God's plan of salvation.

Man must go back to the Bible for the right name to wear. Which Protestant name best fits our religious practice? Should we wear the name of Luther or Calvin, Wesley or Smyth? Perhaps we would prefer a more ancient tradition and should go with Catholic, or Orthodox; then again, if we want to keep up with our progressive society we should go with Nondenominational! That sounds really good AND will not offend anyone!

IF we go back to the Bible we learn "the disciples were called Christians" (Acts 11:26); not Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians, Nondenominational Christians, or some other "flavor" of Christian — just Christian. What name should we wear? Why not go back to the Bible and wear the name given by God?

There is much division in the religious world today. That division is charged by man's failure to follow God's divine directive. The only way to eliminate the division is to go back to the Bible ***and*** to stay with the Bible.

Be of Good Cheer, Jesus Is Near

Clay Bond '03

When we attempt to enumerate the blessings God gives us, forgiveness always tops the list. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases (Ps. 103:2-3). From Matthew 9:2 we see that happiness comes from God's forgiveness. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer thy sins be forgiven thee."

I have some bad news for you today; we have all sinned (Rom. 3:23). Because of our own sin we have become separated from God (Isa. 59:1-2). By sinning we have brought trouble and heartache into our lives, into our relationships and into our homes (Prov. 11:29). At times we feel like we are drowning in misery and unhappiness, and it is all because of sin. We look at our lives and say, "I have done terrible things. I've hurt the ones I love. I'll never forgive myself for what I've done. Can God really forgive me?"

It is not all bad news though. Here is the best part; God is good and ready to forgive (Ps. 86:5). He does not just leave us with the bad news; He gives us the good news about the way out and His terms of pardon. God promises, "...I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:12). These promises are reliable because He cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). The answer to the heartbreaking question "Can God really for-

give me?" is a resounding "YES!"

It may be difficult to understand how this can be, but we can be confident about forgiveness by focusing on the promises of God. Peter wrote that the promises of God are "exceedingly great and precious" (2 Pet. 1:4). Great because God is great and precious because God is reliable.

In John 16:33 Jesus also said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Death is no friend to us. It is a foe that we can overcome through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:57; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8). When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He abolished death and brought immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 2:10). That is what makes the gospel such good news! Jesus has overcome this world and when we obey the words of Jesus, we too can pass from death unto life (John 5:24; Heb. 5:9). If you have never obeyed the gospel of Christ, do not wait any longer, "behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

One final passage where Jesus said, "Be of good cheer" is in Mark 6:50 when He came to His disciples walking on the water. His disciples were frightened and thought it was a spirit, and to allay their fears, Jesus cried out, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." Jesus' presence brings true happiness because when He is near we do not have to be alone. This is another one of those great and precious promises; we can have Christ's continual, abiding presence. Abiding in Jesus puts gladness in our hearts no matter how severe the storms of life may become. Jesus says to each of us, "Be of good cheer: it is I, be not afraid."

In Matthew's account Peter joined Jesus on the water, but because of the wind and waves, Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink (Matt. 14:22-36). Peter cried out, "Lord, save me." Sometimes we are just like Peter. The Lord is right there with us, but we take our eyes off Him and find ourselves drowning in a sea of trouble. We allow ourselves to become so distracted that we lose focus and start to sink. It is in times like these that we need to remember that Jesus is stretching out His hand to rescue us just like He lifted Peter out of the water. He calls out to each of us inviting us to reach out toward Him (Matt. 11:28-30, Ps. 46:1). Receive Christ's invitation, come to Him in humble obedience and allow Him to be the Lord of your life (Heb. 5:9). One final passage to help us keep our focus in the midst of adversity:

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand (Ps. 37:23-24).

The Defender, Mt. Vernon church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, February 18, 2018.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of December 2, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Bryant Siegel
Fruit of the Vine: Dennis Bryson
Offering: Bryce Dolan
Assist: Curtis Scherffius, Kirk FitzSimmons, Manny Flonnory

Sunday Evening: Bryant Siegel, Dennis Bryson

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Lupe Escojido
P.M. Closing: Mark FitzSimmons

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Ronnie Scherffius

Open/Close Building: Helen & Willie Cannady

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters:
Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Scherffius

G.E.M.S. MEETING DEC. 8:

Girls Encouraging Many Souls is at 10am next Saturday at the church building. This is a group for girls 8 and up to learn about serving God and moms are always welcome to stay. This month the girls will be making cookies and taking them to shut ins and widows.

LADIES' ORNAMENT EXCHANGE:

The Annual Ladies' Christmas Ornament Exchange will be held on Friday, Dec. 7 at 6:30pm at the home of Mary Jo White, 78 Kendal Drive. Please bring a new wrapped ornament \$5-\$10, and your favorite holiday snack (finger foods).

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

ARCHANA VERMA, who is ill; ELANA CARROLL, who fell last week; CARL GAINES, friend of Lupe Escojido. Carl's wife Michelle passed away earlier this month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 7: Ladies Christmas Ornament exchange @ 6:30pm at the home of Mary Jo White.
Dec. 8: G.E.M.S. meeting 10am at the building.
Dec. 9: Going away reception for Adrian and Melissa Cannady and family after evening worship
Dec. 16: White Elephant gift exchange

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: June Fielder (1); Ashlee Purswell (2); Jackie Rutherford, Larry Nuckels (3); Kin Marie (4); Mara Hutt (5); Jerri Jeffres (7); Therisa Gant, Ron White (8)

Happy Anniversary: Robert & Jill Powers (1); Jeff & Kathy Laws (7)

We are planning ahead for our Southwest Lectureship that the MidTown congregation will be hosting in February 2019. If you would like to host a student, please see Ronnie Scherffius.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady Della Rampley
Dee Gilpatrick Clark Withers
Ann Pantel

SHUT-INS

Faye Henderson Sandy Malone

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Victor Benitez Vikram Gottam
(brother of Virginia Escojido) (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Kim Neel-Farthing Antonio Benitez
(daughter of Joyce) (brother of Virginia Escojido)

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

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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 November 25, 2018

Bible Class.....107
A.M. Worship.....126
P.M. Worship.....90
Wednesday Bible Study.....96

Offering \$3,667.50

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Miracles

Had a purpose.....John 20: 30-31
Ceased.....1 Cor. 13:8
Acts 9:36-42; Heb. 2:3-4; Eph. 4:1 1f



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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