

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

December 30, 2018

Issue 42

The Blessings Of Faithfulness

Ronnie Scherffius

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).

Preaching, some suggest, is negative by nature. After all, how can one preach against sin and its consequences without being negative! A look at Scriptures might also lead one to a similar conclusion: 80% of the ten commandments originate with a negative “thou shalt not” (Ex. 20:1-17); 66% of the specific actions describing Jeremiah’s work as a prophet are from a negative view: “root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant” (Jer. 1:10). Even Paul’s well known charge to Timothy of “preach the word” is followed by the two-thirds negative approach of “reprove, rebuke, exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2). While a preacher should not be apologetic for preaching so called “negative” sermons, he should also not be unaware of the fact that not all preaching should be from a negative view!

Consider by way of example the first of the Psalms: “**Blessed** is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But **his delight** is in the law of the Lord; and **in his law doth he meditate** day and night. And **he shall be** like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth **shall prosper**” (Ps. 1:1-3). From Psalm one we learn that not only should we consider the negative consequences of unfaithfulness but also the many abundant blessings of faithfulness. As we prepare to begin a new year let’s begin by noting the

positive blessings we may enjoy by living a faithful Christian life.

Faithfulness keeps us from falling. One of the greatest fears one has is that he will make some mistake - sin - fall away from God and be eternally lost! How diligently should we consider the exhortation of Peter:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall **never** fall.” (2 Peter 1:5-10)

The word translated *never* in verse ten is from two Greek words that form a double negative. The first denies the thing itself and the second denies the very thought of the thing. Though we may be fearful of “messing up” and fail to reach our heavenly hope, Peter instructs that if we live faithfully the Christian life, we should not fear of falling eternally from the saving grace of God, in fact, such a thought should not even cross

our minds! Hence Jude would write that God is “able to keep you from falling” (Jude 24). God’s power to keep us from falling away is His word of truth that guides, directs, and lights our paths through the darkness of this world.

Faithfulness enables us to defend the truth. In the days after the attack on Pearl Harbor (Dec 7, 1941) hundreds of thousands Americans rushed to enlist. In some instances the line to join the Army was so long that men walked across the street to join the Navy. The number of enlistments in 1940 was 348,683 — the number of voluntary enlistments in 1941 was 1,094,781. Why did so many men and women want to join the armed forces? To defend their country! An attack on the U.S. is an attack on its sovereignty; an attack on the U.S. is an attack on its freedoms and ways of life; an attack on the U.S. is an attack against our neighbors, our families, and against us. To defend their country, hundreds of thousands rushed to prepare themselves and join the battle.

As citizens of the kingdom of God we have a common enemy - an adversary who seeks the complete destruction of all that is noble, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Understanding that we desire to defend against the attacks of the adversary. Faithfulness enables us to defend the truth: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). Faithful and prepared Paul wrote, “I am set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:7). Our defense may be standing against compromise, opposing questionable practices, saying no to invitations to worldliness, speaking in opposition to error, rebuking a friend for their sin, or even encouraging leaders for strength. Whatever form of attack against God, Christ, or His church may take, our faithfulness to God enables us to stand fast and defend the truth! What a great blessing of faithfulness!

Next week we will note some other great blessings of living faithfully the Christian life.

“The Lord Is My Shepherd”

A little girl was being taught the Twenty-third Psalm. It was a pretty hard assignment for her and sometimes she got mixed up considerably. But one mix-up was most significant and suggestive. Attempting to recite the opening declarations of the Psalm, this little girl said, “The Lord is my shepherd, what more do I want?”

That is almost as good as the original, and certainly if she grows up with that conviction in the forefront of her mind, she can be sure of much happiness and contentment. For the people who are convinced that the Lord is their shepherd find that they have everything in life to make it significant. Such people are very seldom plagued with worry.

If the Lord is our shepherd, what more do we want? If our hope and security lie beyond the circle of this world’s events, then with courage and confidence we can meet whatever assails us.

- Selected -

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of December 30, 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: Doug Jobes
P.M. Closing: Young Men

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Doug Jobes

Open/Close Building: Helen & Willie Cannady

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters:

Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Scherffius

2019 POCKET DIRECTORY:

Please update your contact information for the 2019 pocket directory in the foyer.

Ladies' Day hosted by MidTown church of Christ will be Saturday, February 2, 2019 with speaker Wendy Gibson. She will be speaking on "The Proverbial Woman." Registration begins at 9am. Ladies, please make plans to attend and bring a friend. Lunch will be provided.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

DEE GILPATRICK, who is in Yoakum for Rehabilitation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 4-6: Winter Retreat @ Leakey for Youth
Jan. 6: Forever Young group meeting
Jan. 12: GEMS meeting
Jan. 13: Men's Business meeting @ 3pm
Jan. 13: Jr/Sr. High Devo
Feb. 2: Ladies Day

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Shirley Page (Jan. 1); Glenodine Pitts (4); Gayla Fitchford (5)

Please sign up to prepare communion, open & close the building, and host youth devotionals for 2019. Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board in the hallway.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady Ann Pantel
Dee Gilpatrick Clark Withers

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 December 23, 2018

Bible Class.....108
A.M. Worship.....141
P.M. Worship.....61
Wednesday Bible Study.....87

Offering \$8,696

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Providence of God

God provides.....Rom. 8:28
Gen. 50:19-21; Esther 4:14



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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