



Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

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Issue 10

TAKING UP OUR CROSS

Ronnie Scherffius

We often speak of “taking up the cross of Christ.” We understand fully that the meaning behind this statement is to take up the cause of Christ which is faithfully to proclaim the old Jerusalem gospel locally and to do our part in spreading that same soul saving message abroad. In the heart of every Christian should be the burning desire to do his or her part to expand the borders of the kingdom. Certainly we endorse such a cause! However, while this idea is biblical in nature and the cause worthy of all our efforts, it is our own cross that Jesus pleads for us to take up and carry: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). In fact, in order for us to take up the cause of Christ we **must** take up our own cross!

The truth of the matter is that none could ever take up Christ’s cross for it was a burden that only He could carry: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:42-44). Nevertheless, each of us has his own cross to bear. As Bible students we understand that there was much involved for Jesus to take up His cross. Even so for us. Let us consider some of the things involved in taking up our cross.

Taking up our cross involves courage. Many great figures of the Bible exemplified a life of courage in living for God. To walk faithfully before God Joshua was admonished to be courageous: “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest ob-

serve to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee” (Josh. 1:7). David wrote of having courage: “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:14). In the face of persecution, prison and possible death Paul took courage being strengthened by fellow Christians: “And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage” (Acts 28:15).

Courage is needed today. It takes courage to stand for truth in a politically charged society (Eph. 6:10-11); it takes courage openly to oppose error when others are satisfied with compromise (consider Stephen; Acts 7); it takes courage to be baptized when friends and family openly oppose the Lord’s church; it takes courage to step out in the aisle and openly confess our faith in Christ (John 9:22) or confess faults before our brethren (James 5:16); it takes courage to lead in worship; it takes courage to tell ourselves “No” to luxuries that have become necessities in our society so that we may make better use our means as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7). It took courage for Jesus to take up His cross and we must be courageous when we take up our cross.

Taking up our cross includes resolve. The Bible speaks of resolve as steadfastness. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wick-

ed, fall from your own sted- fastness” (2 Pet. 3:17). A key ingredient in resolve is *determination*. The great patriarch Joseph is a supreme example. Tempted day by day to commit fornication with the wife of his master Joseph declared, “There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:10) Samson, a Judge of Israel whose pride was greater than his strength, resolved to return to God’s service and overcome his greatest adversary (Judges 14-16).

It takes courage to take up our cross and begin the journey that is the Christian life, **but** it takes resolve to continue. Paul instructed Timothy, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:2). The Hebrews writer admonished us to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). In both cases we are called upon to be resolute, to take up our cross and endure.

Next week we will note two more particulars that must be considered and one great result of our taking up our cross and following after Jesus.

What Does Here I Raise My Ebenezer Mean In The Familiar Hymn?

By: *Bob Prichard*

It is very important that we think about what we sing in our worship to God if we want to be pleasing to Him. God commanded singing as worship, and not entertainment. Paul taught, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16). Since the songs we sing should teach and admonish, we risk vain worship if we sing words that are in conflict with scripture.

The phrase, Here I raise my Ebenezer, is the beginning of the second verse of the familiar hymn, O Thou Fount of Every Blessing. This hymn, written by Robert Robinson in 1758, stresses the joy of Christianity and the Christian’s need to rely on the Lord. Robinson chose the phrase, *Here I raise my*

Ebenezer, from 1 Samuel 7:12, because it reminds God’s people how He delivered Israel from danger.

Chapters 4 through 7 of 1 Samuel describe a series of battles between the Israelites and the Philistines. In an attempt to defeat the Philistines, the Israelites took the ark of the covenant into battle as a sort of good luck charm. To their anguish, however, the Philistines captured the ark and took it back to their pagan temple. God then sent plagues upon the Philistines and caused the idol of their god Dagon to fall over on its face. Fearing God, the Philistines sent the ark back to the Israelites, but continued to fight. As they fought more battles, the prophet Samuel led the Israelites as their last judge. As prophet and judge, Samuel offered sacrifices to God, so that when the Philistines approached, God thundered with a great thunder (1 Samuel 7:10). In the confusion that followed, the Israelites soundly defeated the Philistines.

As a reminder of the great victory God gave to Israel, Samuel took a great stone and raised it as a memorial between Mizpeh and Shen. As he raised it he called the name of it Ebenezer [or stone of help], saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us (1 Samuel 7:12). Whenever the Israelites looked at the stone, they would remember how God had helped them. Unfortunately, the exact site of the stone is unknown today.

When we sing, *Here I raise my Ebenezer*, we are poetically quoting Samuel, who raised the Ebenezer stone to remind the Israelites of God’s help for them in their time of trouble. The words fit well with the sentiment expressed in the hymn: O Thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me ever to adore Thee, May I still Thy goodness prove, While the hope of endless glory fills my heart with joy and love. Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I’ve come; And I hope by Thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home. The words of the hymn remind us that God is truly the fount of every blessing, Who deserves our worship and our praise. Although the words, Here I raise my Ebenezer sound obscure to us, they do express the sincere attitude of gratitude we should have to God who is our help in time of trouble.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of May 20, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Sammy Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Will Cleveland
Offering: Anthony Scherffius
Assist: Jeff Cannady, Isaac Jobes, Brant Jacobs

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido, Will Cleveland

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Mark FitzSimmons
A.M. Closing: Mike Atkinson
P.M. Opening: Jim Hutt
P.M. Closing: Dennis Bryson

Ushers: Steve Randle
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Mark FitzSimmons

Open/Close Building: Steve Randle

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Steve Randle

Prepare Communion: Connie Kasper

TODAY! Christian Sneeringer will be honored at the Sunday Fellowship. Please bring sandwiches, chips, and drinks. A cake will be provided and there will be a basket for your cards and best wishes.



There will be a teacher appreciation meal for teachers and their families on Sunday, May 27th, after evening worship.

We will have guest speaker Don Walker kick off our Wednesday Summer Series on Sunday, June 3rd. The Theme this year is "The Denomination Risen Up Among Us". A schedule of the Wednesday Summer Series may be picked up in the foyer.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

CLARK WITHERS, who is in PAM Rehabilitation room 217; ROY ARNOT, who is at Twin Pines; JANIE MARTIN, who's uncle, Jim Daniel, past away last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 20: Fellowship meal honoring 2018 graduate
May 24: Singing @ 7pm at the Morales home
May 27: Teacher appreciation meal @ the building after evening services
June 3: Don Walker kicks off Midtown's Summer Series
June 3: 55+ group meeting at 3:30 pm @ the building
June 6: Wednesday Summer Series—Daniel Garza
July 28: Midtown hosts Summer Youth Series @ 5pm

IN THE AREA

May 23-28: Young Men's Development Conference @ Bryan-College Station
June 7: Summer Youth Series @ 7pm—Riverside
June 21: Summer Youth Series @ 7pm—Mathis

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Summer Siegel (21); Doug Jobes (23); Marilyn Horst (25); Angy Hutt (26)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady	Sandra Marie
Les Daltry	Ann Pantel
Pat Davis	Glenodine Pitts
Dee Gilpatrick	Della Rampley
Lucille Hawkins	Bob Smith
Faye Henderson	
Sandy Malone	

FRIENDS & FAMILY

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

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 May 13, 2018

Bible Class.....120
A.M. Worship.....148
P.M. Worship.....104
Wednesday Bible Study.....89

Offering \$4,479

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Blood of Christ

No remission, without.....Heb. 9:22
Precious blood.....1 Pet. 1:18-19
Heb. 2:9; 9:14; 1 John 1:7; 2:1-2



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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