

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

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Issue 37

BACK TO THE BIBLE (PART I)

Ronnie Scherffius

Jesus announced, “I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18). Paul identified the church as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23) also noting that there is “one body” (Eph. 4:4). Such language clearly indicates there is only one church. Are we to understand this to mean that there is only one church building and all are to worship in that one building? Certainly not for Paul wrote to the “churches of Galatia” (Gal 1:2) and the “churches of Christ” sent greetings to the Roman church (Rom. 16:16). The clear meaning is there is one body or church of Christ of which all Christians are members and to which all Christians are added when obedient to the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:47). Paul explained simply, “But now are they many members, **yet but one body**” (1 Cor. 12:20).

IF, according to Scripture, Jesus built only one church why are there so many different churches? According to figures, there are some 9,000 mainstream Protestant denominations in the world — each professing Christianity. What makes these churches different? The differences (just to name a few) lie in doctrine, manner of worship, conditions of entrance, accepted way of life, **and** most especially the standard on which each of these is based. The fact is (and there is no way around this!) Jesus did in fact build only one church and Jesus gave His apostles the command to teach man: His gospel (not any other - Gal. 1:6-8), acceptable worship (Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42), conditions of entrance (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38ff; et al), and how to live acceptably before God (1 John 1:5-7; Titus 2:11-12; et al). How then can those who profess Christianity be united (with each other and with Christ) IF so many

teach different things? Friend, there is only one way — man must go back to the Bible.

Man must go back to the Bible as the only source of authority. The chief reason for division among professed Christians is that so many follow their own standard. Some follow their Apostle’s Creed others their Catechisms while others have their Confessions of Faith, Manuals, and Disciplines. While these sources are *based* on the Bible they are penned by men and filled with man’s thoughts, ideas, and traditions. The Christian’s standard is not Bible based — it is the Bible!

There are some who render themselves to an even more subjective standard than written traditions and doctrines. These hold to emotions and feelings claiming to be led directly by the Spirit of God. God does lead man today and that leading is through His Spirit, BUT that leading is neither a still small force nor miraculous impulse. God leads man by His written standard which was revealed to man through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:6-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Thess. 3:14; et al). There is only one standard, the Word of God. For man to be in fellowship with God and in true Christian fellowship with one another he must go back to the Bible as the final authority in matters of faith.

Man must go back to the Bible for an acceptable moral life. Some suggest that the acceptable standard is based on culture and society. IF it is the case that morality is dictated and determined by culture and society then what is man to do if culture and society determines that murder, rape, theft, molestation, violence, or oppression is legal and acceptable? According to the Scriptures, when

man allows his morality to be governed by culture and society (essentially by his own will) he perverts his way, commits the most abominable acts, and is given up by God (Prov. 16:25; Psa. 53:1; Jer. 8:12; Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 1:22-7). Man is to live a life that is good and right in the eyes of God. Such is not determined by culture and society neither is it left up to man to discover for himself what is good and right, but God through His Word has provided for us His standard of morality: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). To be united in Christ and accepted by God man must go back to the Bible.

Next week we will note three other particulars that clearly affirm, for man to be truly united in Christ and accepted by God, he must go back to the Bible.

Saved "Like the Thief on the Cross"?

May 4, 2016 by Caleb Colley

The Bible decisively teaches that, in the Christian age, immersion for the remission of sins is necessary for salvation (e.g., Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:1-4). And yet, sometimes a person will say that he wants to be saved "like the thief on the cross was saved," meaning "without being baptized for the forgiveness of sins." Those who follow the Lutheran doctrine of 'salvation by faith alone,' and thus believe that a sinner receives salvation at the moment when he believes in Jesus, often cite Luke 23:39-43 as evidence. In this text, we read:

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

No one should say that the penitent thief was lost, for Christ Himself said that the thief was saved. And it is possible that the penitent, saved thief never had been baptized by Christ's disciples or by John's disciples. (Recall that these preparatory baptisms were exclusively for Jews, and specifically for those living around Judea.)

It is essential to understand that the thief lived prior to the law or covenant of Christ coming into effect. Christ had not died yet, and so His covenant was not yet binding. The author of the book of Hebrews makes this point clearly:

Therefore [Christ] is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect **only at death**, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive (Hebrews 9:15-17, emp. added).

Because Christ had not yet died, the thief on the cross was not amenable to the last will and testament of Christ—His new covenant. In fact, the thief could not possibly be baptized "into the death of Christ," because Christ had not yet died (Romans 6:3-4). However, water baptism is required for those of us living in the Christian age to receive the free gift of salvation, in accordance with the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of November 25, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Sammy Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobs
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: Scott DeDear, Isaac Jobs, Brant Jacobs

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido, Doug Jobs

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Steve Randle
P.M. Closing: Larry Nuckels

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Anthony Scherffius

Open/Close Building: Steve Randle

Sound System: Bryant Siegel

Greeters:
Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Melissa Cannady

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).

New Bible class quarter begins Dec. 2. Teachers please contact Ron White with questions.

The Wednesday PM adult class will have a new topic: "Pondering Proverbs" and Ron White will be the teacher.

The combined family and Jr/Sr. High devotional will not meet on Dec. 8th.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

ROBERTA TURNER, who is at Warm Springs Rehab; GLENODINE PITTS, who fell last week; DEE GILPATRICK, who is at Twin Pines Rehab; WAYNE & JANIE MARTIN, who's house caught on fire last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 27: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class @ 10am
Dec. 7: Ladies Christmas Ornament exchange @ 6:30pm at the home of Mary Jo White.
Dec. 9: Going away reception for Adrian and Melissa Cannady and family after evening worship
Dec. 16: White Elephant gift exchange. More details to come.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Harvey Rampley (26); Les Daltry, Melanie Pantel (27)

Happy Anniversary: Bryce & Barbie Dolan (27)

SPECIAL NOTE:

Tuesday Men's and Ladies' Bible classes will resume Nov. 27. The last class for this year will be Dec. 11th. Classes will start back January 8th, 2019.

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 18, 2018

Bible Class.....112
A.M. Worship.....135
P.M. Worship.....79
Wednesday Bible Study.....103

Offering \$4,339

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Marriage

Instituted by God.....Gen. 2:21-22
One man/woman.....Mat.19:3-9
Eph. 5:22-33, Heb. 13:4; Rom. 7:1-4



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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