



Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

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Issue 27

IF GOD GAVE US ALL GOOD DAYS...

Ronnie Scherffius

The things you see on church signs! In general, phrases on church signs have a good underlying message. For the most part messages on church signs strike a positive chord. But some, after a moment of reflection, truly show the folly and pure arrogance of human wisdom. Consider for example, the following platitude recently posted on one of the signs of a local Protestant church: "IF GOD GAVE US ALL GOOD DAYS — HOW WOULD WE LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES?" How warm and fuzzy that makes us all feel. Yes, we all have bad days. Indeed, we should learn from our mistakes. But what foolishness to blame our bad days on God! And what arrogance and even slander falsely to charge God with the responsibility of our mistakes!

Read the phrase again and consider the implications: IF God is responsible for our bad days (that is the implication) AND if our bad days are because of our mistakes THEN God is not only responsible for our bad days but also for the mistakes we make which causes our good days to turn bad. What blasphemy!

Of the many errors discovered from such foolishness, two stand out. First, God is not responsible for man's mistakes. God created man with a free will. And from the beginning of the creation God gave man a choice to exercise that free will: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). Man's free will is evidenced by God giving man a law with both blessings and consequences. Adam could eat the fruit of any tree in the garden and live; he could eat the fruit

of the forbidden tree and die. It was left for Adam to choose. The man was at liberty to make his own decision. He had the **right** to eat of all but one tree; he had the **freedom** to choose to violate God's law and eat of the forbidden tree. It was Adam's choice.

From the garden, God has continued to bless man with freedom to choose his own path; Cain and Abel each had freedom to choose to offer an acceptable sacrifice or modify God's divine directive; Noah had freedom to choose to build an ark according to God's pattern or to devise his own plan; Abraham had freedom to choose to leave Ur or to stay; Joseph had freedom to choose to commit adultery with the wife of Potiphar or flee fornication; Achan had freedom to choose to take of the spoils of Jericho or deliver them to the LORD; Moses had freedom to speak to the rock or to strike it. We could easily multiply these examples. God is not responsible for man's mistakes because God is not responsible for man's choices. God has blessed man with a law **and** with the freedom to choose either to obey or to disobey that law.

Second, man's choices are his responsibility. We love to play the blame game. Nothing is ever "my fault!" If a man is involved in an automobile accident, it was always the other driver's fault. If a chore is not done at home, it is always brother's or sister's responsibility. Man's habit of blaming someone else for his mistakes is as old as humankind! Consider the following: "And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And

the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:11-13).

Adam and Eve both sinned and each tried to blame their choice to eat the forbidden fruit on someone else. We may at first be disposed to believe that Adam blamed Eve, but upon further inspection we find that he actually blamed God: "The woman **whom thou gavest**," Adam said, was to blame. Eve also sought an out for her poor choice and blamed the devil: "The serpent beguiled me." From that time man has often sought to blame the ills of this life and/or the consequences of their own choices on either God or the devil. When tragedy strikes one is sometimes heard to say, "God did this for a reason," but the truth is that sometimes bad things happen to us because we live in a world where evil exists. God had nothing to do with it!

On the other hand we hear, "the devil made me do it!" The devil never made anyone do anything! The devil did not force Jesus to turn stone to bread; to worship; push Him from the pinnacle of the temple! Satan tempts man—man makes the choice!

"IF GOD GAVE US ALL GOOD DAYS..." James wrote, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Every day we have **IS** from God, and every day is what **WE** make of it! If I have a bad day because things do not go my way it is not God's fault—that's life! If I make a mistake it is not God's fault—I made the choice. Here is an idea for a church sign: GIVE GOD THE PRAISE NOT THE BLAME.

The Prodigal Returns

By: Steven Lloyd

I am under the impression that some young people see the things laid out in Scripture as interesting, at best, but ideal and not very practical. Perhaps it is a challenge inherent in youth that they have not had enough time to test what is taught in the word to prove it true. It is a theoretical something-or-other, to be defined later in life. So, they leave the Lord and His church shortly after graduation from

high school. They are in pursuit of higher things like happiness (translated "fun"). Like Eve in the Garden, they determine for themselves what is right and wrong. They may even experience some "fun" for a while, but it is only "pleasures for a season" (Heb. 11:25). Many of them end up coming home broken-hearted. I have had the opportunity to ask a few people in their mid-twenties who lived the pattern described above if everything they had done to that point in their life they did because they thought it would bring them happiness. Through the puzzled look on their face, they answered in the affirmative. It doesn't make sense, or does it? The Lord has forever told us that it is not in us to direct our own steps, and that folly is bound up in the heart of a child. For those of us who are older, it makes perfect sense. In our youth we may be smart, but we are not wise. We may know a lot of facts, but we do not know the truth. We turn from life to death. Fortunately, some of these broken-hearted people return to the only place they can return—home. Home is where they were loved to begin with. Home is where they learned about God and the foundation was built for them to rebuild their lives. Let's take a look at what happens when they return.

Like the story of the prodigal (wasteful) son, people are greeted in one of two ways. The lost son returned home to receive a less than warm welcome from his older brother, but the father in the story kissed his wayward son. He dressed him with a robe and a ring and sandals for his feet. He even threw a party. The parable of the prodigal son is the third in a series of three parables Jesus tells, recorded in Luke 15. First, there is the parable of the lost sheep, then the lost coin, and then the lost son. All three stories are built on the same pattern: something is lost, the thing lost is found, and then there is rejoicing. The pattern is broken in the parable of the lost son. It is broken with the sour attitude of the older son, who represents the Pharisees and scribes. Luke 15 begins with the tax collectors and the sinners coming to Jesus to "listen to Him". It is always a good thing for people to come "to listen to Him." But the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." (15:1,2). Who are you more like in the story? Are you the returning prodigal son who went into the far country and squandered your early inheritance? Or are you like the father who receives the returning prodigal with open arms. Or are you like the older brother ready to give the once lost son a hard time? Are you, "humbly grateful, or grumbly hateful"? When the penitent prodigal returns do you greet them with open arms or with a scowl on your face; with disapproval in your countenance. Be a stepping stone and not a stumbling block.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of September 16, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Dylan Herring

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Doug Jobes
Fruit of the Vine: Lupe Escojido
Offering: Bryce Dolan
Assist: Scott DeDear, Isaac Jobes, Don Lynn

Sunday Evening: Doug Jobes, Lupe Escojido

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Dennis Bryson
P.M. Closing: Wayne Martin

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Dennis Bryson

Open/Close Building: Will Burleson

Sound System: Michael Page

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Kelly Cannady

Sunday, September 30: Cody Kilgore will be preaching our Sunday Morning Adult Bible Class, Morning Service and evening service. Please make plans to attend!

FALL ONE DAY MEETING

Sunday, October 21, 2018

Guest Speaker: Cody Westbrook

Cody will be preaching the Morning Adult Bible Class, Morning Service and 1pm service. The 1pm service will be conducted by the young men of our congregation.

There will also be a potluck meal after morning service. Please bring a potluck dish to feed your family and a visitor.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

BEN AND MILLIE JAMISON, who are traveling to be with his sister in Indiana; THE FAMILY OF LUCILLE HAWKINS, Lucille passed away last Monday.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 18: Ladies/Men's Bible Classes
Sept. 25: Ladies/Men's Bible Classes
Sept. 30: Cody Kilgore will be preaching
Oct. 2: Ladies/Men's Bible Classes
Oct. 7: Forever Young game night
Oct. 9: Ladies/Men's Bible Classes
Oct. 14: Jr./Sr. high devo

IN THE AREA

Sept. 29: Ladies' Day @ Portland C of C
Oct. 5-7: Freddie Anderson @ Weber Road C of C

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Debbie Lynn (16); Sabrina Gonzalez (17); Dan Fielder (20), Dee Gilpatrick (22)

Happy Anniversary: Bill & Pat Davis (19)

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 (brother of Virginia Escojido)	Vikram Gottam (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Kim Neel-Farthing (daughter of Joyce)	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 September 9, 2018

Bible Class.....118
A.M. Worship.....147
P.M. Worship.....102
Wednesday Bible Study.....100

Offering \$5,299

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Grace

Gift of God.....Eph. 2:8; 3:7
Grace brings salvation.....Titus 2:11
Rom. 15:15; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 5:4

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

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

GO PAPERLESS!

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