

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

March 18, 2018

Issue 1

THE MAN WITH THE CLEAN FACE

Ronnie Scherffius

Two men were repairing the roof of a factory near the opening of a large chimney. Suddenly and without warning, their scaffolding shifted and they plunged fifteen feet through the black sooty chimney to the level below. Unhurt, they scrambled to their feet, and with amazement looked at each other. After a good laugh and some time to regain their composure the men prepared to return to work. It was at this point that something very strange occurred.

It seems that the first man, while falling, had covered his face with his arm while the second man did not. The man whose face was covered had no soot on his face from the fall while the other man's face was almost completely blackened. Strangely, the man whose face was not blackened went to wash his face before returning to work while the man whose face was covered with soot did not even give washing his face a second thought!

The reason for this is simple. The man with the clean face looked at his co-worker whose face was covered in soot and assumed that his face was also filthy, while the man whose face was filthy looked at the face of his co-worker and assumed that his face also was clean. Their mistake — they were judging themselves one by the other rather than looking into a mirror to see their own selves fully.

Many do this in their spiritual lives. Consider Paul's stern rebuke of the false apostles in Corinth: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12). These men never looked outside of their own circle, but compared themselves with each other, and swelled with an inflated sense of self-importance.

Today, many Christians, though not suffering from the disease of self-importance, nevertheless use their brethren as a standard by which to measure their Christian life. The comparisons might go as follows: "I attend both Sunday morning and evening - they do not" — "I teach a Bible class from time to time - they never have" — "I have seen them drop one dollar in the collection plate - I give more" — "I have never seen them at any of our fellowship meals - I always attend." For one to look to their brother whose face is blackened with unfaithfulness, idleness, and a devotion to Christ comparable to an empty cloud (Prov. 25:14) as the standard to measure their Christian life is to set a low standard indeed. Paul instructed, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). This admonition follows Paul's instruction regarding one causing his brother to sin by their example/influence: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:32-33). The point being made here by Paul was not: "Compare yourself to me to see if you are walking in the light," but rather to be a follower of Paul in this matter even as he followed the example of Jesus. The standard was not Paul but Christ! Even so, we ought not to compare our Christian life to the life of our brethren, but look to Jesus Christ and imitate His example.

An even more tragic error is the comparison of ourselves to the world! Paul admonished the Philippians to conduct their lives in a manner worthy of "the gospel of Christ" (Phil 1:27) not in comparison to the world, to which he referred to as "crooked and perverse" (Phi. 2:15). We are to be a light to the world (Mt. 5:14-15)

for the world is in darkness. A comparison/justification of one's Christian life to the life of those in the world is like boasting how bright one's light is compared to a dark room! Christians are to strive to bring the light of God's Word to the darkness of the world, not justify their faults and shortcomings by that darkness.

The parable of the Pharisee and the publican is a prime example of this faulty attitude: "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11). This man's focus was not on how he might improve his life as a child of God according to God's Word, but how much better his spiritual state was (at least in his eyes) in comparison to the spiritual state of other men.

Rather than comparing our Christian growth, spiritual maturity, and the purity of our lives to our brethren among us or to the world around us, we should look into and live our lives according to the inspired Word of God. This is the standard by which we must live, for this is the standard by which we shall be judged.

"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." (John 12:48)

ARE YOU GRATEFUL?

Neal Pollard



Jesus asked a lone, appreciative soul, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:17-18). They were terrified (13), terminal (12), transformed (14), but they were not thankful. They were saved, but to what end? They were selfish and not spiritual. God made them whole, and what did they do? They blended into the world when they should have blessed The Word.

Ingratitude increasingly characterizes man's interaction with man—the etiquette of thank you cards is rarer, the feelings of loyalty and appreciation for the American military and first

responders is waning, and many have forgiven themselves of the debt owed to generations past whose sacrifice has led us to national plenty. This is not all-inclusive and at times there are spikes of improvement and pleasant, positive change toward greater thankfulness.

Yet, since the time when Christ's sandals kicked up dust in Palestine, people have failed to show gratitude to Him. That the ingratitude comes from those whom He saved from the devil's disease and death is remarkable! Yet, we all struggle with that sin.

New Testament writers point out how grave an error ingratitude is. Paul warned about the "ungrateful" (2 Tim. 3:2) who would ultimately make no spiritual progress. God rejects as foolish and futile those who "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful" (Rom. 1:21). Someone may ask, "Why make such a big deal about something so seemingly minor?"

Is it minor? If we're not thankful to God, one or more things have occurred. (1) We are convinced there is no eternity and it's all about here and now. (2) We have forgotten how it felt to be forgiven. (3) We believe that everything is about us and nothing is about anyone else, let alone God. (4) We have come to believe that sin is just no big deal. (5) We think we owe everything we have and are to no one but ourselves. No doubt, more answers could be postulated, but here is the bottom line. A failure to thank God for His abundant blessings makes one in more dire condition than any leper ever was. We may not be losing our extremities, our hair may not be turning bleach white, we may not have painful sores, and we may not be social outcasts. But, here is what has happened. Our heart is cold, our soul is endangered, we're in denial, and we're blinded to the realst of realities.

Won't you say with David, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations" (Ps. 100:4-5)? Stop and think how much you owe to God. Translate that gratitude into godly servitude. Give Him your best. Give Him yourself. Give Him your thanks.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of March 18, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobes
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: B.J. Davis; Scott DeDear; Dennis Bryson

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido & Doug Jobes

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Clifton Rutherford
A.M. Closing: Desmon Flonnory
P.M. Opening: Tom Pitchford
P.M. Closing: Wayne Martin

Ushers: Steve Randle
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Ron White

Open/Close Building: Pitchford

Sound System: Curtis Scherffius

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Steve Randle

Prepare Communion: Jerri Jeffres

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

The road to success is not straight.
There is a curve called failure,
A loop called confusion,
Speed bumps called friends,
Red lights called enemies, and
Caution lights called family.
You will have flats called jobs, but
If you have a spare called determination
And an engine called perseverance,
Insurance called faith,
And a driver called Jesus,
You will make it to a place called success.

—Glenn Hitchcock

Read: Psalm 16:1-11

From: *GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS* (Jacksonville Church of Christ, Jacksonville, AL)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

PAT DAVIS had a procedure on her knee

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 18: Jr/Sr High Devo will be today at the home of Ron & Mary Jo White (78 Kendal); girls bring deserts; boys bring drinks
March 20: Men's & Ladies' Bible Class (10am)
March 24: Easter Egg hunt for kids at the Hutt's—all members are invited—lunch will be provided! Kids participating in the hunt are asked to bring candy filled eggs to hide.
March 27: Men's & Ladies' Bible Class (10am)
April 20-21: F.U.E.L. Youth Rally; speaker: Todd Clip-pard

IN THE AREA

May 6-9: Gospel Meeting @ Port Lavaca; various speakers 7pm nightly
May 5-10: Focal Point @ University (San Marcos)
May 23-28: Young Men's Development Conference @ Bryan-College Station

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Connie Kaspar (19); Manny Flonnory (20); Zachary Sample (21); Tom Pitchford (22); Frank Farris (24)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Jeff Cannady | Sandy Malone |
| Les Daltry | Ann Pantel |
| Pat Davis | Glenodine Pitts |
| Dee Gilpatrick | Bob Smith |
| Lucille Hawkins | Clark Withers |
| Faye Henderson | |

FRIENDS & FAMILY

| | |
|---|--|
| Mary Lou Arguelles (sister of Virginia Escojido) | Vikram Gottam (brother-in-law of Archana Verma) |
| Buster Bailey (former MidTown member) | Mary Younglove (grandmother of Naomi Flonnory) |
| Victor Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido) | Cynthia Sneeringer (mother of Angela) |
| Kim Neel-Farthing (daughter of Joyce) | |
| Scarlet O'Neill (friend of Yvonne Smith) | |
| Sarah Randle (mother of Steve) | |
| Cole Ohrt (friend of Ann Pantel) | |

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 March 18, 2018

Bible Class.....116
A.M. Worship.....149
P.M. Worship.....101
Wednesday Bible Study.....118

Offering \$4,838

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE

Did you know that devoting 30 minutes each day you can read through the New Testament in one month? Here is a schedule to help you get started:

- Day 1: Matthew 1-9
- Day 2: Matthew 10-16
- Day 3: Matthew 17-24
- Day 4: Matthew 25-Mark 2
- Day 5: Mark 3-9
- Day 6: Mark 10-16
- Day 7: Luke 1-6

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

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

GO PAPERLESS!

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MidTown Church of Christ

5901 N. Main
Victoria, TX 77904
(361) 573-0030
midtowncoc2017@gmail.com

