



# Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

August 18, 2019

Issue 33

## *The Lord's Church Is Different (III)*

by: Ronnie Scherffius

*I*t is apparent to anyone with the skill of observation that the Lord's church - the church about which we read in the New Testament - is different from the Catholic and Protestant churches to which the masses of christendom profess membership. The Catholicism of today is the result of a departure from the New Testament pattern and a blending of Christianity and Roman paganism over a period of centuries. The Protestantism of our times is the resultant "pendulum effect" of believers moving away from the *works salvation* of Roman Catholicism to an equally erroneous *faith without any works salvation*.

From the New Testament one discovers that the Lord's church was established in the city of Jerusalem in about 33 A.D., when the Holy Spirit was poured out and the gospel of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus was first preached. (cf. Joel 2:28-32; Isa. 2:2-3; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4, 37-47) The New Testament clearly establishes that the Lord's church was not, and is never to be, denominated by names and creeds of men. (John 17:20-21; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:11; Gal. 1:6-9) The fellowship of those in the Lord's church is restricted to those who "continue steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine" (Acts 2:42) and "walk in the light" of God. (1 Jn. 1:1-7) The right hand of Christian fellowship may **not** be extended to any who hold not the doctrine of Christ taught in the first century by the apostles and other inspired men. (2 Cor. 6:14; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; et al) In fact, we are admon-

ished to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1) and to reject all who "hold not the doctrine of Christ." (2 Jn. 9-11) Having noted that, by its establishment and fellowship the Lord's church is distinctive from the popular "Christianity" professed and practiced by many today, let us note another way in which the Lord's church is different.

***The Lord's church is different by its worship.*** "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mt. 15:9) The worship of New Testament Christians was different and distinctive from the pagan idolatry and heathenism of its day. The heathen temples, pagan priesthood, and idolatrous worship of the ancients have filtered their way into Christian worship. The New Testament church came together every Lord's day to offer the sacrifice of praise with their lips (Mt. 26:30; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); to give thanks, seeking favor and forgiveness through prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:15; 2 Cor. 1:11); to commemorate the sacrifice of their Savior by partaking of the cup and breaking of the bread in the Lord's Supper (Mt. 26:26-28; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7); to give of their means to support the work of the church (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:5-7); and to hear the Word of that their spirit might be strengthened for the daily battle against the adversary. (Acts 20:7; Eph. 6:11-18; 1 Pt. 5:8) Even ancient records of secular history bear witness to the New Testament pattern of the early church. Pliny the Younger, appointed governor of Bithynia by the Emperor Trajan (c.a. 112), wrote of the Lord's church gathering together

on an “appointed day” to sing hymns to Christ and to “take food” together. (F.W. Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom*, p 36)

The worship of the Lord’s church in the first century was simple and according to the apostolic order. (Acts 2:42) There is no trace of a uniform and exclusive liturgy; worship conducted by one of a priestly order; the use of mechanical instruments of music; soloists or choirs giving elaborate performances to arousing applause; an order of sacraments; special clothing or titles to identify the ordained priests and ministers; women leading in the public worship; dramas, skits, or special days to commemorate the birth or death of Jesus. The Lord’s church of the first century did not pray to the saints, count rosary beads, go to confessional seeking forgiveness from the priest, and they certainly did not pray to Mary as the mother of God!

The worship of the Lord’s church is as different from the Catholic and Protestant practices of today as it was from the pagan rituals in the first century. When these differences are pointed out it is often followed by criticism of assumed superiority and accusations of self-righteousness. The truth is that at the heart of the worship of the Lord’s church is a pure heart of devotion seeking to approach God according to His commands not the traditions of men. No man is truly worthy to approach God, but God by the shed blood of His only begotten has made us to be “a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pt. 2:5) Yes, the worship of the Lord’s church is different from the traditions and doctrines of men in form and appearance. It is also different because it is accepted as a sweet savor by the Lord. May we always strive to maintain our distinctiveness. May the Lord’s church ever be different.

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## **Loopholes Into Heaven**

By: Brett Petrillo

Just before the death of actor W.C. Fields, a friend visited Fields in his hospital room and was surprised to find him thumbing through a Bible. After being asked what he

was doing with a Bible, Fields replied, “I’m looking for loopholes.”

Fields wasn’t the first to look for loopholes in the Bible, nor the last. In fact, there is no other book in existence that has received more attention, scrutiny, skepticism, and critique. People all over the world search like ravenous wolves, longing with starving eyes for a loophole into heaven. They salivate over, what appears in their bias to be, a loophole.

Deceivingly, so many have claimed to have found it. “There are many paths to heaven,” they say. And yet Scripture clearly speaks of just one (Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23; John 14:6). “We’ve re-studied \_\_\_\_\_ and have changed our minds,” they proclaim. And yet, ironically and predictably, the conclusions they draw nearly always line up with current cultural norms. “The God I know would never condemn a person doing \_\_\_\_\_,” they say with confidence. And yet, God has clearly condemned it. “All you have to do to be saved is \_\_\_\_\_,” they reassure others. And yet, God has made it abundantly clear that baptism is where salvation is found and sins are forgiven (1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; etc).

Perhaps the greatest tragedy is seeing just how much effort people put towards avoiding God’s commands instead of just obeying them. It takes selflessness and humility to read God’s commands and obey them. And yet, doing so shows that we love God (John 14:15).

Do we love God? I mean truly love Him. Then let’s prove it through obedience.

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**PRIVILEGED TO SERVE**  
Week of August 18, 2019

**Sunday Morning:**

Announcements: Bryant Siegel  
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

**Lord's Supper & Offering**

Bread: Mark FitzSimmons  
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobes  
Offering: Bryce Dolan  
Assist: Kirk FitzSimmons, Scott DeDear, Brant Jacobs

**Sunday Evening:** Mark FitzSimmons, Doug Jobes

**Prayer**

A.M. Closing: Jeff Harris  
P.M. Closing: Kevin Sheeran

**Song Leaders:**

Sun. A.M.: Larry Nuckels  
Sun. P.M.: Jerry FitzSimmons  
Wednesday: Larry Nuckels

**Ushers:**

Don Lynn  
Allen Clifton

**Wednesday Devotional:** Tom Pitchford

**Open/Close Building:**

**Sound System:** Don Lynn

**Greeters:** Don Lynn  
Allen Clifton

**Prepare Communion:** Jeffres

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Donna Shannon has been a shut in for a few months and has a birthday tomorrow, Aug. 19th, if you would like to send birthday wishes and cards of encouragement, they would be greatly appreciated. Her address is in the pocket directory.

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

Sarah Randle, mother of Steve Randle, who's sister passed away last week. Donna Shannon, who has been shut in for a few months.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Aug. 21: Wed. Adult Summer Series speaker Tom Pitchford  
Aug. 28: Wednesday night singing  
Sept. 10: Men's and Ladies' Tuesday Bible Class  
MidTown's Fall Gospel Meeting—Nov. 10-13 with Jason Rollo.

**AREA EVENTS**

Sept. 21: San Pedro C of C Ladies' Day in San Antonio

**BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:**

Happy Birthday: Raider Stryker, Donna Shannon (19); Pam Archer, Pat Atkinson (20); Janie Martin, Archana Verma, Scott Foerster, Jenna Lynch (22); Jerry FitzSimmons (24)

Happy Anniversary: Willie & Helen Cannady; Doug & Kasi Jobes (22); Jim & Angy Hutt (24)

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The Ladies Bible Class will meet at Jason's Deli for lunch on Tuesday, August 27 at 11:30am. This will be a time of fellowship and discussion for the upcoming year. All ladies are invited and encouraged to come.

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**KEEP IN PRAYER**

**MIDTOWN MEMBERS:**

Jeff Cannady  
Les Daltry  
Dee Gilpatrick  
Wayne Martin  
Ann Pantel  
Mickey Tisue  
Clark Withers

**SHUT-INS:**

Faye Henderson  
Sandy Malone

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 August 11, 2019

Bible Class.....112  
A.M. Worship.....155  
P.M. Worship.....108  
Wednesday Bible Study.....88

Offering \$3,731

## *THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT*

Each week will focus on reading a portion of the New Testament, each reading will only take 30 minutes:

**1 Corinthians 15—2 Corinthians 9**



## 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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