

# Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

December 29, 2019

Issue 52

## Death In The Pot By: Ronnie Scherffius

One of the least considered events in the life of Elisha is found in Second Kings chapter four. In this account we learn that poison gourds had accidentally been boiled with pottage prepared for the sons of the prophets (38-39). When this was discovered “they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot” (40). Through miraculous means Elisha purged pottage and the people ate without harm (41). This record of “death in the pot” provides some great thoughts and lessons for the survival of the local church.

**Doctrinal error is death in the pot to the local church.** Paul warned the Ephesian elders of doctrinal error that would bring death to the church: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). Peter likewise warned of “false teachers” who as “spies or traitors introducing themselves into an enemy’s camp” would “bring in damnable heresies” causing many to “follow their pernicious ways” (2 Pt. 2:1-2). Such ways lead to ruin and loss.

To defend the church against *death in the pot* we are warned by John to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 Jn 4:1; cf. 1 Thess. 5:21-22). Paul’s admonition to the saints at Rome to “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid

them” (16:17; cf. Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14) forever stands as a bulwark to keep the church sound and free from doctrinal error and *death in the pot*.

Yet, for the church to recognize error and defend truth Christians must possess a deep knowledge of Scripture. A church without knowledge of God’s Word will soon find itself overrun with doctrinal error and spiritual life extinct (Hos. 4:6; Prov. 19:2; Isa. 45:20; Jer. 5:3-4). Therefore, Christians must educate themselves in the truth of God’s Word that they might be able to defend the church and wage war against error (1 Pt. 3:15; Eph. 6:10-11; 1 Tim. 6:12; Jude 3). For the local church to remain alive **and** thrive it must beware of the *death in the pot* caused by doctrinal error.

**Detestable practices in the life of church members is death in the pot to the local church.** As a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, a body is only as healthy as the members of the body. Drawing lessons from the physical body and applying them to the church Paul wrote: “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). Paul clearly demonstrated how even one Christian’s actions could bring death to the church: “Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6).

When members of the local church practice lying and deceit (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9) or fornication and uncleanness (Eph. 5:3) they bring *death to the pot*. When Christians shamelessly engage in the consumption of alcohol and

drunkenness (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35; Eph. 5:19; 1 Pt. 5:8) or engage in the destructive practice of gambling by “playing the lottery” they bring *death to the pot*. When Christians presumptuously wear immodest and revealing clothes casting a stumbling block before others (Lk. 17:1-2) or use corrupt speech from lips that are to praise God (Eph. 4:29; James 3:9-10) they bring *death to the pot*. How healthy is the local church when members of the body are infected with sin in their lives?! Detestable practices in the life of church members is death in the pot to the local church.

**Destructive speech is death in the pot to the local church.** There is little more deadly than the poison that can come from the tongue. James compared the *power* of the tongue to a “very small helm” that turns great “ships” even in “fierce winds” (James 3:4) and the *destructive potential* of the tongue to “much wood” kindled by a “small fire” (James 3:5 - ASV).

The use of the tongue for talebearing brings *death to the pot*. A talebearer is one who maliciously gossips or reveals secrets. Solomon wrote, “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth” (Prov. 26:20). Paul noted the deadly destruction that comes when the local church is exposed the evil use of the tongue: “For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (2 Cor. 12:20). Of these mentioned, debates (*contentions*), strifes (*used by the ancient Greeks of “electioneering for office”*), backbitings (*defamation*) and whisperings (*secret slander or gossip*) all have to do with the misuse of the tongue. The term “tumults” which closes out this list is also translated “confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33; James 3:16) and carries the sense of “instability.” Confusion and instability will always be the state of the church when

there is “*death in the pot*” because of evil speech among its members.

Elijah, the man of God, purified the pottage so that the “death in the pot” did not harm the sons of the prophets. May we ever strive to be men and women of God purging the death in the pot that seeks its way into the local church.

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### **“But You Don't Understand.”**

It's hard for us to trust someone who is trying to help us when they don't understand what we're going through. I feel unqualified when dealing with someone going through a nasty divorce; someone trying to raise children as a single parent; someone dealing with the loss of a child; or someone who is experiencing chronic pain of some kind.

However, we know Jesus can sympathize with whatever we're going through. He knew physical pain. He suffered the most agonizing death imaginable.

Jesus knew emotional and spiritual pain. He had his closest friends forsake him and betray him.

Jesus knew stress. His stress didn't come from a selfish desire for protection, but because he felt an overwhelming burden for other people (thousands at a time on occasion). Jesus experienced sleepless nights when he would pray and find comfort that only God could give him.

What a blessing that we can carry all of our burdens and share them with him, knowing that he will listen with sympathy and respond with grace.

Father, we thank you so much for our High Priest who is praying for us even as we pray to you!

## PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of December 29, 2019

### **Sunday Morning:**

Announcements: Jeff Harris  
Scripture Reading: Fred Scherffius

### **Lord's Supper & Offering**

Bread: Bryant Siegel  
Fruit of the Vine: James Cammock  
Offering: Doug Jobs  
Assist: Kirk FitzSimmons, BJ Davis, Desmon Flonnory

**Sunday Evening:** Bryant Siegel, James Cammock

### **Prayer**

A.M. Closing: Larry Nuckels  
P.M. Closing: Young Men

### **Song Leaders:**

Sun. A.M.: Kevin Sheeran  
Sun. P.M.: Young Men  
Wednesday: Larry Nuckels

### **Ushers:**

Don Lynn  
Allen Clifton

### **Wednesday Devotional:**

Bryant Siegel

### **Open/Close Building:**

Jobs

### **Sound System:**

Curtis Scherffius

### **Greeters:**

Don Lynn  
Allen Clifton

**Prepare Communion:** Jeff & Kelly Cannady

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Please update the Pocket Directory in the foyer for the 2020 Pocket Directory. If there are no corrections needed, please put a check mark. Also, please put an asterisk (\*) next to each baptized member in your family.

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Sunny Glen Children's Home is requesting the following items only: Gallon freezer bags and fruit drinks like capri suns or kool aid jammers. Please place the items in the donation box in the hallway. The truck will be here to pick up February 11-12.

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Renulfo Rodriguez, friend of Lupe Escojido, who is having health issues. Bob Law, who is still at Citizens Hospital.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 31: New Year's fellowship @ the building at 6pm. Bring finger foods and games.  
Jan. 5: Bridal shower for Alex Scherffius at the home of Nia FitzSimmons from 2-4pm. Alex is registered at Bed, Bath & Beyond, Target, Amazon.  
Jan 5: Men's Meeting @ 3pm here at the building  
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28: Tuesday Men's and Ladies Bible Class  
Jan. 11: Picture Day for Wall Directory  
Jan. 12: Jr/Sr. High Devo hosted by the Dolans

## AREA EVENTS

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Shirley Page (1), Glenodine Pitts (4)

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### Sign Up Sheets on the Bulletin Board:

Please sign up to update your family photo for the Pictorial wall directory on Sat., January 11, 2020. Also, Please sign up to Open/Close the building, Prepare Communion, and host Youth Devotionals for 2020.

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## KEEP IN PRAYER

### MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady  
Les Daltry  
Dee Gilpatrick  
Wayne Martin  
Ann Pantel  
Veronica Serenil  
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 December 22, 2019

Bible Class.....	121
A.M. Worship.....	163
P.M. Worship.....	88
Wednesday Bible Class.....	78

Offering      \$3,499

**Reading for this week: Hebrews 1-4**

For because He Himself has suffered when tempted,  
He is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 2:18



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## SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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## GO PAPERLESS!

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