

Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

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Issue 49

MISAPPREHENSION OF INTENTION

By: Ron White

King David thought he would show kindness to the family of an Ammonite King who had recently died. He sent ambassadors to offer his condolences. Counselors of the deceased King's son (Hanun) misjudged David's motives. These suspicious advisors accused David's Ambassadors of spying (2 Sam. 10:1-3).

To show their contempt for David and his supposed spies, "Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away" (2 Sam. 10:4). "This was a disgraceful insult to these ambassadors from Israel. In that culture, many men would rather die than to have their beard shaved off, because to be clean shaven was the mark of a slave but free men wore beards." Cutting off ambassador's robes halfway up humiliated them leaving their nakedness potentially open to public view (D. Guzik).

Shortly thereafter the Ammonites ascertained King David was angry with them over their mistreatment of his ambassadors. So the Ammonites called in Syrians to help them fight David's forces. As a result, the Ammonite's misapprehension caused thousands of men to die in battle.

Only the Lord knows how many conflicts occur because people misread another's conduct. How quickly we sometimes make negative judgments against a person who actually has innocent motives. When Paul says love "believes all things" he does not expect us to be completely naive. Rather, love is that required motive which should reside in Christians deter-

ring us from putting the worst construction on another's behavior (1 Cor. 13:7).

Ammonite advisors supposed David's ambassadors were a group of liars. One commentator opines, "It is common for liars to always suspect others of lying" (Guzik). We sometimes project onto others accusations of which we are guilty ourselves. Remember Jesus graphic illustration (Mt. 7:1-5) about a log being in one person's eye who seeks removal of a speck in another's eye?

Nations commonly spin out negative judgments about a motive another nation has in international affairs. That's bad enough but what if brethren act in such a fashion?

Joshua received word that men from the tribes of Ruben and Manasseh built a large altar by the Jordan River (Josh. 22:10). This act appeared to them a rebellion against honoring one altar for the Lord (22:19). The children of Israel were so upset at this apparent rebellion, they prepared themselves to go to war against their brethren (22:12). What developed?

Israel sent Phinehas the priest and ten chiefs from the tribes of Israel to speak with their brethren who occupied land beyond the Jordan. This allowed those supposed transgressors to explain their actions. This delegation listened and learned what that symbolic altar actually meant. These Trans-Jordan brethren were concerned their descendants might not feel part of Israel (22:24). They did not want the Jordan River, a natural border between Israel's tribes, to cause their descendants to refrain from worshiping God at one authorized Levitical altar (22:25). So their motivation for

erecting that monument was “not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you” that the Lord is God (22:28, 34). Pleased, Phinehas and the children of Israel returned home and peace among brethren continued.

What if some brother’s words or conduct seems to cast him in a bad light? See how critical it is for us, in a respectful fashion, to ask our brother about the matter? There might be a simple explanation for his conduct and no bad motive present.

Brethren in the Corinthian church misread Paul. When he said “not to company with fornicators” they mistakenly supposed he meant “fornicators of this world” (1 Cor. 5:9-10). He actually referred to any fornicator “that is called a brother” (5:11).

Scriptures “written for our learning” demonstrate this simple lesson: any group of people will occasionally misread an associate’s words or behavior. That happens among school students, work associates, political parties, denominations and even church members.

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:31-32).

The Standing Ovation

Compliments. Cheers. Praise. The standing ovation. These all feel really, really good. In our spotlight driven society, some will do whatever it takes to get all eyes focused on them. Just a brief glance at YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter reveals people who are groping for attention. Much of this process is trivial, except maybe for the fact that praise can inflate egos faster than helium fills bal-

loons. However, there is at least one area where people shouldn’t be searching for public praise. This is the area of righteousness.

As Jesus delivered His brilliant “Sermon on the Mount” He makes a shift and begins to talk about people who love to receive praise from others. Five times in chapter 6, Jesus shows that these type of people publically display their righteousness in order to be “noticed by men” (vs. 1, 16, 18), “honored by men” (vs. 2), and “seen by men” (vs. 5). Ironically, those who act God-minded to be noticed by men “have no reward with the Father who is in heaven” because they have already “have their reward in full” (Matthew 6:1-18).

There are some great actors in this life who will never make it to the big screen. These are people who act righteous but aren’t truly righteous. These are people who put on a show of spirituality in order to receive praise from others. Interestingly, they are handsomely rewarded for their religious production in the form many “Likes” on Facebook and Instagram, views on YouTube, “Retweets” on Twitter, and compliments.

Certainly many are innocent in this matter. There is nothing inherently wrong with sharing something of a spiritual nature with others. In fact, the vast majority of the time it is wonderful and should be done more! However, let’s make sure we take Jesus warning seriously when He said, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them...” (Matthew 6:1). Let’s examine our motives in what we are displaying to others. Let’s question ourselves about who we are actually seeking praise from. May our goal always be for the praise of God over the praise of men.

- Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of December 8, 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: Doug Jobs
P.M. Closing: Ron White

Song Leaders:

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

Ushers:

Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Anthony Scherffius

Open/Close Building: Jobs

Sound System: Curtis Scherffius

Greeters: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion: Jeff & Kelly Cannady

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.

TODAY! There will be a Bridal Shower for Emily DeDear at the home of Athena Scherffius from 2-4pm. Emily is registered at Target and Bed, Bath & Beyond. Also, there is a R.S.V.P. sheet on the bulletin board for those that would like to attend Emily's wedding on January 3, 2020.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Bob Law, husband of Sally Law, who was in Citizens hospital last week with salmonella and septic shock.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 8: Bridal Shower for Emily DeDear @ 2pm
Dec. 10, 17: Ladies' and Men's Bible Class @ 10am
Dec. 14: GEMS @ 9am at the Scherffius home
Dec. 14: Jr/Sr. high devo @ 6pm at the Scherffius home
Dec. 15: Annual White Elephant Exchange after evening service. Please also bring a finger food.
Dec. 25: Singing night in lieu of Bible Classes

AREA EVENTS

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Therisa Gant, Ron White (8), Naomi Flonnory (9), Jeff Laws (11), Steve Randle (13)

Happy Anniversary: George & Therisa Gant (11), James & Leta Reeves (12)

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.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
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 December 1, 2019

Bible Class.....	108
A.M. Worship.....	150
P.M. Worship.....	100
Wednesday Bible Class.....	90

Offering \$4,428

Reading for this week: 1 Corinthians 10-13

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 1 Corinthians 13:11



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

GO PAPERLESS!

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MidTown Church of Christ

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

