

# Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

February 10, 2019

Issue 6

## SAY NOW SHIBBOLETH

Ronnie Scherffius

One of the more unusual accounts in the book of Judges (and there are many!) is found in chapter twelve and the Ephraimites quarrel with the judge Jephthah. Feeling slighted at being “passed over” by Jephthah when he and his men fought against Ammon, the men of Ephraim threatened to kill him and those of his house (Judges 12:1) and declared the Gileadites to be “fugitives among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites” (Judges 12:4). Jephthah objected saying, “I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands” (Judges 12:2). Jephthah then gathered all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraimites even cutting off the passages of Jordan so those who did not fall by the sword would not ultimately escape (Judges 12:5). All who approached the passages were stopped and told, “Say now Shibboleth.” The text then informs us: “and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand” (Judges 12:6).

What a tremendous lesson for us today — the Ephraimites were given away by their speech! Do we ever consider that it is often by our speech that others are able to determine if we are truly the people of God? In what type of speech ought Christians be careful not to engage?

**Lying and deceitful language is not characteristic of Christian speech.** Solomon wrote: “**Lying lips are abomination** to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight” (Prov. 12:22). The wise man further ad-

monished “a lying tongue” and “a false witness that speaketh lies” are things hated by Jehovah God (Prov. 6:16-19). Paul instructed the Colossians that dishonesty was a part of that old man who had been put to death (Col. 3:9) and John clearly revealed the end of all who love lies: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, **and all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8; cf. Rev. 22:15). Moreover, Jesus identified that it is not to God the Father that liars belong, but to the father of lies: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar, and the father of it**” (John 8:44).

Solomon also warned against deceitful and deceptive speech: “Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and **deceive not with thy lips**” (Prov. 24:28). Peter also exhorted honesty in our speech when he wrote: “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, **and his lips that they speak no guile**” (1 Pt. 3:10). Jesus greatly honored Nathanael when he said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is **no deceit**” (John 1:47). If our speech is characterized by lying and deceit — it exposes us as children of the world and not of God!

**Negativity is not a characteristic of Christian speech.** Paul wrote: “Let no **corrupt communication** proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of

## Godly Labors

edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29). While we may consider foul language, taking the Lord’s name in vain, or unfit topics of conversation when we read this passage—one who continually speaks with a negative tone or who speaks negative about others could also fall under this command. Titus was tasked to remind Christians “To speak evil of no man” (Titus 3:2). The idea of speaking evil here is to speak blasphemously or slanderously against someone. Christians should never be noted for such speech, but the truth is that Christians often speak in a negative way of their brethren and bring them into doubt in the eyes of others! Truly, speech that is negative and demeaning of another person, especially one’s brother or sister in Christ, would fall under the banner of *corrupt communication*! Furthermore, one who continually speaks with a negative tone or who seems always to focus on the negatives of life hardly demonstrate the Christian character of rejoicing in the Lord! (Phil. 4:4; 3:1; et al) We should be careful not to fall into the trap of negative speech!

**Gossiping and talebearing is not characteristic of Christian speech.** Solomon warned his son: “he that **repeateth a matter** separateth very friends” (Prov. 17:9) and “**a whisperer** separateth chief friends” (Prov. 16:28). Admonishing His people to be holy (Lev. 19:2) God commanded: “Thou shalt not go up and down as **a talebearer among thy people**” (Lev. 19:16), and Solomon instructed that where the talebearer is will continually be contention and strife (Prov. 26:20). Gossiping and whispering, meddling and talebearing would most certainly fall under the category of corrupt speech forbidden by the apostle (Eph. 4:29).

Because their speech gave them away the Ephraimites were destroyed. As Christians we should strive to guard our tongues from lying and deceitful language, negative and slanderous speech, and gossip and talebearing. Such use of the tongue is as the speech of the Ephraimites, revealing our true heart and bring upon us swift destruction.

Work is a virtue. All people, regardless of personal background, job description, or age, can benefit from a strong work ethic. Not only will we benefit personally, but others around us will be blessed too. The beauty of a work ethic is that we can choose to work hard no matter what our circumstances might be. In Genesis 30:25-34, we see how Jacob’s hard work and dedication allowed him to prosper. Jacob had worked many years in Laban’s household, fulfilling every obligation laid on him for his two wives, Rachel and Leah. Jacob requested to be sent back home (Gen. 30:25-26). Laban recognized the blessing that Jacob had been to him, so he asks what it will take for Jacob to remain (30:27-31). Jacob asked that livestock with specific markings be given to him, while the rest would belong to Laban (30:32-33). Laban agreed to the terms, and Jacob then spent another six years laboring in his household (30:34; 31:7). When we are godly, we are a blessing in the lives of others. (Gen. 30:25-27). However, Jacob was only a blessing to Laban because of his diligent work (Gen. 30:28-30). We too should work to be a blessing to others, even if they are unjust (1 Pet. 2:18). Laban would never be considered a good boss. That did not change Jacob’s responsibility towards him. Likewise, Christians are expected to work hard no matter who they are working for. Ultimately, our work is for the Lord (Eph. 6:5-8). As people benefit from the good work that stems from your faith, they are more likely to become curious about that faith. This is one way that people in the world can see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16). Jacob also made himself accountable for his wages by suggesting he take livestock that could be easily identified by their markings (Gen. 30:31-34). Christians should never fear accountability, but should embrace it. We should actively seek honesty, transparency, and accountability in our dealings with others, even if they do not (Gen. 30:35-36). This is yet another way we can show the character of God in our own lives. In the end, Jacob’s willingness to work provided a great blessing for himself, his family, and his master. If we want to be a great blessing, then we must be ready to put in the work!

*From Faith to Faith, Granbury Street Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, April 23, 2017.*

## PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of February 10, 2019

### **Sunday Morning:**

Announcements: Jeff Harris  
Scripture Reading: Sammy Scherffius

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

Bread: Doug Jobes  
Fruit of the Vine: Dennis Bryson  
Offering: Bryce Dolan  
Assist: Scott DeDear, Kirk FitzSimmons, Curtis Scherffius

**Sunday Evening:** Doug Jobes, Dennis Bryson

### **Prayer**

A.M. Closing: Steve Randle  
P.M. Closing: Wayne Martin

**Ushers:** Don Lynn  
Allen Clifton

**Wednesday Devotional:** Lupe Escojido

**Open/Close Building:** Hutt

**Sound System:** Don Lynn

### **Greeters:**

Don Lynn  
Allen Clifton

**Prepare Communion:** Hutt

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**To Our Visitors:** We welcome you to our service. Perhaps this is the first time you have visited us. It is our desire to have you return often and give us a chance to become better acquainted with you. You will find visitor cards on the back of the pew in front of you. Please fill one out.

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If you have a Bible Question that you would like Ronnie to answer on the 4th Sunday evening of the month, you can submit them in the mailbox in the foyer or email Ronnie.

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Donna Shannon, who broke her arm last week; Freddie Scherffius, father of Ronnie Scherffius, who suffered a mild heart attack last week and will have quadruple bypass surgery this week; Les Daltry, who is at Twin Pines North; Wayne Martin who is at Citizens hospital room 480 with pneumonia.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 12,19,26: Men's & Ladies' Bible Class @ 10am  
Feb. 10: Jr/Sr Devo hosted by Mark /Nia FitzSimmons  
Feb. 23-24: Southwest School of Bible Studies: Student Lectures hosted by MidTown. Potluck luncheon will follow morning services and there will be a 1pm afternoon service in lieu of the 5pm service.

## AREA EVENTS

Feb. 28-Mar. 3: Arise: Spiritual Growth workshop @ SW church of Christ  
Mar. 29-31: Gospel meeting @ Adams Street church of Christ. More info on the bulletin board in hallway.  
Mar. 30: South Texas Youth Lectures @ Adams Street . More info on the bulletin board in hallway.

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Sammy Scherffius (12); Paul Purswell (16)

Happy Anniversary: Ron & Mary Jo White (11)

## KEEP IN PRAYER

### MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady  
Dee Gilpatrick  
Ann Pantel  
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 February 3, 2019

Bible Class.....118  
A.M. Worship.....140  
P.M. Worship.....98  
Wednesday Bible Study.....72

Offering      \$4,793

## QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

### Suffering/Grief

God impartial.....Mat. 5:45  
Godly will suffer.....2 Tim. 3:12  
Rom. 12:12,15; Mark 4:16-17; Jam. 1:12



## SUPPORTED WORKS

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

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