



Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

March 10, 2019

Issue 10

Jesus vs. Caesar

Steven Lloyd

A fascinating point that was brought to my attention over the past 10 years is the unspoken, but implied, conflict between the Caesars of Rome and the Lord Jesus Christ. In the ancient world, many of the Caesars declared themselves to be gods or others declared them to be gods and the Caesars simply used that to their advantage. One Caesar declared that his father was a god, which would have made him what—a son of God.

The region known as Asia, modern day Turkey, wanted Augustus to know that they supported him in his victory against Mark Antony. (They had originally supported Mark Antony.) They did so by instituting and enforcing worship of him and by building a temple in his honor. I can imagine that on the lips of people in the ancient world, “Caesar is Lord,” was commonplace.

But Jesus comes along and is crucified and raised from the dead, exalted and coronated (Acts 2:22-36). This was the means by which God made Him both Lord and Christ. So, on the lips of the early church was the proclamation, “Jesus is Lord.”

Implications of the conflict between Jesus and the Caesars of Rome seem to be scattered throughout the New Testament. For example, in the opening lines of Paul’s letter to the saints in Rome he writes of Jesus that he

“was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead” (1:4). In my early readings of that line, my eyes would simply pass over it like so many others. But today it reads like a strikingly bold affirmation implying that Jesus is “the Son of God” and Caesar is not.

Is it a wonder that the early church was persecuted by the Roman government. Their central declaration was treasonous. The final book in the New Testament is all about the war between the church and Rome. It provides timeless guidance for the church throughout the ages as it considers the challenges it faces with the governments of the world.

But I also find it curious that such a major conflict is not more explicit in the writings of the New Testament. An entire book was written by a number of writers exploring this very point. For the writers of the book, the emphasis on Jesus and de-emphasis on the Caesars is one of, well, emphasis.

...to say “Jesus is Lord” does not seem actually to entail saying “Caesar is not [Lord].” Rather, it entails not saying “Caesar is Lord.” This minute grammatical distinction, simply a matter of where the negation is placed, seems to me to ex-

plain so much about the New Testament witnesses. The affirmation “Jesus is Lord” requires not so much a strident denunciation of earthly lords as a studied silence concerning their pretensions. The answer to Caesar’s inflated claims of significance is further proclamation of Jesus the Messiah’s real significance. (Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies, p. 13).

This may provide us with some guidance on how to consider some of what is going on politically in our world. There is no getting around the politics today, it is an easy thing to get caught up in. Although, the mandate our Lord has given the church does not change. The Gospel, by definition, the good news, is that Jesus is Lord. That is what we are to proclaim to our families and neighbors, indeed to the nation. This, to my way of thinking, helps to raise us up above the fray.

Dennis Prager wrote a book titled, *Still the Best Hope: Why the World Needs American Values to Triumph*. For Mr. Prager, America is the best hope. I sympathize with his efforts, and without intending to be painfully technical, I must say that it is the church, and not America that is the best hope. The only grounds for real unity is embracing certain basic truths declared in the Bible.

Our emphasis should not be on politics, but on the declaration that Jesus is Lord. I have seen politics silently divide people in churches that otherwise live in pleasant fellowship with one another under the rule of Jesus, and living as fellow members and fellow par-

takers in the grace of God. Where is your emphasis today?

Lost

“It is an old ironic habit of human beings to run faster when we have lost our way” (Rollo May).

It doesn’t really make sense, but it’s so very true. When we are lost, we tend to run in an attempt find our way again. Instead, all we do is become more lost with every passing second.

The same is true spiritually. When we get lost in sin, for some reason we lose all sense of direction and run deeper and deeper into our own faults. Many before us have done this very same thing. Consider those who looked to escape from God when they were lost.

Adam and Eve hid themselves after sinning (Genesis 3:8). Cain tried to talk his way out after killing his brother (Genesis 4). Achan hid the treasures he had stolen that rightly belonged to God (Joshua 7). Saul blamed his sin on peer pressure, among other things (1 Samuel 15). David went to great lengths to cover up his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). Jonah literally ran from the Lord (Jonah 1). Certainly many other examples could be mentioned.

We all can stray and become lost (Romans 3:23). Without a doubt, the worst thing we could do is to run faster. The solution isn’t complicated. We need to stop, think about where we are, and find help getting us back on the right road (Matthew 7:13-14).

So many are running around lost. Are you to be found? Stop running. We’re here to help show you to the right road.

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of March 10, 2019

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: Sammy Scherffius, Kirk FitzSimmons, Brant Jacobs

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido, Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Steve Randle
P.M. Closing: Mark FitzSimmons

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Kevin Sheeran

Open/Close Building:

Sound System: Curtis Scherffius

Greeters:

Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion: Jamison

Please mark your calendar for MidTown church of Christ's Annual Spring Gospel Meeting from March 24th through March 27th, 2019. Our speaker will be Wade Webster. Theme is "Tell Us Plainly". Wade is an evangelist and missionary for the Bryan/College Station Church of Christ and will be speaking on Evangelism, Membership, Leadership, Baptism, the Church and the Cross. There will be a potluck luncheon and a 1pm afternoon service in lieu of the 5pm evening service.

TUESDAY, MARCH 26:

Men's and Ladies' Tuesday class at 10 am on March 26th will be a combined class in the auditorium. Wade Webster will be speaking about Missions and there will be a potluck luncheon afterwards. All are invited to attend.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Wayne Martin, who was recently diagnosed with Lymphoma and has started treatment. John & Carolyn Curby, friends of the Nuckels, on the loss of their son. Jason Harris and Brittany Langride, friends of Pam Clifton, who have requested prayers.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 12,19,26: Men's and Ladies' Bible Classes @ 10 am

March 10: Jr./ Sr. high devotional

March 24-27: Spring gospel meeting with Wade Webster. Potluck luncheon after morning worship and a 1pm afternoon service.

AREA EVENTS

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: Isaac Jobes (10)

Happy Anniversary: Leon & Janet Morales (11); Jeff & Kelly Cannady (12)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Ann Pantel
Mickey Tissue
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 March 3, 2019

Bible Class.....100
A.M. Worship.....127
P.M. Worship.....66
Wednesday Bible Study.....60

Offering \$4,969

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Worship

In spirit & truth.....John 4:24
Not in vain.....Mat. 15:7-9
Acts 17:23-31; 2 John 9-11



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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MidTown Church of Christ

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

