

Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

October 6, 2019

Issue 40

A Great Debt

By: Ronnie Scherffius

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.” (Lk 7:41-43)

The book of *Luke* has many unique characteristics. For example, Luke writes on the subject of prayer more than any other gospel writer. He alone records that Jesus prayed at His baptism (3:21); before His first confrontation with Jewish leaders (5:16); before choosing the twelve (6:12); before the first time revealing His suffering (9:18); at the transfiguration (9:29); before instructing the apostles “how to pray” (10:1); while on the cross (23:34, 46); for Peter’s faith not to fail (22:32).

Another characteristic that sets Luke’s gospel account apart from his inspired companions is the number of parables he records. Of the 26 parables recorded by Luke 17 are peculiar to him. Some the most recognizable parables of Jesus are the *Good Samaritan* (10:30-35), the *Lost Sheep* (15:3-6) and *Lost Coin* (15:8-9), and the *Prodigal Son* (18:11-32). All of these are found only in the book of Luke. Another parable unique to Luke is the *Two Debtors*. (7:41-42) In this parable we learn the reality of one’s love for God is the estimate of his indebtedness to God.

Consider first that a **great debt** was owed: “There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty” (41). In real terms, one man’s debt was the equivalent of 500 days wages and the other 50 days wages. One might suppose the debtor who owed the 500 owed a greater debt, but the fact is both men owed a *great debt* because neither could afford to pay (42). If a man has no means of paying off a debt the amount matters little — it is a great debt because it is unpayable! A **great debt** was owed by both men.

Observe next a **great forgiveness** is given: “And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both” (42). The Greek word translated *forgave* is found only in this parable in Luke and only in Luke of the four gospel writers. The literal meaning of the word is “to do something pleasant or agreeable (to someone), or to do a favor.” In fact, the root from which this word comes would be translated *grace*. If we were relating such a story to someone we might say that by forgiving the debt, “the creditor was very gracious.”

Finally, in our parable we see a **great love** is shown. After speaking the parable Jesus asked Simon (40): “Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most” (42). Simon’s answer very revealing: “I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most” (43). We know Simon’s answer is correct because of Jesus response, “thou has rightly judged.” What is most striking is revealed in Simon’s words “I suppose.” The man Simon *supposed* or *as-*

sumed to have the greater love is the one he himself assumed to have had the greater debt. But each man's debt was equally great **because** neither could pay! The lesson of the parable is clear: the love and gratitude one shows to God is based on one's *estimate* of their debt to God.

Those who reject God, the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, and the authority of His Word fail to see not only the greatness of His grace but also their indebtedness. The one who loves God "most" is that one who truly realizes the immeasurable love and boundless grace of God has made available for them the forgiveness of **all sins** by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. A sacrifice that stands as the payment for a debt none can pay.

How much do you love God? What is the estimate of your debt?

The Tornado, The Amputee, & The Hero

Gregory Beck has lived through more than his fair share of life's storms. In his journey through diabetes, Gregory has had both legs amputated, is legally blind, and is bound to a wheelchair. This became a serious problem recently when he wheeled himself to the grocery store. Not long after rolling out of the store, a tornado siren began blaring across the St. Louis area. He began frantically wheeling himself home as fast as his arms could propel him. Some passing drivers rolled down their windows and yelled, urging him to quickly take shelter. Exhausted, Beck had to stop at a gas station to rest his arms. This is when, at long last, someone decided to jump into action. 16-year-old Seth Phillips was riding with his mom when they saw Beck in his wheelchair. Worried for his safety, Seth asked his mom if he could push Beck home. This began Seth's quarter-mile jog, pushing Gregory back home among the looming tornado and blaring sirens. Thankfully, they made it back safely.

What an incredible example of bravery Seth showed us. However, this situation also tells us a lot about us as people. I wonder how many people saw Beck and simply drove past? I wonder how many were willing to roll down their windows and urge him to seek

safety? While we don't know those numbers, we do know exactly how many were actually willing to step out and help Beck – just one. As Christians, we are living in a world of spiritual storms. Sin is swirling around us more every day. People are living in poverty, anguish, and difficulty. The depression and suicide rates tell us that people are severely lacking in hope. People need help. So where are the Christian heroes?

In Matthew 25, Jesus was having a similar conversation about how Christians must jump into action. He identifies some actions the Christian heroes were doing: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me" (vs. 35-36). Jesus' point wasn't that they were literally feeding Him, but they were doing these selfless actions to help others (vs. 40). None of these actions are difficult, but they all require effort and selflessness. Jesus praised those who helped and condemned those who didn't (vs. 31-46).

Sadly, too many Christians have limited their service to those who rolled down the window and urged Beck to hurry to safety. We are sometimes willing to make mild efforts to help others, as long as it's within safety and comfort. Few are willing to go the second mile to show Christian love and service. It's one thing to just yell, "get to safety." It's another to get out and help someone to safety. How many Christians are going to just walk past those in need? How many will settle on just urging others to hurry up and get to safety? How many will actually step out of their comfort zones and selflessly help people to safety?

I pray it will be more than just one. However many are willing, let's commit ourselves to be the one!

-Selected-

MEMBER INFORMATION UPDATE:

Jenna Lynch who recently married Dalton Shafer. The Shafer's new address is:

605 Cannon
Victoria, TX 77904
Phone: 361-212-5379

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of October 6, 2019

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Fred Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Doug Jobes
Fruit of the Vine: Mark FitzSimmons
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: Scott DeDear, Kirk FitzSimmons, Steve Randle

Sunday Evening: Doug Jobes, Mark FitzSimmons

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Mark Jones
P.M. Closing: Ron White

Song Leaders:

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

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Anthony Scherffius

Open/Close Building: Will Burleson

Sound System: Bryant Siegel

Greeters: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion: Scherffius

News from the MidTown Library:

You can now continue to check out the evidence books from the youth summer series. There is also a new book "Dinosaurs Unleashed" by Kyle Butt and Eric Lyons. Please fill out the check out card in each book. Any questions, please see May Jo White.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Please continue to keep in prayer our members who are shut in and those continuing to have health issues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 8,15,22,29: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class
Oct. 12: GEMS meeting
Oct. 20: Baby shower for Emily Cammock @ 2pm at the home of Rita Davenport
Oct. 26: Jr/Sr high youth devotional at the Jobs @ 6pm
Oct. 27: Trunk or Treat
Nov. 10-13: MidTown's Fall Gospel Meeting with Jason Rollo.

AREA EVENTS

Oct. 6-9: Gospel meeting with Bryan Braswell @ Portland
Oct. 18-20: Recharge Youth conference @ Weber Rd.
Oct. 20-24: Gospel meeting with Patrick Hammack @ Goliad
Nov. 9: Bible Bowl @ Weber church of Christ
Nov. 9: Ladies' Day @ SW church of Christ in Austin. Speaker is Carlie Bond.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Willie Cannady, Sandra Mericle, Janet Morales (7); Ashley Price, Sally Law (8)

Happy Anniversary: Scott & Mickey DeDear (7); Kin & Sandra Marie (12)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
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 September 29, 2019

Bible Class.....	103
A.M. Worship.....	133
P.M. Worship.....	78
Wednesday Bible Study.....	79

Offering \$4,163

THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

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

1 John 1—Revelation 3



SUPPORTED WORKS

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

GO PAPERLESS!

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