



Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

September 29, 2019

Issue 39

THE DARKNESS AND DEATH OF SIN

By: Ronnie Scherffius

Man has a sin problem. Man's problem with sin has been a blight to the human family from the dawn of time. (Gen. 3) Sin is deceptive in its nature and appears to man to be harmless and even a means of joyful fulfillment. (Heb. 11:24-25) What if humanity could see the true nature of sin! What if man could open his eyes to the detestable destruction that sin brings to the life of man? What if man could see through the deception of sin that blinds his heart? Two words associated with sin is darkness and death. These two things man generally either seeks to avoid or dread. Let's note sin's association with darkness and death.

Sin is always pictured as darkness. Paul admonished the Ephesians to, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11), and to the Colossians he instructed that God has, "delivered us from the power of darkness" and into the kingdom of Christ. (Col. 1:13) As Christians we know that our battles are spiritual in nature and are "against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12) Because of the darkness of sin the gospel is preached to turn sinful man "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." (Acts 26:18) The end of those who live and die in sin is an eternal punishment of darkness. (Mt. 22:30; 25:30)

Jesus, the Savior of mankind came into this world to be that light (Jn. 8:12; 12:46) and to call man out of darkness into the "marvelous

light" of God. (1 Pt. 2:9) The gospel of Christ is the gospel of light and those who walk in the gospel are "children of light" (Jn. 12:36; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5) who bear the "armour of light" (Rom. 13:12) as they wage war against the great adversary. As the children of light we have a heavenly Father who is the "Father of lights" (James 1:17) in whom there is no darkness at all. (Jn. 12:46; 1 Jn. 1:5) The eternal fate of those walking as children of the light is to be a partaker "of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. 1:12) What a contrast between the darkness of sin and the great light of God and of Christ.

Sin is associated with death. From time immemorial sin has been linked to death: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) Correcting the misguided proverb of the people (Jer. 31:29-30; Ezek 18:1-3) God highlighted the state and end of sinful man: "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4) In contrast to salvation that is a gift of God, man earns his wages for a life of sin: "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23) James demonstrated clearly the process of temptation and the end of sin in man when he wrote: "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:15) Sin is always associated with death.

In Jesus Christ man has life. John the apostle identified Jesus as “the Word of life.” (1 John 1:1) Jesus himself affirmed that He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” (Jn 14:6) And John noted the life man has in Christ is an eternal life with God: “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 Jn 5:11)

Sin is always associated with darkness and death but light and life is of God. Jesus Christ is the light of God that leads man out of the darkness of sin and into the light of the life. May we ever strive to take the gospel light to lost man and dispel the darkness of sin.

THE ART OF LISTENING

“Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, “Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.” (Deut. 27:9-10) This was the admonition from the Lord as the Israelites were preparing to enter the land of Canaan. The Israelites did not heed this admonition. We read in Judges 2:17 “...they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so.” Even as God pleaded with them they would not listen. (Ps. 81:8-14)

In our day and time no one seems to be interested in what anyone else has to say. Solomon wrote that those willing to listen to counsel and instruction would be wise in their “latter days.” (Prov. 19:20) A lack of willingness to listen stops or severely diminishes any hope a person would have to increase in knowledge or wisdom. Do I believe that no one is smarter than me or has anything of value for me to hear? The very fact

that we might be unwilling to listen to God directly impacts any hope of entering heaven.

Jesus emphasizes in the book of Revelation eight times “he that has an ear, let him hear”. In other words, everyone that has an ear (which is all of us) should listen to what He says. He would admonish the Jews that they could not understand Him because they simply would not listen to Him! (John 8:43) How many times do I put myself in a compromising position spiritually or physically because I refuse to listen? None of us ever improves our listening skills by talking! In fact, it is impossible to listen if my only interest is what I have to say.

Perhaps if we all rediscovered the art of listening, we would be more receptive and responsive to the word of God. Rather than try to direct our own footsteps, (Jer. 10:23) if we would but listen, we would hear the words of eternal life. (Jn. 6:68)

Perhaps if we were all better listeners there would not be so much meanness and hatefulness in interactions with others. We might actually hear what the other person is saying rather than already having our minds made up about what they are going to say or what they believe.

As we have studied or spoken with others about the Gospel, have we ever considered how many potential converts have been driven away because we would not take the time to listen to them? Do we assume to know what someone believes or why they believe it because of perceived denominational doctrine? Are we as focused on listening to others as what we have to say?

Would we all be satisfied if God listened to us as we listen to others?

By: Randy Reagan

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of September 29, 2019

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Kirk FitzSimmons

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford
Offering: Bryant Siegel
Assist: Isaac Jobes, Manny Flonnory, Fred Scherffius

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido, Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

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

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Sun. P.M.: Young Men
Wednesday: Anthony Scherffius

Ushers:

Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: James Cammock

Open/Close Building:

Sound System: Curtis Scherffius

Greeters: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion: Dolan

TODAY: Ladies' Day Planning meeting at
4pm in the old auditorium.

TODAY: There will be a Men's Business meet-
ing at 3pm.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Shirley Page, who's father passed away last week. Jeff Cannady, who was admitted to MD Anderson last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 1,8,15,22,29: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class
Oct. 12: GEMS meeting
Oct. 13: Jr/Sr high youth devotional at the Jobses
Oct. 27: Trunk or Treat
Nov. 10-13: MidTown's Fall Gospel Meeting with Jason Rollo.

AREA EVENTS

Oct. 18-20: Recharge Youth conference @ Weber Rd.
Nov. 9: Bible Bowl @ Weber church of Christ

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Tamyra Carroll (1); Barbara Nuckels (5)

Happy Anniversary: Tom & Gayla Pitchford (5)

Baby Shower

Ladies are invited to a baby shower for Emily Cammock on Sunday, Oct. 20th from 2-3:30pm at the home of Rita Davenport, 205 Amberglow Court.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
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 September 22, 2019

Bible Class.....107
A.M. Worship.....123
P.M. Worship.....81
Wednesday Bible Study.....107

Offering \$3,300

THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

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

James—2 Peter



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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