

# Midtown Messenger

Volume 3

January 12, 2020

Issue 2

## The God-Given Name

By: James Cammock

Members of the Lord's church are known as "Christians." We hear the word so often that it is easy to forget its significance. What is the origin of this term? Was it given by men as a term of derision, as some suggest, or was it bestowed by God on those who are followers of His Son?

The Greek word for "Christian" is *christianos*, and it signifies "an adherent of Jesus" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*). The term "Christian" is found three times in the New Testament. It is first found in Acts 11:26, where Luke records that the early disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Antioch of Syria. The term is also found in Acts 26:28, where Paul presents the Gospel to King Agrippa II and urges him to become a Christian. Finally, the term is found in the writings of the apostle Peter, in which he encourages anyone who suffers as a Christian to glorify God in this name (1 Peter 4:16).

While some have suggested that the term "Christian" was originally given by antagonists of the early church, by surveying the evidence from the Scriptures it becomes clear that the term is of divine origin. First, on more than one occasion, the Old Testament spoke of a time when God would call His people by a new name. In Isaiah 62:2 we read, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name." (Other examples include Isaiah 56:5-6 and Isaiah 65:14-15). When we turn to the New Testament, we find the fulfillment of this prophecy in the disciples being first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). If "Christian" is not the new name of which the prophet Isaiah spoke,

then one is left to wonder what is.

Second, the original word for "were called" (*chrematizo*) in Acts 11:26 is used nine times in the New Testament, and every time it is God who does the calling. For example, in Matthew 2:12, after seeing the young Jesus, we read that the wise men were *divinely warned* in a dream to not return to Herod. In Acts 10:22, we read that Cornelius was *divinely instructed* by a holy angel to summon Peter to his house in order to hear the Gospel. In Romans 7:3, the apostle Paul explains that if a woman marries another man while her husband is still alive, she will rightly be *called* an adulteress, as she is viewed as such by God. And in Hebrews 11:7, we read that Noah was *divinely warned* of things not yet seen, which motivated him to build the ark. (Other examples include Matthew 2:22; Luke 2:26; Hebrews 8:5; and Hebrews 12:25). Based on how this Greek word is used without exception throughout the New Testament, Acts 11:26 could rightly be translated as, "And the disciples were *divinely* called Christians first in Antioch."

Third, in 1 Peter 4:16, the apostle encourages his readers to glorify God in the name "Christian." It is doubtful that the apostle would have encouraged the early saints to glorify God in this name, if the name was a man-made, derogatory term, specifically designed to insult the church of God.

Fourth, in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, Paul rebukes the Christians at Corinth for aligning themselves with men, such as himself, Apollos, and Cephas. Paul rhetorically asks the Corinthians if these men were crucified for them, or if they were baptized in their name. Christ, however, was crucified for

them and they were baptized in His name, and because of such, they had every right to identify themselves with Him.

Those who have obeyed the Gospel and been added to the church by the Lord are rightly known as “Christians.” The term “Christian” is a God-given name, and is the central name that is to be worn by those who are members of His church. May we, as members of the Lord’s church, wear the name with honor and dignity, and may we glorify God in it by faithfully following the teachings of Christ in every area of our lives.

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### **The Parable of the Talents**

One of the most eye-opening revelations mankind faces when coming to the Bible is exemplified in the parable of the Talents; namely, that we are accountable to God. The Parable of the Talents casts a great light on the varied elements of our faithfulness towards the Lord. Let us be reminded of four practical lessons of our stewardship reinforced in this parable.

First, the Parable of the Talents teaches us that we will be held accountable for our lives. The overarching theme Jesus provides is that we have been entrusted. Everything we possess is given to us by Almighty God. Often we see the word “possess” and recognize ourselves as owners. But in reality, we are mere stewards. Do we recognize ourselves as stewards or owners? Our answer makes all the difference. A steward is one whose life consists of taking care of something for someone else and waiting for the day such things will be returned to their Master. An owner possesses things and is entitled to do anything he wants with them. And yet all we have, our material belongings, our opportunities, and even our very lives—belongs to God. We are simply entrusted with them until the day of reckoning. Some believe on that final day we will show our faithfulness but the truth is we are showing our faithfulness now by the way we use these entrusted endowments, just like the servants in this parable.

Second, the Parable of the Talents shows us that we do not have identical opportunities or talents. Notice that each steward was entrusted with unequal amounts of money, “Each according to his ability.” (Matt. 25:15) All are entrusted with something, but each receives a different amount. In our age of equality, we are tempted to begrudge the varying degrees of allocation and opportunity we see. We sometimes want to

compare ourselves and our talents. Yet we must remember two things: we are responsible for what we have and we are able to work with what we have. Jesus reminds us, “After a long time the master of those servants returned.” (Matt. 25:19) The parable parallels a sure return of Jesus to judge us, and a sure accounting of our faithfulness with that which he has entrusted to our care. The return will consist of our own accounting of our faithfulness to God.

Third, the Parable of the Talents shows that God has given us everything we need in order to be a good steward. Due in large part to the modern-day doctrines of equality, we are tempted to feel sorry about the servant who was only given one talent. Yet our faithfulness is not contingent on anyone else’s relationship with God and we will be judged by our own merits. The Biblical teaching found in Luke 12:48, reminds us that whatever we are given is required back to God, whether a little or a lot. “...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required...” The one talent man was not given too little to accomplish his faithfulness toward the master. He was given more than enough to meet the master’s expectations. Likewise whatever we possess is sufficient enough to produce an increase for our God. But it will always take our effort of faith to achieve that increase. This brings us to our final point.

Fourth, the Parable of the Talents teaches us that our success is contingent upon our work or effort of faith. Go back to the beginning in the book of Genesis and you will see that God’s purpose for man was to work the garden and to keep it. Man has always been made to work. God cares about our efforts and pursuits. This is why God has included the efforts of man in his plan for salvation. Our labors and deeds matter to God. And He expects an increase in whatever we have been given. God expects growth and increases to be the outcome of our efforts in faith for Him.

Regardless of whether we are reading this parable for the first or the fifty-first time, the conclusion is unmistakable: we are personally held responsible for our lives to God. Jesus shows us in the Parable of the Talents, our calling as Christians and our responsibility to use what God has given us to glorify and honor to Him. May we ever be thankful to Him for giving us opportunities to serve and glorify Him.

**PRIVILEGED TO SERVE**  
Week of January 12, 2020

**Sunday Morning:**

Announcements: Mark FitzSimmons  
Scripture Reading: Kirk FitzSimmons

**Lord's Supper & Offering**

Bread: Bryce Dolan  
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford  
Offering: Dale Hill  
Assist: Curtis Scherffius, Pat Gooch, Isaac Jobs

**Sunday Evening:** Bryce Dolan, Clifton Rutherford

**Prayer**

A.M. Closing: Mike Atkinson  
P.M. Closing: Kevin Sheeran

**Song Leaders:**

Sun. A.M.: Anthony Scherffius  
Sun. P.M.: Larry Nuckels  
Wednesday: Isaac Jobs

**Usher:**

Allen Clifton

**Wednesday Devotional:**

Ronnie Scherffius

**Open/Close Building:**

Whites

**Sound System:**

Will Burleson

**Greeters:**

Lupe Escojido  
Doug Jobs

**Prepare Communion:**

Dolan

LADIES' DAY 2020

"BIND US TOGETHER"

Speaker: Jennifer O'Banon

Saturday, February 8, 2020 @ MidTown  
church of Christ

Registration: 9-9:30am

Lunch will be provided.



**IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

Please pray for our members that are sick and our shut-ins.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Jan. 14, 21, 28: Tuesday Men's and Ladies Bible Class  
Feb. 8: Ladies' Day hosted by MidTown. Registration begins @ 9am. Lunch will be provided.

**AREA EVENTS**

Jan. 31-Feb. 1: Young Ladies' Day for Middle and High School Girls @ University church of Christ in San Marcus. More info on the bulletin board.

**BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:**

Happy Birthday: James S. Reeves (12)

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Barry Hatcher, who is involved in missions and the School of Preaching in Indonesia, will be speaking to the congregation Wednesday evening, Jan. 22, to inform us of this work and of the pressing need to relocate the school due to the rise of Muslim influence in the area. Barry has been personally recommended by Jason Rollo and the Bryan College Station eldership, overseers of the Indonesian work.

**KEEP IN PRAYER**

**MIDTOWN MEMBERS:**

Jeff Cannady  
Les Daltry  
Dee Gilpatrick  
Wayne Martin  
Ann Pantel  
Veronica Serenil  
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 January 5, 2019

Bible Class.....	97
A.M. Worship.....	132
P.M. Worship.....	82
Wednesday Bible Class.....	89

Offering      \$3,650

## Reading for this week: Genesis 18-20

He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant."

Genesis 18:2-5

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## SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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