

Midtown Messenger

Volume 3

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Issue 4

And They Were Astonished

Tom Wacaster

Near the close of His earthly ministry our Lord made one final journey to Galilee. His first stop on that tour was in Nazareth, the city where He grew up. Matthew's record of this visit to Nazareth appears in 13:54-58. Upon entering into the city it is said that our Lord "taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished" (13:54). Should that surprise us? Do you recall that moment recorded by John when the officers were sent by the Pharisees and chief priests to arrest Jesus, and those men returned and declared, "Never man so spake" (John 7:46). The opinion of those officers was not borne out of hearsay, or conjecture, or mere guess. They heard Jesus for themselves, and from that experience they boldly declared that there was no one who ever spoke as did Jesus. No one!

Over the centuries there have been great orators who have gained the respect of those who heard them. Among those are Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, orator and writer. He is ranked #18 on the list of the most enlightened leaders in world history. Marcus Cicero, Roman philosopher, politician, and lawyer. According to one writer, "the influence of Cicero upon the history of European literature and ideas greatly exceeds that of any other prose writer in language." Other great orators might include men like John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Ronald Reagan, known as "the great communicator." One of the most well-known statesmen of the closing years of the 1800s and early 1900s was William Jennings Bryan, well known Senator, author, and candidate for the Presidency. Time and space would fail us if we were to tell of Pericles, Abraham Lincoln, Patrick Henry, Daniel Webster, and others. No doubt the officers who came to arrest Jesus on that occasion were familiar with the famous orators of their age, and likely had studied those of the past who had influenced Roman and Jewish thinking alike. Now, take the lump sum of all of the famous orators of any and every age. Cull from their speeches and writings the best of the best, put it in a volume of philosophy and human wisdom and advice, and it would pale in comparison to the wisdom and communication ability of our Lord. Truly, "Never man so spake"!

One of the best-known tributes to our Lord was that offered by Napoleon Bonaparte:

"I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."

Albert Einstein is credited with having said this about Jesus:

"No man can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life. Theseus and other heroes of his type lack the authentic vitality of Jesus."

Here is an amazing quote from Vincent van Gogh:

It is a very good thing that you read the Bible. The Bible is Christ, for the Old Testament leads up to this culminating point. Christ alone has affirmed as a principal certainty, eternal life, the infinity of time, the nothingness of death, the necessity and the *raison d'être* of serenity and devotion. He lived serenely, as a greater artist than all other artists, despising marble and clay as well as color, working in living flesh. That is to say, this matchless artist made neither statues nor pictures nor books; he loudly proclaimed that he made living men, immortals.

Sholem Asch, a Jewish author wrote concerning Jesus:

Everything he ever said or did has value for us today and that is something you can say of no other man, dead or alive. There is no easy middle ground to stroll upon. You either accept Jesus or reject him.

Among my favorite is this tribute by Philip Schaff:

Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander the Great, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, he shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of school, he spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, he set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

If the student desires a good sampling of the amazing wisdom of Jesus, let him spend time meditating on the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. In my notes on chapter five, I provided you with a beautiful quote from John T. Fisher. It bears repeating here:

If you were to take the sum total of all the authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene – if you were to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you were to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably by comparison.

What Fisher had to say about the Sermon on the Mount could be said about every word that ever came out of the mouth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He spoke with wisdom, for He is the very embodiment of heavenly Wisdom. Let us listen, respect, and obey His words that we might have the life He has promised to the faithful.

The Forest Hill News, Forest Hill Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, August 21, 2019

Please Send Someone Else

"Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."

Exodus 4:12-13

Can anyone relate?

Moses didn't think he was qualified for the task the Lord gave him. "I am not eloquent," he said. But this was an excuse. Moses' problem was he was looking to self, not to God.

In the end, Moses was able to speak both eloquently and boldly for the Lord. He stood before Pharaoh and before the people to speak God's message to them with courage and conviction (even when his life was threatened - Ex 10:28; Num 14:10). God knew exactly what he was doing when He chose Moses for this job.

We have been told to "go" just like Moses. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28:19-20)

Are you going? If not, why not? Do you wish God would send someone else? Do you see yourself as unqualified?

What if God really expects YOU to go and tell others about Jesus? (And he does.)

What if the same God who promised to be with Moses has also promised to be with you? (And he has.)

What did Jesus say after he said "Go make disciples?" He said, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20)

Father, you have told us to go and disciple all the nations. We commit ourselves to faithfully fulfill this commission as we go one by one and share the message of your Son.

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of January 26, 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 Jobes

Sunday Evening: Bryce Dolan, Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Ron White
P.M. Closing: Young Men

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Larry Nuckels
Sun. P.M.: Young Men
Wednesday: Doug Jobes

Usher: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Mark FitzSimmons

Open/Close Building: Whites

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters: Lupe Escojido
Doug Jobes

Prepare Communion: Dolan

There will be a farewell reception for June Hawkins here at the building on Saturday, February 1st from 2-4pm. She will be moving to Bowie, TX to be closer to her son and daughter-in-law.

LADIES' DAY 2020
"BIND US TOGETHER"



Speaker: Jennifer O'Banon
Saturday, February 8, 2020 @ MidTown
church of Christ
Registration: 9-9:30am

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Janice FitzSimmons who had a medical procedure last week. Clifton Rutherford who is recovering from eye surgery to remove cancer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 28: Tuesday Men's and Ladies Bible Class
Jan. 29: Fifth Wednesday singing
Feb. 1: Farewell Reception for June Hawkins 2-4pm at the building.
Feb. 2: Congregation Potluck Luncheon after morning services.
Feb. 8: Ladies' Day hosted by MidTown. Registration begins @ 9am. Lunch will be provided.
Feb. 16: Chili Cook-Off after evening services.

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.
Feb: 27-Mar. 1: Arise and grow as a family workshop at Southwest church of Christ in Austin, TX

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Pat Gooch, Julia Atkinson (26); Trenton Jenkins (27); Billy York (29)

Happy Anniversary: Lupe & Virginia Escojido (31)

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 19, 2020

Bible Class.....	106
A.M. Worship.....	126
P.M. Worship.....	82
Wednesday Bible Class.....	85

Offering \$3,392

Reading for this week:

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." (James 5:16)

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

GO PAPERLESS!

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