



Midtown Messenger

Volume 4

January 10, 2021

Issue 2

When Judgment Becomes Doctrine

By: Cody Westbrook

The church of Christ is designed to be a united body (Eph. 2:14-16; 4:4-6). Unfortunately, the Devil has servants who try to disrupt that unity through false teaching and ungodly practices. In Romans 16:17-18 Paul provides instructions for dealing with such individuals.

First, there is the command to “note,” or pay close attention, to those who cause division, and “avoid” them, which indicates purposefully keeping away from them. The rationale for this command is fleshed out in three points. First, consider the fruit of their actions. To cause division is to produce factions and dissension in the body, and “offenses” refer literally to setting a trap that results in division. Second, note their method. They deceive the vulnerable by “smooth words and flattering speech.” The idea is that they give the illusion of truth by saying things that sound good but actually have no merit whatsoever. Finally, Paul addresses their motive. They “serve their own belly” which means instead of being a slave of Christ, they are slaves of themselves. They are egomaniacs who are completely self-centered and do everything to serve their own appetites.

This command applies in a general way to any doctrine or practice that is false and harms the church. But consider a specific application that normally is not discussed in this context. In Romans 14 Paul dis-

cusses liberty in matters of judgment and commands Christians not to allow their judgments to become problematic in the church. But what happens when they do? It is appropriate to apply Romans 16:17-18 to Romans 14. If a person pushes an opinion to the point of causing division, they sin and should be marked and avoided. If a preacher preaches a strange doctrine that he insists is a matter of judgment, yet that doctrine is pushed to the point of causing division, then he has sinned and should be marked and avoided. The command to mark and avoid is not restricted to false teaching. It includes opinions, attitudes, speech, actions, and anything else that causes division and problems in the church. When judgment becomes doctrine, the church has no choice but to fulfill the divine imperative to “note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

Cody Westbrook preaches for the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, TX

Resilience

Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Genesis 13:8-9

Have you ever noticed how some people just never have a bad day? It's not that they have a life free of pain or problems. It's just they have a tremendous capacity to bounce back when they are down or when something bad happens to them. In a word, they are RESILIENT. I believe Abraham was like this. He had plenty of bad days in his life, but he wouldn't allow things to get him down. He remained optimistic no matter what the circumstances.

And I believe this little passage may give us a window into the thought process of people like this. When Abraham was presented with a terribly divisive family problem involving a costly land dispute (and don't these kinds of issues hurt us worse than others), his solution was very simple: "Lot, you choose!" What this shows us about Abraham's disposition is not just his meekness and humility, but his FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES!

What had God promised to him?

Genesis 12:2 "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

The reason Abraham could be so positive and giving and meek in this situation is he knew there was no way he could lose. His optimistic outlook and generous, give-it-all-away point of view was based on the rock solid promises God had given him.

If you're feeling down today, encumbered by the many problems that are burdening

you (family, financial, health, etc.), spend a few moments simply meditating on the incredible promises God has made to you!

-Selected-

Is Freedom a Good Thing?

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

Genesis 6:1-2

One thing that is clear from the first chapters of Genesis is that God has given man freedom. God puts restrictions on us ("don't eat of the tree of knowledge"), and he calls on us to exercise control over our passions ("sin's desire is for you but you must rule over it"). But God doesn't prevent man from exercising his free will. In chapter three the woman "saw" and then she "took" from the forbidden tree. In chapter six the sons of God "saw" and then they "took" whatever wives they desired. And in the end, the results of these selfish and short-sided choices were devastatingly bad.

So, is freedom a bad thing? It is if we don't listen to God. But freedom ultimately is a good thing because without it we couldn't choose to "walk with God" as Noah did (Gen 6:9). Because God gave Noah freedom Noah had a real and authentic relationship with God. Noah chose to obey God (Gen 6:22) trusting in what God said and not in what his eyes saw. He lived righteously (Gen 6:9) choosing what God defined as good and not what he saw as good in his own eyes.

God gives us freedom, but that freedom is not a license to sin. Freedom is God's invitation to walk with him in righteousness and to enjoy all the good God wants to share with us.

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of January 10, 2021

****subject to change****

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Communion: Ron White
Offering: Bryce Dolan

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Kirk FitzSimmons
A.M. Closing: Mike Atkinson
P. M. Opening: Bryce Dolan
P. M. Closing: Ronnie Scherffius

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Doug Jobes
Sun. P.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Wed. P.M.: Isaac Jobes

Ushers: Allen Clifton

Greeters: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devo: Ronnie Scherffius

Open/Close Building: Randles

To Our Visitors: We welcome you to our service. Perhaps this is the first time you have visited us. It is our desire to have you return often and give us a chance to become better acquainted with you. You will find visitor cards on the back of the pew in front of you. Please fill one out.

Sermons are available on our website
www.midtowncoc.org

MidTown's Bible Classes and Worship services
can be viewed livestream on YouTube. Search
MidTown church of Christ Victoria.

LAST DAY! Today is the last day to make corrections to the 2021 working copy of the Pocket Directory in the foyer. Thank you!

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Mike McVey, who was in DeTar Hospital.

Happy Birthday: Richard Hill (11); Candance Dolan (12); James S. Reeves (12); Rick Bass (15)

******Ladies Day scheduled for February 13th hosted by Midtown has been cancelled ******

Janet Morales will be taking family pictures for our Bulletin Board today.

*****FRIENDLY REMINDER TO CONTINUE PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING*****

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Ken and Sandra Marie
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Dee Gilpatrick
Faye Henderson
Charlie Mabe
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 Morning Bible Class:	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship:	10:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship:	5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Class:	7:00 PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of January 3, 2021

A.M. Bible Class.....	52
A.M. Worship.....	63
Sunday Evening Worship.....	41
Wednesday Bible Class.....	43

Offering : January 3, 2021.....\$5,628

Reading for this week:

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

Genesis 6:1-2

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - Anthony Scherffius

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