

Church Street church of Christ Newsletter

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“BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES”

In Bible language, a “witness” is one who can testify about what he has seen or heard (John 3:11, 32). In both the law of Moses, as well as the new covenant of Jesus, we read the Lord’s instructions that in certain matters, action should be taken only when two or three witnesses can verify that something took place.

In what specific instances do we find the statement that two or three witnesses were/are required? What if an Israelite was accused of serving a false god? In such a matter, God’s command was, “*Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness*” (Deuteronomy 17:6). Again, “*One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established*” (Deuteronomy 19:15).

What if my brother sins against me? Jesus said that I am to go to him and tell him his fault. If he is unwilling to hear me, then I am to go back and take one or two more persons, “*that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established*” (Matthew 18:15,16).

When the Pharisees told Jesus that His witness was not true because He bore witness of Himself, His response was, “*It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me*” (John 8:17,18).

When Paul penned 2 Corinthians, there were some unsolved matters among the brethren in Corinth. Some of them had been involved in “*contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings . . . uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness*” (2 Corinthians 12:20,21). When Paul made his next visit to them, if those issues still were unresolved, what would need to be done? “*This will be the third time I am coming to you. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established*” (13:1).

What if an accusation of wrongdoing is made against one of the overseers of God’s church? “*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses*” (1 Timothy 5:19). Surely it was for the good of His people that God gave such instructions about “*two or three witnesses.*”

The passages cited above point to the *quantity* of witnesses required in certain instances. There are, however, other matters to take into account in addition to the number of witnesses who are available to confirm what they saw or heard. The clear message of the old law was that there was a need for two or three witnesses

in those cases when Jehovah’s covenant had been transgressed, meaning that *evil* had been done (Deuteronomy 17:2,3,7). Suppose we have two witnesses to something that occurred. Common sense causes us to ask, “Okay, two people saw something happen. Was it sinful or harmless?” “Well, three of us saw her wear a blue dress to services, and her shoes did not match the color of her dress.” Surely, we can agree that here is an affair that has no serious spiritual consequence. Such inconsequential activities do not fall under the realm of needing two or three witnesses in order to remove evil activity.

Besides taking into account the quantity of witnesses, there is also a need to have the proper *quality* of witnesses. How interesting that after the Lord through Moses instructed Israel “*by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established,*” the very next words were, “*If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing*” (Deuteronomy 19:15,16). God recognized that there will be false witnesses. What is the difference between a faithful, reliable witness and a false, unreliable one? God said, “*A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness will utter lies*” (Proverbs 14:5). False witnesses helped bring about the death of an innocent man by the name of Naboth (1 Kings 21:7-14). Of course, the most blatant example of false witnesses being manipulated was when the Jewish leaders “*sought false testimony against Jesus*” and found hirelings who would give dishonest “witness” against the sinless One (Matthew 27:59, 60). So, having the right number of witnesses is no guarantee that the speakers/accusers/testifiers will tell the truth. Evil hearts cause tongues to spit out lies.

Consider this. What if a person sins but there is only one human witness to his transgression? Or what if there are no human witnesses at all? The reality is, a person’s guilt is not eliminated simply because two or three witnesses cannot be found – if there is only one witness or no witnesses at all, sin is still sin. God sees all that goes on (Hebrews 4:13) and He will bring all matters, “*including every secret sin,*” into judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Though there may not be sufficient witnesses for the church to carry out discipline against a member living in sin, he/she will not “get away with it” before the God of heaven.

“*By the mouth of two or three witnesses*” is not just a cute, memorable expression. It is Bible teaching. It is the Lord’s instruction to His precious people. We need to accept it and strive to apply it properly.

-- Roger D. Campbell

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though they join forces, none will go unpunished. In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil. When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Better is a little with righteousness, than vast revenues without justice.”

Proverbs 16: 5 - 8

Attendance 25/06/17: AM – 52; PM – 16

Contribution: \$1687.80

If you are visiting with us today, we wish you a warm welcome and thank you for being with us to share in our worship to God. If you have any questions, or would like any further information, please ask one of our members or feel free to take any of the tracts and leaflets that are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAYS	UPCOMING EVENTS
05/07: Ruth – Birthday.	02/07: Building Fund contribution, after am service.
12/07: Jo Anne – Birthday.	05/07: Prayer Night, 7:30pm at building.
14/07: Raymond – Birthday.	08/07: Fellowship dinner, 5:30pm at the Chin’s home.
26/07: Heng – Birthday.	10/07: Ladies Devotional Night, 7:30pm at building.

TRAVELLING/SICK – Please keep in your prayers:

- Continue to pray for Abigail Williams and her family in Adelaide.
- For Sis Sharon Chan in Singapore. We thank God for the good news regarding her condition.
- For Joshua Stokes in Hobart. His cancer has recurred, so please pray for him and his family. He is now in a 12-month ongoing period of chemotherapy (1 week of treatment, 3 weeks off).
- Brett Rutherford in Tasmania.
- Wally Crous from the Central North congregation in WA. Please pray for him as he recovers from a stroke.
- Ray French, one of the elders from the congregation that oversees the support of Charlie and Mary. He has had further surgery to ease his back pain.
- Greg Shea in Launceston. He is looking to raise funds to work full-time with the brethren at Launceston.
- Please pray for Charlie and his eyes and the PMR he is being treated for.
- Please pray that Robyn remains well enough to maintain full time community work. In recent years, several positions have been terminated due to health issues.
- For Augustine as he recovers from his recent surgery.
- For Sis Kim Susetyo who is the wife of Bro Jacob Susetyo from Jakata, Indonesia. She was involved in an accident and is in hospital in a critical condition.
- For Bro Ron Gilbert in the US. He is suffering from a rare condition that has caused him severe pain in his arms and legs. He is slowly recovering and undergoing rehab. He has for many years conducted regular mission trips to Asia and Africa.
- Please pray for Adrian Ting’s (from Adelaide) parents. They are undergoing health checks after some previous concerns they have had.
- Please pray for Mabel McPherson from Devonport. She is recovering from surgery that she had last week.
- For the Tang family who are away on holiday in Hong Kong and Taiwan.
- For Joan who is in Malaysia for a couple of weeks.
- For Charlie and Mary who away working with the brethren at Central North in Perth.
- For Mary and that her new medication will assist her.

BUILDING PLANS:

The men are considering building works as we are blessed to be growing in number. Han has kindly drawn up a proposed plan to increase the seating capacity and have additional class room space. A proposed plan has been placed on the notice-board, please feel free to examine this and make any suggestions or comments about this. Any questions are also welcome as we seek to cater for our increasing numbers.

BUILDING FUND CONTRIBUTION:

After the morning service today, there will be an opportunity for those members who wish to, to contribute to the building fund.

PRAYER NIGHT:

This Wednesday night, we will be having our monthly prayer night together. There will be a list available if you would like to add any requests or thanks-giving to it that we can pray about together.

NEW CLASS AND WORSHIP TIMES:

The men have decided to change our Sunday morning bible class and worship times. As of Sunday 16th July, the children’s song time and bible classes will commence at 9:30am and conclude at 10:15am. There will then be a short break of 15 minutes and our morning worship will commence at 10:30am, concluding at 11:30am. Please note these new times.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:

Next Saturday 8th July, all are invited to the Chin’s home for a fellowship meal together. The evening will commence at 5:30pm, please bring along some food and drink to share.

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDIES:

Please continue to remember and act on our goal for every member to be able to set up 1 personal bible study with someone they know this year. If needed, there are several members who are willing to conduct the actual study as required. Please also keep in your prayers those that are currently doing bible studies at this time.