TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#535 The Glory Land Way
#548 The Lily of the Valley

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary

#383 Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#716 Sing to Me of Heaven
Sermon: "Are You Content?"
Hebrews 13:5-6

#650 Send the Light
#851 I'll Fly Away

Closing Prayer by: Kelly McCain

Welcome by: Don Taylor

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#867 To Canaan's Land
#797 Lord, We Come Before Thee Now

Scripture Reading: Ttistan Strickhausen

Opening Prayer: David Smith

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

Sermon: "One Word: Proclaim"
1 Corinthians 1:21-24

#643 Sowing the Seed
#634 We'll Work Till Jesus Comes

Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 6:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 10:00am — Ladies Bible Class, 7:00pm — Bible Study Classes

July 28, 2019

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

"Restoration Movements" in the Middle Ages

The very concept of "Restoration" indicates that something needs to be restored. What do we mean by that? **Acts 2** portrays the Jerusalem church in the immediate aftermath of Pentecost as a model: they were devoted to the teachings of the apostles, they engaged in regular prayer and fellowship, and they grew exponentially. But the rest of Acts as well as the NT more generally make clear that the early church had problems too: there was division in Corinth, Judaizing teachers who claimed another way of salvation (**Galatians 1:6-9)**, proto-Gnostics who claimed special knowledge (**Colossians 2**) and denied that Jesus came in the flesh **(2 John)**, and personality conflicts (**Philippians 4:2).**

Church history has been messy from the beginning. While the church is a divine institution, the bride of Christ purchased with his own blood, it is composed of fallible human beings. Sound doctrine, correct practice, and unity have been a struggle all along. During the 1st century, the apostles were present to guide and direct the church; their teachings and writings instructed the earliest Christians in the right way. That is why it is proper to hold the 1st century church up as normative: they were not perfect, but they were apostolic. We want to follow the teachings of the NT, striving toward the ideal of God's church.

By the 2nd century, the apostles were gone, and with their passing came a gradual shift in the teachings and practices of the church. Cohesion was still produced by sporadic persecution from the Roman Empire: no one became a Christian simply to get ahead in life; it required real commitment. That changed with the conversion of Constantine in the early 4th century and the eventual state church. The end of persecution was obviously a good thing. But as it became intertwined with the Empire, the church became increasingly corrupted.

After the fall of the Western Empire in the late 5th century, the Roman Catholic Church emerged as the center of power and culture in the West. Spiritual life for most people in the Middle Ages was dominated by superstition. Learning was at a low ebb with the explosion of the ancient world by the barbarians; accordingly, instruction in Scripture was almost non-existent, and people's imaginations indulged in all sorts of false notions. It was also characterized by extreme dependence on the church as an institution, much like that existing in feudal society as a whole. The church controlled the 7 sacraments which were held to be the means of grace from God, and the power to bar people from them.

Toward the end of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas applied the philosophy of Aristotle to develop Scholasticism. This ultimately produced churchmen who were ignorant in Scripture, but given to debate and clever arguments. So by the Renaissance, European Christianity ran in these 2 divergent streams: superstition and dependence on the church controlled the common people, while the clergy engaged in disputes completely irrelevant to those same people. For both groups, Scripture was essentially forgotten.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Bill Lunceford is in Magnolia Place Health Care for rehab.

Randy Snell, a friend of Danny Balch's is having health problems.

Nancy Hempel will be having eye surgery.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Eric Davis, Dayla Hale, Minny Owen, Doris Trahan, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Phillip Cottle, J. P. Williams

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Dr. Ronald Davis, Larry Hicks, Mark Wilcox

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Sunny Glen Children's Home

We are collecting 200 boxes of macaroni and cheese for Sunny Glen Children's Home. A barrel has been placed in the foyer. We have collected 104 boxes.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday at 7:00 pm.

We will be having a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Aug. 6th at 8:00 am.

Primetimers will be going to El Toro in Baytown on Tuesday, Aug. 13th at 5:15 pm. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. The September event will be another Bunco night. More information to come.

Barrett Station Church of Christ is having a Summer Gospel Meeting, Contending For the Faith on July 28-31st.
The gospel meeting will start at 7pm on Monday-Wednesday. They would like for the Liberty church of Christ to attend on Tuesday, July 30th at 7 pm.

Back to School Get Together

The Perkins' will be having a back to school get together from grades 6th-college on Saturday, Aug. 10th at 5pm at their house. See Abbey Perkins for more information.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;
Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

Privilege to Serve
Sunday, July 28th

Communion Preparation: Ashley Balch
Nursery Attendants: Marsha Rader, Lynette Ward

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Aug. 4th: Tania Balch
Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Aug. 4th: Tania Balch, Pat Hobbs

continued from front page

In the midst of this, there were exceptions who sought reform – even some who sought to restore the primitive church. One such man was **Peter Waldo** (c. 1140-1218), a rich merchant in Lyon, France. One day, he approached a priest to ask how to live like Christ. The priest gave him the answer Jesus gave the Rich Young Ruler. Waldo followed the counsel, providing an income for his wife, placing his 2 daughters in a convent, and then giving the rest of his estate to the poor. His movement came to emphasize 3 points: voluntary poverty; access to Scripture in the vernacular (rather than Latin); and public preaching. Waldo enlisted 2 priests to translate the Bible into French. After memorizing long passages himself, he began to teach commoners to imitate Christ by practicing poverty. As he gained followers, he sent them out 2 by 2 to preach, just like the apostles.

But Waldo's preaching was unauthorized. The Archbishop of Lyon ordered him to stop; he refused, quoting Peter in **Acts 5:29**, *we must obey God rather than men.* Ultimately, because he persisted in his preaching and continued to gain followers, Pope Lucius III excommunicated him and his movement in 1184. You see, the Waldensians (as we know them today) wanted to purify the church by returning to the simple life of the apostles. But that would mean that the church would have to surrender its worldly power. Furthermore, through their study of Scripture in their own language, the Waldensians had come to reject certain practices of the medieval church: prayers for the dead, purgatory, the veneration of saints and images. Their concern to live by the Sermon on the Mount meant that they refused to take oaths or participate in any killing. They survived intense persecution in the Alpine valleys, coming into contact with the larger Protestant Reformation in an accommodation with the Calvinists in 1532 – the only medieval sect to have a documented continuity to the present.

If space permitted, we could examine later figures like John Wyclif in England (1328-1384) and John Hus in Bohemia (1373-1415). All of these movements looked to the example of the NT church, sought to place Scripture in the hands of the common people, and called for a simple piety based on the Bible. But the medieval church did their best to crush all opposition, just as they forced the Waldensians underground for centuries: Wyclif was compelled to retire, and his followers, the Lollards, were suppressed; Hus was burned at the stake as a heretic. Thus, churches of Christ cannot claim any sort of direct influence from any of these groups. But many of these radical dissenters anticipated much of what we believe and practice; their common call, to study the Scriptures and see them as normative for the church, is certainly familiar. The courage these men and their followers demonstrated is admirable, and their commitment to follow Jesus despite tremendous personal cost is an example to us all.

Bryant Perkins