TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah
#450 Give Me the Bible

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#350 When My Love to Christ Grows Weak
#701 My Jesus, I Love Thee
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#453 Love Lifted Me
Sermon: We're All in This Together
1 John 1:1-3

#934 Softly and Tenderly
#859 When All of God's Singers Get Home

Closing Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee

Fellowship Potluck tonight at 5:00 p.m.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
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Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

June 27, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Unity of the Spirit

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace **(Eph 4:1-3).**

Note that last phrase especially: *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Paul's exhortation to the church in Ephesus is one that we need to hear again and again. As long as Christians remain united, working solidly together, there is nothing impossible in the Lord's work. Unfortunately, the opposites of this—envy, strife, jealousy, rivalry, disunity, and division—are very common and have been extremely costly to the cause of Christ through the centuries. And as Ephesians implies, this problem existed from the very beginning.

Consider how much Paul deals with the problem of factionalism in his first letter to the church in Corinth, just a few short years after it began. *I appeal to you, brothers[J] by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers* **(1 Cor 1:10-13).** He continues a bit later, *But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?* **(1 Cor 3:1-3).** There are numerous others references to division in the congregation, from the lawsuits of chapter 6 to the abuses of the Lord's Supper in chapter 11. And, interestingly, if you read the First Letter of Clement—one of the oldest Christian documents outside the NT, probably dating to the end of the first century—written from an elder in Rome to the same church in Corinth, he deals with the same sins of strife in the church!

The point is that this sin of rivalry is all too common, both in the world and even among God's people. The twelve quarreled about who would have the prime position in the Kingdom of God. In the earliest days of the church, the dissension between Jewish and Gentiles Christians was a hugely difficult problem, detailed both in Acts and a number of Paul's letters. And that's on top of the personal conflicts within the church that we have hints of in the NT.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Herlinda Izaguirre, grandmother of a family friend of the Leal's had a stroke and is in a coma.

Susan McCain fell and broke her leg. She is in a brace and will be in it for 6-8 weeks and then possibly surgery.

Bo McKewen, Jo Ella McKewen's son, has bone spurs on the back of his neck. He will be seeing a spinal Dr, at the VA.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, J. C. Whitfield, Peggy McIntosh, Oscar Cantu

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Larry Hicks, Catherine Parker

Our Missionaries

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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, June 28th at 5:30 p.m.

Primetimers will be going to Tia Juanita's Fish Camp restaurant in Winnie on Thursday, July 1st at 6:00 p.m.

Children's Bible Hour will resume on Sunday, July 4th.

We will have a Houston Food Bank on Tuesday, July 6th at 8:00 a.m.

Baby Shower for Lacey Arthur on Sunday, July 11th. She is registered at babylist.com. More information to come.

VBS is scheduled for Monday, July 19-Thursday, July 22nd from 6-8 p.m.

Reminder

We will be having a Potluck Fellowship tonight at 5:00 p.m. Bring your favorite finger foods or something for a light mea.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor	Phillip Strickhausen	
Robert Ward		

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And rivalry continues to be a problem today. Sometimes we see it within a family: between husband and wife, or siblings, or parents and children. Sometimes one family dislikes another family. Sometimes it is between individuals; I have seen preachers estranged from each other because of professional jealousy, or elder who could not work together in peace. Even whole congregations have become jealous of each other instead of realizing they are "playing for the same team."

Envy, strife, and jealousy are among the greatest problems that we face. And our culture only reinforces that, embedding the competitive spirit deeply within us. We teach our children to compete vigorously for better grades, higher honors, athletic achievements. With that ingrained in us, as adults we compete for jobs, for promotions, for possessions, for prestige.

The root problem of all of this is too great a concern for self and too little for others. Instead, listen to what Paul writes to the church in Rome: *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness* **(Rom 12:3-8).** There are fingers, hands, arms, toes, feet legs, eyes, ears, and all the rest in the body—and each is necessary and important to the body as a whole. There is no need for strife among members of the physical body! And there isn't among members of God's spiritual body: the church.

The antidote for division is Christian love: love for God and love for neighbor. Pau reaches his climax on this theme just a couple of verses later. *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor* **(Rom 12:10).** May we all strive to cultivate that instead of rivalry, and *maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*

Bryant Perkins