TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Phillip Strickhausen

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah!
#543 Wonderful Words of Live

Scripture Reading by: Brooks McKelroy
#214 Have You Seen Jesus, My Lord?
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#742 When Upon Life's Billows
Sermon: Christ in Control
Mark 14:12-21

#650 Send the Light
#753 Farther Along

Closing Prayer by: Andre Jones

Third Sunday night Singing

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

July 18, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Sluggards Need Not Apply

My parents came down to visit for a few days last week. While it is always good to see them, this was not primarily a social occasion. Instead, they were here so that my dad could help me construct a metal shed in my yard. We have been trying to work on this project for a few months, but endless rains and our schedules have kept getting in the way. But we finally found a week that would work for us both and they spent several days here so we could work.

The job proved to be bigger than we anticipated. For one thing, we had to finish demolishing a previous structure (which we had begun a couple of months ago but were unable to finish because of the aforementioned rain). For another, assembling these prefabricated buildings is not so much difficult as it is tedious—there are some 380 screws, 180 nuts and bolts, umpteen numbered pieces that have to fit together in a very specific order; it takes time. The weather failed to cooperate again, interrupting us repeatedly with storms and draining us with heat and humidity when we were at our task. And then there is just the matter of going soft, I guess, if I'm being honest—when you do most of your work indoors, it doesn't take much heavy lifting out in the sun to wear you out. I confess that I am tired and sore as I write these lines.

At any rate, we did not get it finished this trip. It is stabilized, but the roof still needs to be added. But we had to quit doing that work, because I had my other, *actual* work that I had put off—studying, reading, writing, thinking—and could no longer delay. All of this underlines the importance of work in our lives. Sometimes it is physical, sometimes more intellectual; sometimes it is in our homes, sometimes at our jobs. But work is unavoidable for us all.

No book in Scripture has more to say about the importance of work, of industriousness, of effort, and the danger of laziness that Proverbs. I think particularly of the well-known passage in **Proverbs 24:30-34:** *I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.* What can we learn from the field of the sluggard?

We might ask first of all: why was he so neglectful? If we were to pose that question to him, I imagine that he would offer a variety of excuses. But none of them hold water. It's not because there was no room – he had an entire field, he simply failed to utilize it. It's not because the soil wasn't fertile – the ground was overgrown with weeds, with thorns and nettles. Ground that will

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Susan McCain is in a leg brace for 6 weeks.

Bo McKewen, Jo Ella McKewen's son, has bone spurs on the back of his neck.

Kingsley Cormier and **Nova Brown**, Linda Frank's great grandchildren are having respiratory problems.

Barbara Stroble, Alice Smith's sister has been diagnosed with leukemia.

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, Peggy McIntosh, Oscar Cantu

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister, meet Monday, July 19th at 5:30 p.m.

VBS is this week, Monday, July 19-Thursday, July 22nd from 6-8 p.m. All ages are welcome.

Plastic Bags

Thank you everyone for saving your plastic bags. We do not need anymore at this time. The Houston Food Bank has been sending us 3 boxes at a time when we have a truck.

Our Missionaries

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

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

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Ground that will grow weeds will grow what you plant too. It's not because of a bad environment, where animals would inevitably eat the crop. The *stone wall was broken down.* If that was a problem, it was due to his neglect of the wall.

No, in fact, the writer tells us explicitly why he failed: he was lazy. He's called a *sluggard* in the first line of the passage, and that is just a 50 dollar word for lazy. Unfortunately, laziness is an enemy of us all in different ways. We must constantly battle it or else we will fail like this man.

Think about this for a moment strictly in the realm of the work of the church. God gives us a metaphorical field; we have the opportunity to plant good or bad seed in our lives. And we can be sure, whatever we plant, it will produce fruit. So there is a real need for Christians to plant good seed. That we live in a world that seems hostile to Christian values is no excuse, because God has provided all we need to endure. Those excuses won't fly for us anymore than they did for him. If we fail to plant as we ought, it is due to our laziness. That has tragic consequences.

For one thing, this man was never able to bring in a harvest. What about us? We might think that we can't accomplish much as only one smallish church. But have you ever considered the potential even in this group? We have the food bank, worked by many of you, that feeds literally hundreds every month. We have contributed to mission works and children's homes and disaster relief and on and on. That's all good! Now think of the potential, if each of us started applying ourselves diligently in our fields. Think of the reverberations of the work we have already done, and then imagine the victories that could be won through each person here. You know, Jesus started with only 12 men, and one of them dropped out – but they turned the world upside down.

Laziness also causes the weeds to grow. This man never made a decision to plant weeds. The only choice he made was to do nothing. Nature took care of the rest. We can be sure that, if we do not plant something positive in our lives, the negative will take over, with no effort on our part, and it will blight our lives.

That is the final consequence of laziness. The wall was neglected, the weeds grew, the field was in a total state of disintegration—the wild animals run through it, the snakes live there—all because the man decided to do nothing. Our lives are the same. When we do nothing for the Lord, the weeds begin to grow. Pretty soon, the walls come tumbling down and, without God's presence, evil comes in. And we are ruined.

If we are going to live for Christ, we need to cultivate the soil, plant good seed, mend the walls. We need to work. What sort of crop are you producing?

Bryant Perkins