TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Brooks McKelroy

#727 Jesus Is Coming Soon
#738 Take the Name of Jesus with You

Scripture Reading by: Tristan Strickhausen
#753 Farther Along

#742 When Upon Life's Billows
Sermon: "Christ, Our Passover"
Mark 14:22-26

#934 Softly and Tenderly
Lord's Supper and Contribution
#What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Closing Prayer by: Craig Girard

Pizza tonight at 5:00 p.m.
This will be our Fourth Sunday night of the month fellowship

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

July 25, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Revive Us Again

We had Vacation Bible School this past week, as you all know, and we tried something different this time by having it in the evening. I was personally not sure how that would go for a variety of reasons: would we have as many children turn out at night as we do in the morning? Would we have many adults show up for a Bible class throughout the week? How would the year layoff impact things, given that COVID still seems to be affecting all sorts of groups and activities?

The results surpassed my wildest expectations. We actually had MORE kids in attendance than either of the first two years we were here. And after the first night, we had a good number of adults in class, too. All in all, we surpassed 70 each of the last 3 nights. I think everyone who participated learned a lot and had a good time. I cannot thank all of those involved enough—and there were so many that I don't want to list them, because I know I will inadvertently leave someone out. But it took a lot to pull this off successfully, and we could not have achieved it without a great deal of effort throughout the congregation.

That is inspiring, because it shows us just a glimpse of what we can accomplish when we work together as a church with enthusiasm for our task. It makes me think of our lesson from Tuesday, when we studied King Josiah. If you don't remember the story, Josiah became King of Judah as a boy of only 8 years old. His father and grandfather were notoriously wicked men; Josiah, however, decided to seek the Lord. He tore down the idols and the high places, and he restored the long-neglected Temple in Jerusalem. In the process, the lost scroll of the Law was found. When Josiah read it, he tore his clothes and wept, because he realized just how far the people had strayed from God's will. It gave his reformation a new focus: now he worked for restoration.

In churches of Christ, we should be able to identify with that. Restoration of the beliefs and practices of the earliest Christians has motivated us since our origins in this country. But Josiah's story—a zealous reformer who did not realize how much more he had to do, but who then redoubled his efforts when faced with new information—confronts us with the same issue: have we really restored the New Testament church? What areas could stand to be improved upon?

If there is any church that should serve as a model for us, it is the one in Jerusalem in the immediate aftermath of the church's birth on Pentecost. You remember the story recorded in **Acts 2**. The end of the chapter, **2:42-27**, offers a summary statement of life in this new community of believers. Luke tells us

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.

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

Our Missionaries

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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister, meet Monday, July 26th at 5:30 p.m.

Primetimers will be going to Agave in Cleveland on Tuesday, Aug. 10th at 6:00 p.m. A driver is needed for the bus.

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.

Reminder

We will be having pizza tonight at 5:00 p.m. Bring your favorite dessert.

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

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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that the Jerusalem church *devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers* **(Acts 2:42).** These are all familiar actions to us, to the point that that I fear we can take them for granted. Yet these early Christians reoriented their lives around these activities. And there is real danger in neglecting any of them.

When the church is not steeped in the apostolic teaching—for us, not delivered directly but mediated through the Scriptures—it ends up shaped by culture rather than Christ, with a thin veneer of Jesus to give authority to whatever is popular. When the church does not share in life together, individuals live in isolation, rather than in the edifying community God intended for his people. When the church does not value the breaking of bread—that is what we typically call the Lord's Supper—it fails to proclaim the very act of God, the death and resurrection of Christ, that called it into existence. When the church does not practice fervent prayer, it ignores the powerful access God has given to his children as their Father.

The unfortunate truth is that, while we practice all of these things, we are a pale reflection of those halcyon days in Jerusalem. Does our concern for the apostles' teaching inspire us to be fervently evangelistic like those in Jerusalem? Even after they were scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the word (**Acts 8:1-4).** Does our love for the Lord transcend material things, to the point that our fellowship extends even to a willingness to share all we have with our brothers and sisters (**2:44-45)**? Do we celebrate the Lord's Supper as the high point of our assembly, an enacted sermon that tells who we are and what Jesus has done for us, or is it a ritual we go through thoughtlessly? Are our prayers like those of the early church, recorded as praying together all throughout Acts?

If we are honest, I think we must admit we often do not measure up. I don't mean that primarily as an indictment—we must remember that MANY churches in the 1st century fell short of this model, and they were still God's people! But it should challenge us to always be striving after what God would have us to be.

The larger point is that this new way of life resulted in them *having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved* **(2:47)**. You see, when the church practices these things, it is not just beneficial for us. There is an attractiveness, an energy, that draws outsiders in. They were praising God, they were organizing their lives around each other and prayer and God's word. And God added to their numbers daily.

When we think that the church is unattractive or stagnant or apathetic—and we probably all think that at times, and, at least sometimes, we are right—we would do well to reread this passage and ask ourselves: what is missing? The gospel has not changed. God is still at work. People still need deliverance.

What are we doing about it?

Bryant Perkins