TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#678 More About Jesus
#797 Lord We Come Before Thee Now

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#509 I Will Sing the Wondrous Story
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#470 Victory in Jesus
Sermon: "In Gethsemane"
Mark 14:27-42

#915 Trust and Obey
#852 When the Roll is Called Up Yonder

Closing Prayer by: Reiko Walker

Welcome by: Don Taylor

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#548 The Lily of the Valley
#549 There Is Sunshine In My Soul

Opening Prayer: Ken Coleman
#539 Higher Ground

Sermon: "This is a Test"
Genesis 22:1-2

#947 Jesus Is Tenderly Calling
#615 He Keeps Me Singing

Closing Prayer: Wayne Noonkester

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

August 1, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Wiser Than Socrates

Socrates was a Greek philosopher who lived in the city-state of Athens in the 5th century B.C. Most of what we know about him is due to the writings of his most famous student, Plato. In the *Apology*, an account of Socrates's defense against charges of corrupting the Athenian youth, Plato records how Socrates acquired his reputation for wisdom in the first place.

As the story goes, one day a friend of Socrates inquired of the Oracle at Delphi if anyone were wiser than Socrates. The priestess affirmed that there was no one. That puzzled Socrates greatly: he knew that he possessed no great knowledge. He decided, then, that he would go around and question those reputed to be wise in order to test the oracle's statement.

First he interrogated the politicians. He found that while many people *thought* them to be wise – no one more so than themselves – they actually did not know much at all. Then he questioned the poets. Though their writing was impressive, they could not explain it. Socrates concluded it came from some inspiration within rather than great wisdom. Worse, their ability deluded them into thinking they could speak authoritatively on things they knew nothing about. Finally, he went to the artisans. These actually had some real wisdom in their craft. But they went wrong in the same way as the poets; because they had knowledge in one area, they thought themselves wise in all.

Socrates' quest, characterized by its penetrating questions, gave birth to his unique style of argument. And eventually, he concluded that perhaps he really was the wisest man in Athens: he was the only one prepared to admit his own ignorance.

In **Acts 17**, the Apostle Paul enters Athens. Though this was obviously many centuries after Socrates' day, he still casts a shadow over the scene: like him, Paul debated with those in the synagogue and the agora (**Acts 17:17**); and, like him, Paul was charged with preaching new deities (**v. 18**). As John Stott put it, "Paul was…a kind of Christian Socrates, although with a better gospel than Socrates ever knew." And in his approach, there are some lessons for us as we confront our own antagonistic and unreceptive culture.

1. **Be good students.** The greatest commandment is to love God with everything that is in us, including *all your mind.* Paul immersed himself in Scripture to the point that his letters are steeped in its imagery and allusion even when he does not directly quote it. We need to endeavor to absorb it to that same degree.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

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

Jo Ella McKewen was in the hospital last week.

Doyle Owen is in the VA Hospital.

Patrick Smith, Gayle Coleman's brother in-law, has pancreatic and liver cancer.

J. C. Whitfield, Gayle Coleman's sister, is in the hospital.

Debby McKinzie had surgery on Friday and will be in the hospital for 7-10 days.

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, Deacons meet Monday, Aug 2nd at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Aug. 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 4th we will have a meal at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

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

Men's Workday is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 21st at 7:00 a.m.

Our Missionaries

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

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
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2. **Find common ground.** But Paul was not only a student of Scripture—he as a student of Athenian culture. He spoke to them of the *unknown God* they worshipped and used that as a springboard to make an argument from natural revelation. Paul is more than capable of arguing from Scripture, as he does frequently in Acts in the synagogues; but that source of authority was either unknown or unvalued by his audience. So he quoted from their own poets, Aratus and Epimenides. He argued in a way that would have appealed to Stoic and Epicurean philosophers.

3. **Don't hold back.** Some people operate under the misconception that to use such a tactful approach is to accommodate error. But in spite of using the most accommodating approach possible, Paul doesn't mince words. He says that their service is ignorant, and now they are commanded to repent. Though he speaks in terms that are geared towards his audience, he strikes at their faults: God does not need to be served by human hands in your manmade temples, and the day is coming in which the world will judged by the one he has appointed. Finding common ground does not mean that you have to compromise the truth.

4. **Exalt Christ.** Ultimately, in trying to reach others, we do not need to present them with a better way to live so that we can find peace or contentment or fulfillment or whatever (even though it is that!). The world is not short on what has been called "moralistic therapeutic deism"—the idea that there is a God, and he wants you to be nice and be happy and go to heaven. Paul and the other earliest Christians proclaimed Christ: his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming judgment, not just here but in every sermon in Acts. We may become good students of culture, we may find common ground, but the end goal is to always point to Jesus Christ.

Even though Paul put forth his best effort to reach these Athenians with the gospel, not all believed. In fact, apparently, most were not receptive to his message: many of them mocked him; others said they would like to hear more, though it is unclear if that was out of genuine interest or the love of discussion itself. That is much the same response you would expect from attempting to reach those in our own time

But some DID believe. Does that make it a success? Perhaps not in the terms of the 3,000 on Pentecost, the 5,000 following Peter healing the lame man. But there is rejoicing in heaven over even one soul that is saved. In that sense, it most certainly was a success. And, of course, in the end, what Paul preached triumphed over everything. Here we are some 2,000 years later, and the great Parthenon stands in ruins, while Christianity overtook the world.

Socrates, by his own admission, knew nothing. But the Christian Socrates knew *Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God* **(1 Cor 1:23-24).** Let's emulate him.

Bryant Perkins