TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Bobby Rader

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#509 I Will Sing the Wondrous Story
#286 Wonderful Story of Love

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#313 The Old Rugged Cross
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#508 A Wonderful Savior
Sermon: "A Rock and a Hard Place"
Mark 14:53-72

#907 Hark the Gentle Voice
#523 I Know the Lord Will Find a Way

Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Third Sunday Singing

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

August 15, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Meanest Man in Texas

We have been studying Christian ethics on Wednesday evenings for several weeks now, with an emphasis on how we can make moral choices when faced with dilemmas in life. Last week, we talked about capital punishment. In discussing the possibility of repentance and reformation of life, I mentioned how the case of Clyde Thompson had strongly influenced my views on the subject. I told his story in a Sunday night sermon some years ago, but it occurred to me afterward that it is likely not all of us are familiar with it.

Clyde Thompson was raised in a Christian home. His father was a Bible salesman and itinerant preacher. But Clyde never had much use for church. When he was old enough to stay home alone, he began refusing to attend services. Most Sundays, while his family was worshipping, Clyde was out hunting.

One Sunday evening, Clyde was doing just that. He was with a couple of friends of his, two brothers, ages 18 and 13. Clyde was only 17. They borrowed the pistol and shotgun of the brothers' father without his knowledge and set out. As it happened, they ran into a couple of men who had had trouble with the older brother and their father. Some words were exchanged. The argument escalated to a fight. When the two men tried to use a powder horn and tree limb as weapons, Clyde pulled the pistol and shot them dead.

Clyde was sentenced to death in the electric chair in 1931. At only 19 years old, he was the youngest person ever to be placed on death row in Huntsville at the time. He had never obeyed the gospel. But he overheard Bro. P.D. Wilmeth preaching on a radio in the prison. Clyde listened and sent for him to come and baptize him. He did, there in the Walls Unit at Huntsville, only 6 days before he was to be executed.

In the meantime, the trial of his other adult accomplice took place. That young man came from money and was able to hire a good lawyer. He received a 5 year suspended sentence. The governor could not see justice in sending one man to die when two others were equally guilty. So Clyde's sentence was commuted mere hours before his execution—not to 5 years, but to life in prison.

Unfortunately, no Christian came to encourage him. They sent him to Retrieve Farm near Angleton on the Gulf Coast, a place so miserable the inmates referred to it as "Burnin' Hell." There were no worship services there. In fact, they worked them as much as 8 weeks straight without a Sunday off. There was no time even to wash their socks. They would just come in from working the land, collapse exhausted into bed, filthy, to do it over again .Clyde lost what little faith he had. How could both God and a place like that exist? His daddy came to visit him, and Clyde gave him back the Bible he had given him on death row. He told him he didn't believe it anymore and wouldn't try to live it. Oh, how that must have hurt his father! The whole ordeal probably put him in an early grave—he died in 1938 at only 53 years old.

During this dark period, Clyde became a desperate man. His fellow inmates tagged him as the "Meanest Man in Texas." He attempted to escape on 4 separate occasions, but was always plotting and planning it. He felt determined either to get away or be killed. He had 2 knife fights with fellow inmates and killed the men.

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.

Debby McKinzie is recovering from surgery at home.

Anthony Walker has covid.

KaLeisha Jones has health problems.

Jo Ann Modisette has covid.

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, Aug 16th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Aug. 19th at 8:00 a.m.

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

Sunday evening Aug. 22nd will be our fellowship meal at 5:00 p.m.

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to Gayle Coleman on the death of her brother in law, Patrick Smith . He passed away Friday morning.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Zach and Lacey Arthur on the birth of their son, Sterling Emmitt. He was born, Thursday, Aug. 5th and weighed 7lbs 14oz.

We are in need of Bible class teachers for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. If you would like to help please let Bryant or one of the Elders know.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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For those crimes, he was sentenced to another life sentence in each case.

The officials realized he was not afraid to die, so they transferred him to a unit they called "Little Alcatraz" at Eastham Farm. There, he plotted with several inmates to seize the arsenal and hand out weapons, planning to kill anyone in the way of their escape. They seized two guards, used them as human shields, and made their way to the armory. But it was an ambush. Clyde was shot through the shoulder. The other three men who went up with him were killed.

At that point, the prison system gave up on Clyde. There was an old abandoned morgue behind death row, a concrete building. They put a steel door on it and they placed Clyde there in solitary confinement. There was no light except what came in through the barred hole in the door for 5 hours a day. There was no water. There was no toilet. They didn't give him utensils, afraid he would sharpen even a spoon. They gave him no clothes except shorts, afraid he would hang himself. Clyde walked end to end in it to the point he wore holes in the concrete floor where he made the turn and his bare feet became hard as rocks.

After a few months, he asked the guards if they would bring him a Bible. He knew they wouldn't let him have anything else to read, but he had to have something to keep from going mad. He was angry with God. So he set out to prove it was full of contradictions. With nothing else to do, he studied diligently

And there, in the pig pen, Clyde Thompson came to himself. He began to realize the Bible was true and he was false. He repented in tears, on his knees day and night for months. He read the Scriptures and prayed, asking if God really could forgive someone like him, and if he would take him and use him for his honor glory. And the Lord—merciful, gracious, loving Father that he is—did just that. When they took him out to bathe and shave him once a week, they started letting him pass out literature. Soon, he had three men wanting to obey the gospel. He wrote to a preacher in Dallas to come down and baptize them, and he did, in an old deep bathtub on the corridor of death row, where Clyde had once awaited execution.

In 1946, a young woman named Julia sent him a Christmas card after hearing his story from her minister—he had encouraged members of the church to send Clyde cards, and she was the only one who responded. A correspondence began, and they met for the first time a year later. Clyde proposed marriage and she accepted. From then on, she campaigned on his behalf. Finally, on November 1, 1955, after more than 28 years in prison, Clyde Thompson—once the "Meanest Man in Texas"—was released on a conditional pardon. He and Julia married 5 days later.

The Thompsons traveled for awhile after their marriage, seeking to serve Christ wherever they were called. He was in local church work at times, as well as Superintendent of a Navajo Children's Home in New Mexico. They adopted a Navajo infant girl there. Finally, in 1970, he returned to Huntsville, where he established his Prisoner's Aid Center. He taught and baptized more than 1,500 prisoners between then and 1977. Then he moved to Lubbock, where he worked with the Sunset Church of Christ as Prison Minister and converted another 400 souls, before being called home to be with his Lord on July 3, 1979.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. **(1 Timothy 1:15-17)**