TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop
#414 Anywhere with Jesus

Scripture Reading by:
#Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#957 This World Is Not My Home
Sermon by: The Power of Fear
1 John 4:18

#934 Softly and Tenderly
#867 To Canaan's Land

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Fifth Sunday night Prayer Service

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

October 31, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

All Saints' Day

Today is Halloween. In the US and many other countries, we associate that with a number of traditions: dressing up in costumes, going from house to house trick-or-treating, terrifying, uncanny things like ghosts and vampires. Some have accordingly objected to celebrating Halloween as wicked. Where did this holiday come from, anyway?

To answer that, we need to understand that the day after is a holiday too: All Saints' Day. This is a day set aside in the Roman Catholic Church and some other religious groups to honor all saints, known and unknown. The idea of venerating and invoking saints has its origins in the persecutions and martyrdoms of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It became customary to commemorate martyrs on the day of their death. In the Great Persecution of Diocletian at the beginning of the 4th century, so many were killed that a separate day could not be assigned for each. So the church, feeling that they should still be honored, established a day honoring all of them: at first only martyrs, but later including others due to their lives that were deemed worthy.

Originally, the feast of All Saints was held the first Sunday after Pentecost, where it is still observed in the Eastern Orthodox churches. But in the West, it was fixed at May 13 by Pope Boniface IV in either 609 or 10. Why the date change? After its legalization and later establishment, Christianity was increasingly influenced by paganism and adaptable in its attempts to appeal to and accommodate pagans. May 13 was the culmination of the ancient Roman feast of *Lemuralia*, where the evil spirits of the dead were said to be active. Romans propitiated these ghosts by walking around the house barefoot and throwing out black beans—because, apparently, nothing appeases spirits like beans. Linking a celebration of the sainted dead to this time of year was an attempt to de-paganize those who still participated in the ancient practice. The observance of the day on November 1 dates from Pope Gregory III in the mid-8th century. This coincided with the Celtic harvest festival Samhain from sunset October 31 to sunset November 1, which also had a mythical connection with the Otherworld. Again, the intention was to replace a pagan festival with a Christian one.

During the Middle Ages, major church feasts had vigils the night before. We are most familiar with this with Christmas Eve. The same was true of All Saints or All Hallows. Over time, All Hallows Eve became Halloween. An association with dead spirits and other ancient customs continued and evolved into the present holiday on this night.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Virginia Cole, Glenda Wiggins' sister, is recovering from a broken leg and a broken elbow.

Gary Nielsen will be meeting with a transplant team on Nov. 2nd.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, Jo Ann Modisette, Ka'Leisha Jones, Mike Little, Jackie David, Oscar Cantu

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister, Deacons meeting Monday, Nov. 1st at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Nov. 2nd at 8:00 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 3rd we will have a meal at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Primetimers will have a Thanksgiving potluck meal on Tuesday, Nov. 9th at 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship room.

Baby Shower for Ellie Vazquez on Sunday, Nov. 14th from 2-4 p.m. She is registered at babylist.com.

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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I relate this history primarily because of the concept of a day dedicated to All Saints. Not because we should take up this sort of observance, but because it reminds us of an important truth: we are all saints. In the NT, "saint" is not reserved for a group of dead, super Christians; instead, without exception, ALL Christians are saints. That is significant because the Greek word translated as "saint" is the same one that is rendered as "holy"; some modern translations actually use the phrase "holy ones" instead of "saints" to convey this. And the terms is always used collectively in Scripture. It is not an individual title. Rather, the church is holy; it is an assembly of saints.

On the one hand, that is true because we are the body of Christ. He is the Holy One (**Acts 3:14).** We are holy because he is holy, not because of anything great or worthy in ourselves. As Paul puts it: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly place, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will* **(Eph 1:3-5).** If we are in Christ, God declares us to be saints. What a blessing!

On the other hand, that presents us with a tremendous challenge: to become in reality what God has said we are in Christ. Because we serve a holy God, we are to be holy. That confronts God's people, Israel, in the Wilderness (**Lev 19:2)**, and it's something that holds true for us under the New Covenant as well: *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."* **(1 Pet 1:14-16).** This is the foundation for all of the ethical instructions Peter proceeds to expound. Because you are holy, practice brotherly love **(1:22).** Because you are holy, get rid of wickedness in your life and long to grow **(2:1-3).** Because you are holy, be a witness in this world: submit to the king, submit to your husband, honor your wife, love each other (**2:11ff).** Because we are saints, God calls us to live like saints.

We might think of that as an impossible standard. And yet, Christians are repeatedly called holy ones in Scripture, despite all our weakness and imperfection. The church in Corinth was extraordinarily flawed: torn by factionalism, abusing the Lord's Supper, and celebrating gross sexual immorality, to name just a few of their more glaring failures. But Paul still addressed them as saints (**1 Cor 1:2).** Let's resolve, then, to truly become what God says we already are in Jesus. Let's be holy as he is holy.

Bryant Perkins

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