TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#2 We Praise Thee, O God
#47 Holy, Holy, Holy

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

#480 Blessed Assurance
Sermon by: Guest Speaker: Dale Foster

#912 Burdens are Lifted at Calvary
#549 Sing to Me of Heaven

Closing Prayer by: Don Lynn

Welcome by: Don Taylor

Opening Prayer: Ken Coleman
#322 Lead Me to Calvary
#396 No Not One
#695 None of Self and All of Thee

Sermon: The Christ of Calvary
Matthew 27:33-35

Let Him Have His Way with Thee
#705 A Common Love

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

November 7, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

A Great Church?

On the first Sunday in November of 2017—exactly 4 years ago, in other words—Abbey and I came here to Liberty to try out for the open preaching position. It is hard to believe that much time has passed in many ways. In the interim, many things have changed for us personally and for the congregation. Some who were here that morning are unfortunately no longer with us; some of you reading this now were not here then. Not long after that morning, we were scrambling to find a place to rent here and looking for Abbey a teaching job in the middle of the school year; now we are homeowners and she has a job she loves at San Jacinto Elementary.

As for me, I would like to believe that I have continued to grow in my teaching and preaching and been able to pass some of that on to you, however imperfectly. But I also know that I have a long way to go and there are a great many things I would like to do better. I hope to do so if God allows it—we are all a work in progress in our journey with the Lord, whoever we are.

But the last two years in particular have been challenging for all of us. A preacher friend of mine recently said that a year in ministry during COVID should be counted like dog years. Between employing new technologies, reinventing how we assemble to implement social distancing and other safety measures, reintroducing services and activities that had temporarily been halted (and still waiting on others to resume)—on and on, it has been trying. And with the ups and downs that have often coincided with resurgences of the virus, it can be discouraging to see attendance get almost back to normal…only to have it drop again. Or to wonder why people have not started coming back to Bible class. Or on Sunday or Wednesday evenings, even after asking for congregational input on how to improve those offerings. I have frequently found myself lying awake at night wondering what I can do differently to help remedy the sense of apathy that seems to have set in for many people.

Of course, we are all in the same boat: I am not unique in that regard any more than this congregation is. I recognize we all have faced the same sorts of challenges in our respective jobs, and we all potentially face the same dismay here in the church. Maybe you have been actively engaged here and despair about how to get others involved again, or maybe you have been struggling with the malaise that seems to beset so many in our society in general as the months stretch on, and it has seeped even into your spiritual life. Whatever the case, I think it is important for all of us (including me) to remind ourselves that *the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart* **(1 Sam 16:7).**

You see, we tend to measure the greatness of a church in very human-centered terms, much like we would any old earthly enterprise. We probably think first in terms of size—if there are hundreds or, better still, thousands in attendance, it must be a great church! But Gideon's defeat of the Midianites reminds us that a small number are mighty if God is with them **(Judges 7).** Perhaps we think of wealth—a large contribution, a big budget, those are marks of greatness, right? But the early church was far from wealthy. The NT church was generous—a sure sign of greatness—but they gave bountifully despite their poverty, as the Macedonians exemplify **(2 Cor 8:1-4).** Well, then, it must be in great facilities; after all, there surely is a

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 going to the hospital on Monday for testing.

Jackie David, Walden David's mother is in San Jacinto Hospital.

Joe Edd Stifflemire will have heart test this week.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, Ka'Leisha Jones, 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, meeting Monday, Nov. 8th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a meeting immediately after morning service for those that are helping with the baby shower for Ellie Vazquez.

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.

New Address

Please note the new address for Ken & Gayle Coleman. 42703 Interstate-10 West, Winnie, TX 77665

Matthew Girard is leading a walkathon this Saturday, Nov. 13th for SpiritHorse in Liberty. If you would like to help with this please see the Girard's. Flyers are available on the bulletin board for more information.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;
Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

continued from previous page

reason churches build big, beautiful buildings. Yet in the earliest days of the church, there were no buildings at all. They met in the homes of members. Despite that, they grew leaps and bounds.

We could go on listing the criteria that we so often apply. Now, none of those things are bad: we have fantastic facilities here, we have generous givers, and I would love it if we had more people! But ultimately, God judges us by other standards. What makes a great church?

1. Knowledge. A church begins to be great when its members know God's will and can distinguish it from error. We come to know that through studying the Scriptures. It has become cliché, but it's true that the Christians in Beraea were singled out for *searching the Scriptures daily* to verify the truth of Paul's teaching **(Acts 17:11).**

2. Faith. The Hebrews writer says, *Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him* (**Heb 11:6)** The faith Christians need is more than mere belief in the existence of God; the heart of biblical faith is trust. It is being persuaded that God keeps his promises, as Paul says of Abraham in **Rom 4**. And biblical faith always includes faithfulness: the obedience of faith, doing what God says. A great church puts their trust in God, not their own ingenuity or programs or talents (something that we preachers, in particular, would do well to remember!). They are faithful to him—but then they trust him to bring about the results, if he wills. We plant and water; God gives the increase.

3. Consecration. This is what Jesus meant when he said *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you* **(Matt 6:33**). Unfortunately for many professed Christians, faith is a casual thing. It has only a fragmentary hold on their lives. The Lord would rather have "ten who are stout-hearted" than a thousand lukewarm like Laodicea. The enemy can surpass us in numbers or wealth or facilities—that is what he trades in. But one thing he cannot imitate or overcome is a Christlike spirit.

4. Work. No church can be great until it begins to carry out the work which God intends his people to do. Having the right doctrine is not enough. The Lord intends for his disciples to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the poor, encourage the disheartened, and lift up the fallen. He intends for his followers to carry the message of what he has done in Christ to all. The church is not a place just of knowing or believing only, but also of doing, as Jesus indicates in his picture of the last judgment **(Matt 25).**

5. Love. Finally, it is imperative that there be a warm and continuing fellowship among the members of a congregation if the church is to be great. The members must love each other. Christ said this is the badge of our discipleship **(Jn 13:34-35).** Where there is no sense of community, where there is anonymity, there is no fellowship. A church our size can be, and should be, like a family. That lends itself to this quality of greatness.

The question is, where do we fit in? Are we valuing the right things in the church? Or do we judge it by human standards? The church is great. *This* church has the potential to be greater still. Are we doing our part?

Bryant Perkins