## TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

*Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee*

*Morning Assembly Song Leader: Phillip Strickhausen*

#296 We Have Come into His House
#882 No Tears in Heaven

*Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard*
#315 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
***Lord's Supper and Contribution***

#508 A Wonderful Savior
***Sermon: "Don't Be Anxious"***
***Luke 12:22-34***

#915 Trust and Obey
#711 Blest Be the Tie That Binds

*Closing Prayer by: Andre Jones*

**Second Sunday Service Project**

***Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth***

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

November 14, 2021

# *"Stand Firm in…Liberty"*

Galatians 5:1

### God is Real

What would you say if someone asked you to argue for the existence of God? There are a number of classical arguments that have been worked out and debated by philosophers and theologians over the centuries: the cosmological argument, that every finite, contingent thing must have a cause, so there must be an infinite, necessary Uncaused Cause; the teleological argument, that the universe shows evidence of design, so there must be a Designer; the ontological argument of Anselm, that God is the greatest being of which we can conceive, and therefore, he must necessarily exist; the moral argument, that law requires a Lawgiver; and so on.

Interestingly, Scripture does not ever attempt to prove God's existence. The story opens in a straightforward way: *In the beginning, God created the heavens and that earth* **(Gen 1:1).** That declares both the existence and the activity of God. But it does not present a detailed argument to logically conclude that God exists. It simply asserts his reality and reports on his acts.

That perhaps points us to something significant. We should know that it is not inherently unreasonable to believe in God, so all those arguments are important on some level. But it is insufficient to merely believe abstractly in his existence. The question is, what difference does that belief make? We can believe that God exists in the sense of mental assent and still not find him "real." That is a much greater problem than apologetics, and it is as challenging for believers as much—or more—than unbelievers.

Our postmodern era is cynical and pessimistic. The Enlightenment gave birth to a spirit of optimism that generally pervaded the Western world. The mindset was that humanity would eventually solve all of the world's ills. We do still see vestiges of that line of thought. But, in general, that modern worldview has given way to postmodernism. Many of those problems have proved intractable and their solutions elusive. In despair, many have concluded that there actually are no answers.

Amidst this hopelessness, the church has an opportunity. The Christian message of hope is precisely what the world needs! The *peace that passes all understanding* would be a magnet! Sadly, we stumble with our own brand of pessimism in the church. We struggle with apathy. The problem is not, as some theologians famously declared in the 1960s, that "God is dead." The problem is that we are.

That is rooted in the fact that, for many of us, God is not real. We are practical Deists: he exists, but he is distant, far-removed from us. As a result, we have a God we do not communicate with, who has no impact on our lives or our ministry. Our God, he is alive—but he might as well be dead.

# 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** is in the hospital for testing.

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

**Joe Edd Stifflemire** had heart test last 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. 15th at 5:30 p.m.

**Baby Shower** for Ellie Vazquez today from 2-4 p.m. She is registered at babylist.com.

We will be having a meal Wednesday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Nov. 18th at 8:00 a.m.

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What we need, then, is not logical arguments for God's existence, but an awareness of his reality. Do you remember when a lawyer came to test Jesus, asking what is the greatest command? He said it was to love God *with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength* **(Mk 12:30)**. Jesus said the most important business for life is have a hunger for God that cannot be satisfied We must thirst for God as the deer pants for streams of water **(Ps 42:1-2).** We have only one real task as Christians: to love God above all else.

Unfortunately, we have little to no real passion, real enthusiasm for God. Johann Goethe once said that, "Nothing is so terrible as activity without insight." Activity without insight is a common failure of contemporary Christianity. We occupy ourselves with the demands of church life, we manage our services, our programs, our assets—or maybe we get burned out and do nothing—but in either case, we are too busy to pursue God.

We must endeavor instead to see God more clearly and love him more deeply. We will fulfill our purpose only when we make God real by pursuing him. Jesus announced himself to John as *the one who is, and was, and is to come* (**Rev 1:8).** That is, Jesus is Lord of the past, present, and future. We are familiar with the Jesus who was in the gospel accounts. We are accustomed to thinking about the Christ who is to come. But what of the Christ who remains—the one who is? We seem strangely unaware of him. It is as if God were not here at all.

But God is not the God of the Deists, an absentee landlord sitting outside the universe. Rather, *in him we live, and move, and have our being* (**Acts 17:28).** The Psalmist wrote, *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?* **(Ps 139:7)** God is always there, and if you go and read the whole text you will see that he is closely involved with the Psalmist. In fact, God has always been present among his people: Adam and Eve enjoyed an intimate relationship with God in Eden; we remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob because they were God's dear friends; God promised Moses, *My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest* (**Exod 33:14).** This same Moses exhorted the Israelites, *But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul* **(Deut 4:29).**

God is present because he is love. *I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness* **(Jer 31:3).** Love is, above all, the gift of oneself. A God of love cannot make himself known except by love. That God has been present with his people then from the beginning is unsurprising; becoming present preeminently in the person of Jesus is simply the culmination of this.

We need, then, to emphasize the reality of God much more than his existence. It is well and good to believe in God, but even the demons believe and tremble. But if we were more aware of his presence—our sorrow would turn to joy, our weakness to strength, our night to day. It would ease our worries, bring us peace, and restore our sense of mission as his people. An awareness of God's reality and his abiding presence is the foundation that everything else in our faith built upon. Let's all strive to come to a greater appreciation of it.

***Bryant Perkins***