TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#742 When Upon Life's Billows
#453 Love Lifted Me

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#701 My Jesus I Love Thee
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah
Sermon: "A New Year's Prayer"
Philippians 1:9-11

#947 Jesus Is Tenderly Calling
#867 to Canaan's Land

Closing Prayer by: Don Lynn

Welcome by: Bobby Rader

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#480 Blessed Assurance
#800 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Opening Prayer: Jerry Mallernee
#535 The Glory-Land Way

Sermon: **"Devote Yourself to Reading"**
1 Tim 4:13

#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom
#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop

Closing Prayer: David Warren

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

January 2, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Daily Bread

Robert Murray M'Cheyne was a 19th century minister in the Church of Scotland. He died before he reached his thirtieth birthday, and he only spent 7 and a half years in vocational ministry. But in that brief time, he made such a strong impression that he was known throughout Scotland as "the saintly M'Cheyne." As one contemporary wrote on his death: "Indolence and levity and unfaithfulness are sins that beset me; and his living presence was a rebuke to all these, for I never knew one so instant in season and out of season, so impressed with the invisible realities, and so faithful in reproving sin and witnessing for Christ."

M'Cheyne was born in Edinburgh in 1813. He was a precocious child: by age 4, he already knew the characters of the Greek alphabet; at 8, he entered the high school; he enrolled at the University of Edinburgh in 1827. During his first few years at the school, he was focused on fashionable society, spending his leisure time in music, playing cards, and dancing. But the untimely death of his elder brother in 1831 stirred him. He entered the Divinity Hall that year and was licensed to preach in 1835.

After a year of preparation as an assistant, he was called to St. Peter's Church in Dundee. He poured himself into his work with such fervor that his health deteriorated, and in December 1838 he was ordered by doctors to take a leave of absence to rest. He returned to Edinburgh, where he recuperated for several months. During that period, he undertook a mission to Palestine—both because it was thought the climate might be good for his health, and because of an interest he had in the plight of the Jewish people. On his return, he resumed preaching in Dundee in November 1839.

He spent the next few years again working himself to the point of exhaustion. In February of 1843, he was away in the northwest of Scotland, where he preached 27 times in 24 different places, often traveling through heavy snow. March 12 was his last Sunday in the pulpit back in Dundee; he took ill the following week (though he still conducted a wedding service and gave a talk to a group of children) before succumbing to typhus on March 25. He was 29 year old.

In December 1842—just 3 months before his death—M'Cheyne sat thinking, as many of us do, about the dawning of the new year. And, as many preachers in particular are wont to do, he was pondering the spiritual welfare of the congregation, optimistic about the possibilities and concerned for their growth. One of his chief concerns over the years was encouraging his people (and himself) to read the Bible more diligently and carefully. So he published a plan to enable them to do just that.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

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, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Gary Nielsen, Jackie David, Virginia Cole

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

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

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister, meeting Monday, Jan. 3rd at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Jan. 4th at 8:00 a.m.

We will be having a meal on Wednesday, Jan. 5th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Primetimers will be going to Saltgrass Steak House on Tuesday, Jan. 11th at 6:00 p.m. A driver is needed and a signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

Thank You

Liberty Church of Christ, Elders & Bryant
Just a note to say thank you for our Christmas goodies. It was filled with so much of our favorites. We appreciate you thinking about us and all of the prayers spoken on our behalf. We can't wait until we can meet with you all in service again.
We love and miss you!
Cathy & Joe Edd

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There are a lot of ways that people try to read the Bible, and at the start of a new year, many will attempt a program to read through it in its entirety. Some just divide it up into roughly equal chunks; some arrange it chronologically; some advocate reading entire books at a time. And any systematic approach to Bible reading has its dangers, as M'Cheyne was well aware. He noted them: formality, that this practice could just degenerate into a lifeless monotony; self-righteousness, that the reader might become complacent because of their good work; careless reading, that we might not really feel the significance of the book; and that it might become burdensome rather than a joy.

But he felt the advantages more than outweighed the potential drawbacks. M'Cheyne's system in particular is unique in a couple of ways. For one, it pulls readings from both the OT and the NT on the same day, so that you can get a better idea of how the entirety of Scripture is related. For another, it actually has you read through the NT and Psalms *twice* within the year, and the rest of the OT once. As he put it, "I fear many of you never read the whole Bible; and yet it is all equally Divine, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect.' If we pass over some parts of Scripture, we shall be incomplete Christians."

With that in mind, I want to encourage you to undertake the M'Cheyne reading plan in 2022. I am going to attempt it myself, and it would be an edifying exercise, I think, for as many of us as possible to participate in it together. A handout is located on the table in the foyer with the readings for every day of the year. You will note that there are, with some exceptions, basically 4 chapters designated daily. The original plan had the first two columns of the day for family devotions and the other two for private reading (and if you choose to do it that way, that's outstanding!), but most people just use it all for a personal reading schedule.

If that much reading seems daunting, then just slow down! Read the first two columns in 2022, and the next two in 2023. And if you fall behind, either catch up or skip ahead to where you should be and resume. Don't just throw in the towel and say you will try again in 2023. Part of the purpose of this is to cultivate a regular habit. As M'Cheyne wrote of his own practice, "Let our secret reading prevent [precede] the dawning of the day. Let God's voice be the first we hear in the morning."

Whatever time of day you choose, and whether you decide to join me in this specific reading plan or not, I encourage you to listen to God's voice on a daily basis in this coming year and beyond.

Bryant Perkins