TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop
#797 Lord We Come Before Thee Now

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch
#349 Ten Thousand Angels
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#869 We're Marching to Zion
Sermon: "Crown of Life"
Acts 6:8-8:3

#650 Send the Light
#711 Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Closing Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee

We will have our 4th Sunday Evening Potluck Fellowship meal at 5:00 p.m.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

April 24, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Go Fish

This past week, I attended a meeting for Liberty County Responds. This is a local coalition of different churches and other entities that work for disaster preparedness, primarily so that we know who has what resources and capabilities and can have a plan when the next hurricane (or plague?) inevitably hits. As we began, we went around the table at the restaurant and talked about what had transpired over Easter. For virtually everyone, it was a big day of events—sunrise services, giveaways, plays, egg hunts—all sorts of things were mentioned. We did not discuss numbers by design, but it was at least implicit that attendance was up at most places too. But there was also a sense of fatigue in the aftermath of all that activity. In fact, the reason that we were meeting at a restaurant in the first place is because no one was up to hosting it at their facility! And underneath that there lurks a sense of, "what now?"

Interestingly, that is not unlike the experience of the disciples after the resurrection. Think about the familiar story John tells of one of the post-resurrection appearances:

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. **(John 21:1-14)**

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stifflemire is taking chemo treatments. He will be having test run this week.

Linda Frank will be having test run in the future.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Gary Nielsen, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones

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, Minister meeting Monday, Apr. 258th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a fellowship potluck meal this evening at 5:00 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, May 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

We will have a meal on Wednesday, May 4th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Primetimers will be going to Saltgrass Steak House on Tuesday, May 10th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. A driver is needed.

A brown box has been placed in the foyer for suggestions as to Deacons, and will be there until Sunday, April 24th..

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Linda Frank and Andre Jones on the death of their uncle, Alvin Childress. He passed away Tuesday, April 19th. The funeral is Saturday, April 30th in Orange.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
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There are a few practical points we can draw from this particular incident:

1. **The importance of obedience.** We have talked about this idea in our study of "Church Reset" on Wednesday nights. We think sometimes of what the church needs to do to be more effective; usually it is in terms of bigger programs, projecting ourselves better in the community, just doing more and in different ways in general. But this story reminds us that what God requires of us is obedience. He does not ask for us to be good fisher men or have a fancy boat or be skillful in throwing out the net. He demands faithfulness; he puts the fish in the net.

2. **God provides.** I imagine if I had been throwing a net in the sea all night long, my stomach would be in rebellion. Despite everything else that was going on, Jesus knew they were hungry, and he took the time to feed them. Doesn't that remind us that our Lord is aware of our needs, whatever they are? Whatever we are experiencing—when we are hungry or hurting or in need or lonely—the risen Lord is there to minister to us.

3. **God does not give up.** The story that follows in the next several verses to the end of the chapter is a beautiful story of restoration. Jesus asks Peter the question, *Do you love me?* time and time again. You see, Peter had given up—that is what is meant by him going fishing. But God did not give up on Peter. He kept reminding Peter of His great love for him and encouraging him to love and serve in return. Sometimes we act as if God is looking for a reason to kick us out of the boat. In fact, it is quite the opposite

4. **God gives direction.** We all know that old aphorism, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." We have all likely experienced that in our lives. Here we are with our neat little plans: we know where the fish are and how to catch them; we have it all figured out! But then God says, "Have you listened to my plans?" We need to be more attuned to what his will is and take it into account when making our plans.

5. **God wants us to start fishing for men.** There is a similar sign in **Lk 5**, where Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be apostles. Their nets are filled after a miraculous catch, and Jesus tells them from now on they would fish for men. That is what God calls us to do: our mission is to make disciples, people who follow Jesus. That could be those out in the world, yes. But could it be some among us need to be brought to maturity? Could it be that others of us could help guide them in that?

We have come through the glory of the resurrection one more time, celebrating the fact that Jesus Christ conquered sin and death in rising from the grave. But now the dust settles. In liturgical groups, after Easter season, there is what is called "ordinary time." We are back to the regular business of life. What now?

The Lord's message is to start fishing for men: make disciples. Thankfully, he does not ask us to do this alone: he gives the direction and the provision. He requires us to carry out his will in faithful obedience. That is our mission. My prayer is all of us, myself included, will endeavor to rise to that challenge.

Bryant Perkins