TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#742 When Upon Life's Billows
#555 Seek Ye First

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#313 The Old Rugged Cross
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#539 Higher Ground
Sermon: "On the Way"
Acts 9:1-19

#915 Trust and Obey
#989 Soon and Very Soon

Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Tonight is our
3rd Sunday Evening
Singing

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

May 15, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Heavenly Citizenship: What the Bible Says About Heaven 3

This is the third in a series of articles recently published by Wes McAdams on his blog "Radically Christian." You can read the other on his site or in previous bulletins.. BP

The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew uses the word, "heaven" more than any other New Testament author. This is due to the fact that Matthew records the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven" more than thirty times. Other Gospel writers use the phrase, "the kingdom of God" to capture the same idea.

When Jesus described the kingdom of heaven, he was not describing a place where he would take his followers, but rather a new reality he was bringing. This new reality was God's rule and reign through Jesus and his followers. God had anointed Jesus, his Son, as King. As king, Jesus promised to win a decisive victory over God's enemies and begin ruling through the transformed lives of his followers.

All of Jesus' parables about the kingdom of heaven help us understand the unusual and unexpected nature of this heavenly kingdom. People often describe the kingdom of heaven as spiritual rather than physical. However, Jesus didn't differentiate his kingdom this way. Physicality was not (and is not) the issue.

After all, Caesar wasn't physically present in every village, town, and city in which his kingdom was present. And the city of Rome didn't physically encompass the whole area over which Rome's rule extended. Similarly, Jesus is not physically present in every home in which his kingdom is present. And the city of God does not yet encompass the whole earth, but the kingdom of God already extends across the whole globe.

Rather than physicality, one of the primary differences between the kingdom of heaven and kingdoms of the earth is that victory is won through a cross instead of a sword (see **Jn 18:36-37**).

Citizenship in Heaven

Consider also **Philippians 3:20**, in which Paul wrote, *Our citizenship is in heaven*. Many have lifted these words from their context and assumed they mean we are destined to go to heaven someday. But that does not seem to be what Paul meant to imply at all.

First, Paul is most likely contrasting allegiance to heaven with allegiance to Rome. Many citizens of Philippi were very proud of their Roman citizenship, "The city was…a little Rome, administratively modeled on the empire's capital." But as for the Christians who lived in Philippi, they had traded their Roman citizenship for heavenly citizenship. As one early Christian said, "I am a Christian. He who answers thus has declared everything at once—his country, profession, family; the believer belongs to no city on earth but to the heavenly Jerusalem." (John Chyrostom)

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stifflemire received good news last week. He is in remission.

Linda Frank will be having test run in the future.

Susan McCain is at home and recovering from an infection.

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, May 16th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a meal on Wednesday, May 18th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, May 20th at 8:00 a.m.

We will have a fellowship meal on Sunday, May 22nd at 5:00 p.m. in the family life center.

The corrected directory has been placed on the bulletin board. Please double check it to make sure your information is correct.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor		
Robert Ward		

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

Second, Paul did not say we are waiting to go to heaven, but rather we are waiting for our Savior to come from heaven, *Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*…When Roman citizens were in danger, they pleaded with Rome to send help. But because the Christian's citizenship is in heaven, we wait for heaven to send a Savior to come and deliver us from our enemies.

Do Not Love the World

When New Testament authors encouraged Christians not to "love the world" (**1 Jn 2:15; 2 Tim 4:10**), they were not saying, "Don't get too attached to the trees, rivers, oceans, canyons, and mountains." Loving the world is not about being emotionally attached to planet earth. The world, in this case, stands for all the things humanity has constructed in defiance and opposition to God. The world is made up of systems of injustice, idolatry, greed, violence, and destruction.

People love the world because the world offers pleasure, treasure, and power. Worldly people are deceived into thinking this pleasure, treasure, and power will endure. But the truth is, *The present form of this world is passing away* (**1 Cor 7:31**). This does not mean planet earth is passing away, it means all the corruption, wickedness, and evil will be destroyed when our Savior comes from heaven.

James told his audience, *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God* (**James 4:4**). In the ancient world, "friendship" could imply a patron/client relationship. A laborer, for instance, could form a friendship with a wealthy patron or benefactor. In exchange for the laborer's loyalty, the patron would provide protection and blessings to him and his family.

When God's people form "friendships" with the powers of the world, they are being "adulterous" towards God. The Lord is the patron, protector, and provider of his people. We cannot give our loyalty to both heaven and earth.

Conclusion

As the world is presently ordered, we are *sojourners and exiles* (**1 Pet 2:11**) here. Babylon and Rome still act like they rule the world, but their rule is coming to an end. The power they wield is hollow. All of their threats and all of their promises amount to nothing. So, do not fear them or give allegiance to them in hopes they will share their pleasure, treasure, and power with you.

Our King reigns in heaven. And the kingdom of heaven is spreading across the earth even at this very moment. Our King shows us a new and better way. He invites us to take up our cross and follow him in this way of selfless love. Though the world may kill us, our heavenly King promises to give us life. Though the world threatens to take away our possessions, he promises, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth* (**Matt 5:5**).