TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#2 We Praise Thee, O God
#286 Wonderful Story of Love

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#382 Why Did My Savior Come to Earth?
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah
Sermon: "But Barnabas"
Acts 9:19-31

#902 Nothing But the Blood
#867 To Canaan's Land I'm On My Way

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Tonight is our
4th Sunday Evening
Fellowship Meal

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

May 22, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

New Creation: What the Bible Says About Heaven 4

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

The Redemption of Creation

Some people understandably feel a little disappointed when they hear we will *inherit the earth* (**Matt 5:5**) rather than go to heaven. They think, "Why would I want to inherit the earth? The earth is full of problems: hurricanes, tornadoes, diseases, famines, and floods." The problem is that they are thinking of the present world (as it is), not the future world (as it will be).

The apostle Paul described the whole creation as presently being in *bondage to corruption* (**Rom 8:21**). The reason there is death, decay, disease, and destruction is that the whole creation has been, *subjected to futility* by God (**Rom 8:20**). Since humans first sinned, the whole creation has been subject to the curse of decay and death.

But Paul says this is not the final state of creation, *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now* (**Rom 8:22**). When a woman is in the pains of childbirth, the pain will lead to something better, something new and glorious. All of the pains that creation is presently enduring are labor pains. They indicate that something better is coming.

In fact, Paul explicitly states, *The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God* (**Rom 8:21**). Read that one more time, the creation will be set free! God's good creation, which is currently groaning under the curse of sin and death, will experience the same sort of redemption that our bodies will experience when they are resurrected and transformed (**Rom 8:23**).

The Prophetic Promise of New Creation

As modern Christians, we often struggle with the OT focus on land. We seem to look down on our spiritual forefathers for being too focused on "material" things. However, it was the prophets who gave the Jewish people the idea that God wanted to remove all corruption from the land and give it to his people as their inheritance forever. In other words, the expectation of inheriting a corruption-free world did not come from man, but from God.

Not only did this expectation come from God, but it is Jesus who is supposed to fulfill this expectation. Throughout the writings of the prophets, the hope of inheriting a corruption-free world is tied directly to the work of the Messiah (**Is 11:1-9; Ezek 37:24-28; Jer 23:5-8**). So, we should not think this hope was fulfilled when the exiles returned from Babylonian captivity. If Jesus is the Messiah, then this prophetic hope could not have been fulfilled prior to his birth.

Furthermore, we must also reject the idea that this prophetic hope is already fully realized today in a symbolic sense. Isaiah called this future corruption-free world, *new heavens and a new earth* (**Is 65:17**). Peter says we are *still waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells* (**2 Pet 3:13**). The new heavens and new earth cannot be fully realized until the old world passes away (**Rev 21:1-2**). In other words, as long as death exists, the new creation is not yet fully realized (**Is 25:6-8; 1 Cor 15:26**).

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stifflemire has a blood clot in the apex of his heart.

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, Linda Frank

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 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a fellowship potluck meal on tonight 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.

Starting Sunday evening, June 5th at 5:00 p.m. we will be viewing "The Chosen" and will have a discussion after.

VBS

VBS is July 18-21st from 6-8 p.m. We will have classes for all ages (including adults). For more information see Abbey Perkins.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Gloria White and her family on the death of her husband Chalmer White. He passed away on May 13th and the funeral was last Sunday, May 15th.

"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

This promise of inheriting a perfect world is what so much of the Bible is about. In Romans, Paul refers to the promise that Abraham and his offspring *would be heir of the world* (**Rom 4:13**). And the writer of Hebrews laments that the present world is *not yet* subject to humanity as **Psalm 8** describes. He concludes that it is *the world to come* which will be subject to humanity, when we are glorified with Christ (**Heb 2:5-18**).

We Are Already New Creation

Though the new creation is not yet fully realized, it has already begun. The resurrection of Jesus was the beginning of new creation. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he was raised with a new creation body. His resurrected body is immortal, imperishable, and incorruptible. This is why Paul calls Christ, *the firstfruits* of the coming resurrection (**1 Cor 15:20-23**).

All of our mortal bodies will be transformed *to be like his glorious body* (**Phil 3:21**). And the whole creation will experience the same sort of redemption and transformation. The creation itself will *obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God* (**Rom 8:21**).

But just as important, the new creation has already begun in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. In giving us his Spirit, God has already begun to transform us into little pieces of his new creation. Paul writes:

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. **(Rom 8:10-11)**

This is why Paul says, *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation* (**2 Cor 5:17**). The whole cosmos will one day be redeemed, purified, transformed, and sanctified, but that renewal project has begun inside of us (**Titus 3:5**).

On Earth As in Heaven

The phrases "kingdom of God" and "new creation" are two similar ways of expressing the same idea. In the age to come, God will be *utterly supreme over everything everywhere* (**1 Cor 15:28, NLT**). On that day, no aspect of creation will be in rebellion to God's rule. Everything will be as it should be.

This is why Jesus taught us to pray, *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven* (**Matt 6:10**). In the heavenly Jerusalem, everything is as it should be. The heavenly hosts, in the new Jerusalem, live in perpetual obedience and reverence. Someday that reality will be true on earth as it is in heaven.

Until that day, Christians are supposed to live like travelers from the future exiled in the past. We are to live as kingdom of heaven people in the midst of earthly kingdoms. We are supposed to be reflections of new creation in the middle of what is wearing out and passing away. Every Christian home should be an outpost of heaven. And in every word and deed, our neighbors should see "the age to come" in us.

Our love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control should reflect the fact that God's great renewal project has already begun in us.