TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader
#144 O, Worship the King

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

#134 The Lord's My Shepherd
#537 Here We are But Straying Pilgrims
Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#381 Years I Spent in Vanity
Communion Devotional by: Craig Girard
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#615 He Keeps Me Singing
Sermon: "Paul's Valediction
Acts:20 17-38

#902 Nothing But the Blood
#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop
Closing Prayer by: David Warren

Tonight is our
5th Sunday night
Prayer Service

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

Oct. 30, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Last Beatitude

All of us are familiar with the "Beatitudes" with which Christ began the Sermon on the Mount. Eight times Jesus pronounced blessings on those who possess certain characteristics: *Blessed are the poor in spirit ... Blessed are those who mourn ... Blessed are the meek ... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness ... Blessed are the merciful ... Blessed are the pure in heart ... Blessed are the peacemakers ... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake*." **(Mt 5:3-10**).

To these eight beatitudes, I want us to add a ninth. We might call it Christ's last beatitude. It is found in the text we will be considering in our sermon, where Paul recounts, *remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'* **(Acts 20:35).** This is an unusual passage, because it is one of only two occurrences outside of the gospel narratives where a statement of Jesus is quoted verbatim. The setting is also quite interesting: Paul was headed to Jerusalem, but stopped briefly at the seaport town of Miletus, where he summoned the elders from the church at nearby Ephesus to deliver a farewell message to these men he knew and loved dearly. In it, he emphasized how he had supported himself as well as his companions financially in Ephesus, crystalizing his message in the words he quoted from the Lord. *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

There is a great blessing in giving. Giving is at the very heart of the gospel: God gave his Son **(Jn 3:16).** But that was not forced upon Jesus; he gave himself for the salvation of humanity, laying it down willingly, as he himself notes **(Jn 10:17-18).** As followers of Christ, we are accordingly instructed to give; it is at the center of Christianity. We might think of Jesus sending his disciples out on the limited commission, where he reminds them *you have received freely, freely give* **(Mt 10:8).** And I imagine that most of us have experienced more joy, happiness, and satisfaction in life from giving than receiving.

Now, of course, there is nothing sinful about receiving. It is simply not accompanied by the rich blessings that are associated with giving. Think about what Paul says about this in another place: *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.* **(2 Cor 9:6-10)**

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Louise Cottle has shingles.

Kristy Favro, Lydia Mallernee's daughter is having health problems.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain, Gary Nielsen, Howard Duhon, Bubba Pearson

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, Oct. 31st at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Nov. 1st at 8:00 a.m.

We will have a meal Wednesday evening, Nov. 2nd at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a meal Wednesday, evening, Nov. 9th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Blood Drive on Monday, Nov. 14th from 4-8 p.m. in the fellowship room.
A signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

"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

I think of our situation here in the United States. No people in the history of the world have been as blessed with material possessions as we have. In spite of our recent economic difficulties, no society has been so affluent. Yet we are not happier because of our affluence; we find many people frustrated, disillusioned, and destructive. Jesus was so right in saying that genuine happiness comes not so much in receiving as in giving. Consider how we learn this principle throughout our lives. A baby has no power beyond that of making his wants known and insisting that they be satisfied; that they will be provided is taken for granted. Ultimately, however, the infant learns as he grows that he must also serve the needs of others. In a mature, wholesome personality, the tide turns and flows back into the lives of others; perhaps there is even a willingness to sacrifice for others. I am convinced that this kind of self-giving, on its highest level, comes from a knowledge of Jesus Christ and of his self-giving love for humanity.

Somewhere in our consideration of our responsibilities it is imperative that we come to realize that we are God's stewards. The universe in its entirety actually belongs to God who created it. *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers* (**Ps 24:1-2; cf. Ps 50:10-12).** We only use the things of this world for a while; we do not absolutely possess them. For example, most of us carry a set of keys either in our pockets or our purses. I have a key to my house; but one day, whether in a few years or even decades, one way or another, the key will no longer be mine, and the house itself will be used by another. Everything we own is that way when we really think about it. *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.* We only use what belongs to him for a time and then turn it over to someone else.

It is imperative that we realize, then, that our eternal destiny depends in part upon how we use what God has entrusted to us. There are other factors, of course, but few, if any, are more significant than how we use the talents and possessions God has given to each one of us. Stewards must be faithful in using what belongs to their Lord. In **2 Cor 8**, Paul is speaking of giving, and then says it is a way of *putting your love to the test* **(2 Cor 8:8).** He holds the Macedonians up as an example: *We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.* **(2 Cor 8:1-5).** There is no question about their love; it was clear in how they passed the test.

There is no clearer emphasis in Scripture on the importance of giving generously to the needs of others than that found in the Judgment scene as presented by Jesus in **Matthew 25.** Space precludes printing it all here, but go read it; on the Day of Judgment, we need to have lived a life in which we were not so concerned about our own needs as about giving to those around us who were in need. It is a matter of emulating our Lord, giving ourselves fully and completely to him, who first gave himself for us.

Bryant Perkins