TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

#38 Awesome God

Welcome by: Bobby Rader/Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah
#76 How Great Thou Art

Scripture Reading by:
#214 Have You Seen Jesus My Lord?

Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#47 Holy, Holy, Holy
Sermon: "Life Together"
Acts 2:42-47

#909 There's a Fountain Free
#144 O Worship the King
Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet tonight. Don Taylor's group will meet at the building. If you have singed up and not been contacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

Jan. 22, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Is "Your Church" a "Red Door" Church?

This is an article I ran across this week by Ken Weliever, a gospel preacher for more than a half century. He evidently published it back in May, but reprinted it this week because it was his 2nd most read post of the year. It touches on many of the themes we have been talking about over the last couple of weeks and especially relates to our lesson this morning. What's more, the elders had asked what we are going to call our small group program this week, and I told them that the acronym "RED" has stuck in my mind: relationships, edification, discipleship. That this article is about "red door churches" is one of those little coincidences that causes us to wonder if it is, in fact, coincidence at all. You can read more of Brother Weliever's work at ThePreahersWord.com. BP

Nancy Kennedy, religious writer for our local Citrus County Chronicle recently wrote a column entitled "Red Door Churches" that caught my eye. Kennedy relates touring a new meeting house of a church that had red doors. She learned that traditionally and historically, dating back to the medieval day that churches had red doors. While the red door was symbolic of Jesus' blood shed on the cross, thus reminding us of salvation in Christ, it also had a cultural significance. During times of persecution, people could seek asylum at a church that had a red door. Apparently, this was prevalent during England's War of the Roses. A soldier on the losing side could hide in a church with a red door and his enemies would not harm him. They wouldn't violate the red door.

Kennedy makes the point that the church ought to be a place of sanctuary. Safety. And refuge.

I've been thinking about "Red Door Churches" for several days. And what that means in a personal, practical sense in our congregational relationships. The Bible speaks of the Christian's relationship in Christ's church where we:

Accept one another **(Rom. 14:1).**
Care for one another **(1 Cor. 12:25).**
Bear one another's burdens **(Gal. 6:2).**
Through love serve one another **(Gal. 5:13).**
Encourage one another **(1Thess. 5:17).**
Show tolerance for one another **(Eph. 4:2).**
Comfort one another **(I Thess. 4:18).**

While the churches to whom these epistles were penned didn't have red doors, in fact, they didn't even have church buildings as we know them, they were encouraged to be "red door churches." I wonder, are the congregations to which we belong really working to be "red door" churches? More personally, and pointedly, are we working to be "red door" Christians?

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Robert Williams, the Mast's son in law has been diagnosed with cancer in his jaw and will have surgery.

Carmen Williamson, Kelly & Susan McCain's granddaughter is in the hospital with RSV.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain

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, Jan. 23rd at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Primetimers will be going to Tiger Harry's on Tuesday, Jan. 24th at 6:00 pm. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Small Groups

We will be launching a new small groups ministry on Sundays this month in lieu of our traditional evening services. We will be starting our small groups on Sunday, January 22nd. If you have any questions, see Bryant or one of the Elders.

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"
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Through the years we've been blessed to be received warmly by the churches with whom we've ministered. While every preacher can recount some slight or ill-treatment, overwhelmingly our experiences have been positive, supportive, and uplifting. Yet, that's not the case with everyone in every congregation.

We have both seen and heard of situations where brethren have not treated others with the spirit of kindness, concern, and compassion. At times, we've received letters or emails, from brethren who are heartbroken, describing their feelings of loneliness, indifference, and even rejection where they worship.

Most churches have a sign that says "Visitors welcomed." Yet, sometimes visitors are ignored. Judged by their appearance. Quickly condemned for their beliefs. Viewed with suspicion. And generally made to feel uncomfortable in the assembly.

In some churches, cliques exist. Preferential treatment is given to members of means, position, or social standing. The sins of some are overlooked because of family ties. And new Christians are left on the outside looking in, never feeling a part of the fellowship.

In some places, preachers may be failing to "speak the truth in love," being unduly harsh, or else failing to preach the Truth at all. Some pastors may be failing to shepherd the flock, and not protecting those assigned to their care. Other churches may have members who are divisive, self-willed, and spiteful. Yet, nothing is done to rebuke or discipline their sins. And the church suffers.

Hopefully, this bleak description is not widespread. But it does exist. Every preacher, pastor, and Christian should work to make their congregation a "red door" Church.

Is your church a place where…

…Hurts are healed?
…Fellowship is inclusive?
…Needs are met?
…Help is provided?
…Souls are saved?
…Hearts are mended?
…Prodigals are forgiven?
…Compassion is shown?
…Grace is extended?
…Mercy is bestowed?
…God is glorified?
…Christ is exalted?
…People are valued?
…Love is shared?
…Faith is strengthened?
…Hope is offered?

Regardless of the color of the door, the church where you worship can be a "red door" church. Now, what can you do to make it so?