TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor Opening Prayer by: Bobby Rader
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#286 Wonderful Story of Love
#109 Amazing Grace

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch
#342 We Saw Thee Not

Communion Devotional by: Daniel Balch
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#122 The Love of God
Sermon: "Faith Perseveres "
James 1:12-18

#903 There Is Power In the Blood
#704 Bind Us Together
Closing Prayer by: Zach Arthur

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Don Taylor's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m. If you have signed 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

Feb. 19, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Help Me Believe More!

I read a story about a man on trial for murder. There was strong circumstantial evidence against the defendant, but no body was ever found. That is always a difficult proposition, and the defense attorney attempted to capitalize on it in his closing argument: "In the next minute, the person presumed dead in this case will walk into this courtroom."

He looked toward the door. The jurors, taken aback, all looked too, waiting to see what would happen. A minute passed…nothing happened. Finally, the lawyer said, "Actually, I made that up. But you all looked at the door with anticipation. That indicates you have reasonable doubt. You must return a verdict of not guilty."

The jury, pretty clearly confused, retired to deliberate. But they weren't out for very long before they returned with a verdict: guilty. The attorney was puzzled and asked the foreman afterward about it. "How could you find him guilty? I saw every one of you stare at the door." "Oh, we all looked," the foreman replied. "But your client didn't."

Perhaps there was no doubt in that case. But doubt is something that we all struggle with. It is closely related to that problem of worry that we discussed last week in this space. We can be overwhelmed by the problem of doubt and have our own personal crisis of faith.

But we should not despair when we experience doubt. Some of the most prominent people we read about in Scripture have dealt with it, too. Elijah did. John the Baptist did. Job famously did. And you and I have been there too. It's a trying experience. And sometimes we end up beating ourselves up over it. We are supposed to be people of faith! How can faith and doubt coexist?

Consider a story we find in **Mark 9.** There we encounter a desperate father who brought his son to Jesus. The boy was demon possessed. The father had tried every remedy imaginable, and likely some unimaginable, for his son—nothing had worked. He had spent many a long, dark night racked with doubt. At last, he brought the boy to Jesus' disciples, but they could not heal him. Thus, at his wits' end, with nowhere else to turn, the father turned to Jesus.

Here is now the text reads in Phillips translation:
So they brought the boy to him, and as soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it convulsed the boy, who fell to the ground and writhed there, foaming at the mouth. "How long has he been like this?" Jesus asked the father. "Ever since he was a child," he replied. "Again and again it has thrown him into the fire or into water to finish him off. But if you can do anything, please take pity on us and help us." "If you can do anything!" retorted Jesus. "Everything is possible to the man who believes." "I do believe," the boy's father burst out. "Help me to believe more!" **(Mk 9:20-24)**

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Kellie Bagwell Chavanne, Joe Edd & Cathy Stifflemire's niece, had 2 procedure's done last week and are waiting on the results of other test.

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, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthis Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson

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

No Elders, Minister meeting this week.

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

We will have a Blood Drive on Monday, March 6th from 4-8 p.m. in the fellowship room. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Thank You

We would like to thank the brothers and sisters at Liberty Church of Christ for the beautiful plant you sent to Howard's celebration of life. Dad loved this congregation very much! So many wonderful Christian friends there.
Thank you for your prayers, love and support.

We love you very much,
Audrey Duhon, Glynn & Carolyn Duhon,
Kathy and Ricky Young

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
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Can you see the anguished father watching his son? Seeing him writhing on the ground like a rabid animal? That father is straining against that burden of doubt in his life. He is desperately trying to find sufficient faith to believe. He was bold enough to acknowledge his doubt; he also asked Jesus to help him overcome that doubt.

I am glad God decided to include that candid dialogue in Scripture. It shows faith is measured in genuineness rather than certainty. Sometimes it feels like we are surrounded by people who have never, not even for once questioned their faith; they have never doubted. I admit that I find the piety of people like that makes me feel a bit isolated and out of place. Maybe you have never cried, "Lord I believe, Help my unbelief!" But I think most of us have felt that way. We need to know that it is ok to struggle with it. It is ok to admit that we have spent time dealing with the turmoil of doubt. But we need to look to the right place for resolution: Jesus.

There are times when all of us have questions. There are often things that we do not understand.
In quiet and private moments, we blurt out "Why God?" We go through the motions, we try to set an example. But still we wonder. I think here of Job, who grappled with these same questions in the midst of his suffering: he lost his wealth, his health, and all of his children. His wife urged him to curse God and die; his friends, who ostensibly visited him to provide comfort, instead accused him of grievous sin and urged him to repent. No wonder Job sought answers! But after God appears to him, we read Job's profound response in the climax of the book: *I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?" Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. "Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me." I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and am comforted in dust and ashes.* **(Job 42:2-6)**

Job never learned the answer to his questions. What he learned instead was that God knew, and that was sufficient. He would trust him.

There are times when doubt overwhelms our lives. As we work our way through that, a new faith is forged. It comes slowly, shaped on the mysterious anvil of God's plan. Even in doubt, we must remember the promise of God. We must trust him—even if, especially if, we do not understand.

It is ok to doubt. It is ok to struggle. But when that inevitably happens, we must not turn away from God; we must turn to him. Let's not be afraid to say, *Lord I believe – help me to believe more!*

Bryant Perkins