TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#959 Just a Little Talk with Jesus
Opening Prayer by: Don Taylor
#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#354 I Gave My Life for Thee

Communion Devotional by: Gus Tristan
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#957 This World Is Not My Home
Sermon: "I Believe in the Resurrection"
Mark 16:1-6

#948 I Am Resolved
#755 God Be With You
Closing Prayer by: Zach Arthur

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will not meet today.
Don Taylor's group will meet at the building at next week 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

Apr. 9, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Discerning Good From Evil

In **Hebrews 5:14,** the writer states, *solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.* As we continue to discuss the everyday problems we all deal with in this space, let's consider the idea of discernment. To discern is to see and identify by noting differences. In particular, we are to distinguish between good and evil. That's not the same thing as choosing between what's pleasant and unpleasant, though people often boil it down to that. But what is pleasant may be bad, as any number of sins might demonstrate to us, at least initially; and what is unpleasant may be good, as that awful medicine you had to choke down as a child proves.

The problem is not of choosing what pleases me necessarily, but of choosing what is good, what is right, what is true: for me, for others, for the church, for the gospel. That should please me—though, sometimes, it may be difficult in the moment. How do we make that determination? The writer says that our powers are shaped *by constant practice*. I recall a couple of years ago that I decided I was far enough out of shape that I needed to start exercising a bit more. And so I began a couch to 5k running program. I ran regularly as a teenager, but at the time, I hadn't run for years; the first day, running 60 seconds with 90 seconds of rest, for 8 intervals, almost killed me. But it was a bit easier next time. And after a few weeks I had worked up to running 5 minutes at a stretch without much problem.

Unfortunately, I hate running, and I haven't stuck with it. Bu the point is that even a little bit of practice can sharpen our abilities. *Constant practice* is what refines the athlete or the musician. And long practice with the right standards enables the Christian to discern properly. The Hebrew Christians had not done that, and because of that, they were open to being called spiritual infants! So for our own good, we need to develop the habit of carefully weighing matters and cultivating discernment.

As noted, we need to do so especially in the realm of distinguishing good from evil. Most people are against such absolute categories these days; right or wrong is subjectively based in the mind of the participant, varying from person to person. There are some things, evidently, beyond the pale, but even these shift according to indefinite standards. In short, every person is a god to themselves. Logically, then, no one could ever do evil if they thought what they were doing was good; no way that seems right could ever be wrong.

But Scripture tells us, *there is a way that seems right, but the end is death* **(Prov 14:12).** Some ways are good, and some ways are bad. And the bad carries a penalty no matter how inviting it seems: switching up the road signs won't make a bad road good. But it will bring destruction: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.* **(Is 5:20).** The rightness or wrongness of a thing is not just a matter of personal opinion; truth and right aren't abstractions, but facts. That means I must change my mind to fit them rather than changing definitions to suit my preference. That is one of the greatest struggles of our contemporary society: we futilely endeavor to shift immutable standards rather than changing ourselves to conform to what is right.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Jerry Mast is in Kingwood Hospital and had a pacemaker put in Friday

Cheryl Mast has covid.

Debbie Lynn has a fractured vertebrae.

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

Elders, Minister meet Monday, Apr. 10th at 5:30 p.m.

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

Primetimers will be meeting at Mike's BBQ and Steak in Dayton on Tuesday, April 11th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

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

New Email Address

Susan McCain has a new email address:
smccain565@gmail.com

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

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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

That is not a new problem, though, no matter how relevant it is today; accordingly, we see a number of examples in Scripture of people who failed in proper discernment. There is the young man of God in **1 Kings 13**, for instance: he had courage, demonstrated in crying out against Jereboam's altar at Bethel; he was steadfast, refusing the king's invitation because obedience meant more to him than a royal banquet. But he was taken in by an old prophet, all because he failed in discernment—he believed a lie.

Or what about the rich fool in **Luke 12:16-21?** He was intelligent enough to be successful, but not prudent enough to discern material from spiritual values. He enjoyed such a great harvest that his barns ran over, and he planned to the build bigger ones and enjoy his bounty. But God called him a fool; he would die that night, a fool because he left God out of his life, thinking his soul could live on things stored in a barn.

One more example is the story of Martha recorded in **Luke 10.** She had to choose between 2 important things: preparing a meal, or listening to Jesus. She chose the lesser activity, while her sister, Mary, sat at Jesus' feet and heard his world. Then Jesus talked to them about the power of discernment: *Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.* **(v. 41-42)**

We could no doubt come up with other examples. But the question for us is, how can we practice discernment? How can we get the exercise that refines our ability in this area? We can at least set out a few guideposts to help point us in the right way. The first one is faith. By that, we mean trust in God rather than in ourselves and our own wisdom. A great example here is Moses; his discernment was shaped by faith. *By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin* **(Heb 11:24-25).** Faith led him to make the right decision.

Another is hope. Now, hope for the Christian, hope is much more than the wishful thinking we often describe with that word. Hope is waiting with confident expectation, rooted in the promises of God. We know that he will do what he says, so our hope is assurance. Here, again, Moses is an example, picking up the next verse: *He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward* **(v. 26).** The ultimate goal guided him, and it should help guide us, too.

A third is love. Jesus said if we love him we will keep his commandments. It is a watered down sort of love that rejects Christ: a love of self, of pleasure, of the glory of this world. Paul writes about those who are *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God* (**2 Tim 3:4)**. Instead, we are talking about love in the Biblical sense, for God, for our neighbor, for even our enemies. That is willing what is good for them—the good in God's eyes, not our own. That will guide us in the right way.

Finally, in making decisions, let's always ask what would Jesus do? He is the only man who ever perfectly discerned every problem of life; though he was tempted like us, he did not sin **(Heb 4:15).** To the extent we follow his teachings, the principles he laid down, and his example, we will be wise discerners.

It is our duty as Christians to discern good and evil. Much of the trouble in the world, in the church, and in our personal lives is because of poor discernment. May God help us to practice it more.

Bryant Perkins