TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#851 I'll Fly Away
#480 Blessed Assurance

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#353 One Day

Communion Devotional by: Robert Ward
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#867 To Canaan's Land I'm On My Way
Sermon: " Faith Is Wise"
James 3:13-18

#907 Hark the Gentle Voice
#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop
Closing Prayer by: Gus Tristan

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet today.
Robert Ward'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

Apr. 23, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

A Grateful Heart

We have been writing for several weeks now about grappling with practical, everyday problems, inspired by our sermon series in James. Let's discuss ingratitude, something that I suspect most of us struggle with at times. Yet, we are actually commanded to be grateful. *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (**1 Thess 5:18**). For Christians, to be ungrateful is to be disobedient to God's will.

We are also taught by example to be thankful. Jesus demonstrates gratitude repeatedly in his expressions of thanksgiving to the Father. We find it in the Psalms. We see it in great men and women of Scripture, like Daniel and Anna and Paul. Even the heavenly host pictured in **Revelation 7** gives thanks! So how can we develop a grateful spirit in our lives?

Well first of all, broadly speaking, we need to stop focusing on the negative in our lives. It is easy to concentrate on our problems. A sore finger or toe or a toothache dominates the whole body: it is only a small member; it may not even he seriously injured. But it makes us forget about all of the intricate parts of the body that are functioning normally and fixate upon the minor hurt. Similarly, a flat tire immobilizes an entire car: it may be a new car, even an expensive car, but if it has a flat tire it does not operate properly.

This principle applies in numerous areas. The news we hear, day and night, emphasizes societal problems to the point we often forget the virtues and strength of our country. We wrote recently in this space about discontentment, and it is closely related to ingratitude: advertising emphasizes what we do not have, making us feel that what we own is obsolete, old fashioned, inadequate—to be ungrateful, in short.

It is easy for us to focus our lives on what we do not have, or on weighty decisions that are on our shoulders, or problems which weigh upon us, all to the exclusion of the things we do have and life's blessings. If we focus our lives on the negative, we will inevitably be ungrateful. And we will constantly be unhappy and miserable.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Jo Ella McKewen was in the hospital last week.

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. 24th at 5:30 p.m.

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

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, May 2nd at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be meeting at Hartz Chicken Buffet on Tuesday, May 9th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Thank You

Dear Church Family,
Thank you to everyone that brought food and sat with Jerry while I was in the hospital. Thank you for the prayers and cards. The lov e of a church family is amazing.
Thanks to all, Jerry & Cheryl Mast

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We need, then, to remember to not focus on our troubles. Count our blessings instead, as the old hymn says. In fact, we might even express gratitude for our troubles! If we focus on the positive, we can see the good it brings. *The trying of your faith works patience*, as James says. Matthew Henry wrote in his diary on his house being robbed: "Let me be thankful first, because he: 1) never robbed me before; second, because although he took my purse, 2) he did not take my life; third, because although he took all I possessed, 3) it was not much; and fourth, because 4) it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." This, admittedly, requires a dramatic shift in our attitude—but that's the point.

We must also not focus on what we do not have. As Paul writes, if *we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.* (**1 Tim 6:8)** *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have,* the Hebrews writer says. The next clause provides a powerful basis: *for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"* **(Heb 13:5-6)**

We need to consider just how detestable ingratitude really is to God. That whole litany of sins in **Romans 1,** describing what the Gentile world is like without God? The basis of it is that *they did not honor God or give thanks to him*. God reckons ingratitude so reprehensible, he catalogs it among the worst sins imaginable. So let's get rid of our complaining.

Instead, we need to focus on the positive in our lives. We have already alluded to counting our blessings, not our troubles We might begin with the physical ones, like life, food, shelter, and clothing. We might consider home, family, and friends. Or we might list the beauties of nature. We might consider that we live in a land of freedom and opportunity. We are blessed with wonderful technology and abundance beyond the imagination of any people before in the history of humanity.

Above all, we must be thankful for and emphasize spiritual things. There is the fact that we are children of God, just as much as Abraham, or David, or Daniel, or Paul, or Timothy. We have Christ as our Savior and our perfect example; the intimate, personal relationship we have with him is a blessing beyond our description. There is the wonderful blessing of the church, this fellowship with other Christians that helps give us strength and encouragement when we are weak and reminds us that we are not alone. There is the Bible, our ever present and dependable guide, that we can carry with us wherever we go—a privilege many throughout history did not enjoy.

We have so much for which to be grateful. Let's remember, then, to never forget that. *Forget not all his benefits,* as the Psalmist says **(Ps 103:2).** God has given us so much. May he give us one more thing: a grateful heart.

Bryant Perkins