TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#647 Soldiers of Christ Arise
#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#381 Years I Spent in Vanity

Communion Devotional by: Ken Coleman
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus
Sermon: "All Is Vanity"
Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

#650 Send the Light
#634 We'll Work Til Jesus Comes
Closing Prayer by: Craig Girard

We will be watching the second season of "The Chosen" at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday nights in the fellowship room.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

July 16, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Confidence in Christ: Walking in the Light

We have had a couple of articles here in this space on why we should have more confidence in Christ. We focused first of all on the big picture of Scripture and what it reveals to us about God's nature and purpose: he is perpetually reaching out to his Creation, acting on behalf of humanity to restore the relationship he had with us in the beginning that has been broken by sin. We must always keep in mind that his heart is geared toward us, and his goal is for us to be reconciled to him.

Last week, we discussed how God has achieved that reconciliation in Jesus. We have peace with God through Christ. All of that should be familiar to those of us are Christians. But I'm not sure we fully appreciate the implications of it. We come into that relationship with him through baptism. But what then?

What about sins that we commit after baptism? Can we be forgiven of those? The early church struggled with this question. The liberals said that you could be…once. This is why so many delayed baptism till the near the end of life. So do we need to be baptized again every time we sin? We know that is not the answer, and that we can be forgiven. Yet we still sometimes struggle with *feeling* forgiven.

The apostle John gives us the answer: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* **(1 Jn 1:9).** To confess means to say openly we have sinned—to accuse oneself of our own evil deeds. John then contrasts confession with claiming we have no sin, *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us* **(v. 10).** We can choose to deny that we are sinners, or we acknowledge our sins to God. Only the latter are forgiven.

But another question we sometimes hear is, what if I sin and die before I get a chance to repent? There are a couple of things to keep in mind before digging in here. There is a God; I'm not him, and neither are any of you. God will ultimately judge us and answer this definitively. The best answer to this situation—like most such hypotheticals—is to do all in your power to not be in it.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Robert Modisette is on hospice care.

Gerald Bagwell, Joe Edd Stifflemire's brother in law, is on hospice.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, 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, Jo Ella McKewen, Brooke Ann Smith, Tony Fontenot, Winston Leifester, Kelly 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 meet Monday, July 16th at 5:30 p.m.

Primetimers will be meeting at Pueblo's on Tuesday, July 18th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Wednesday, July 19th at 8:00 a.m.

Summer Book Club

The book we are reading and studying is "Gentle and Lowly". A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. We will meet each Thursday at 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in this see Bryant.

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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With that said, let's see if there are some clues we can glean from Scripture, keeping in mind the foundation we have laid over the last couple of weeks. The first question to consider is what was the pattern of your life? Let's go back to that passage from John and consider the wider context:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. **(1 Jn 1:7-10)**

We learn here that Jesus' blood continually cleanses sins, if we walk in the light and if we confess our sins. All of those verbal phrases are in the present subjunctive tense, meaning that it implies a continuous, ongoing action. In other words, Jesus' blood cleanses us in our baptism, but it continues to cleanse us after baptism, just as long as we continue to walk and continue to confess.

The blood of Jesus doesn't flow from a faucet that you turn on and off. It stays on as long as we are walking and confessing as we ought. We are expected to follow God's commands, to act with love as John points out later in the letter. But did you notice—walking in the light includes sin! The issue is direction, not perfection; it is about faithfulness. John is talking about a pattern of walking and confessing.

We need to remember that there is a very real difference between being in Christ—walking in the light, having peace with God—and being outside of him. That moves us a long way toward answering some of our doubts. Next week, we will address the assumption that seems to underlie this question and much of our insecurity: do we move out of salvation every time we sin and back in every time we repent?

Bryant Perkins