TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#469 Faith Is the Victory
#797 Lord We Come Before Thee Now

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#383 Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross

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

#650 Send the Light
Sermon: "We, Not Me"
Ecclesiastes 4:4-16

#902 Nothing But the Blood
#634 We'll Work Till Jesus Comes
Closing Prayer by: Don Lynn

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

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

Aug. 20, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Christians Should Rule the World, But Not Like You Think

*In our Wednesday evening study of Proverbs, we encountered **14:31** this week: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." There was discussion over what it means for a nation to be righteous, because it is hard to define. It made me think of this recent article by Wes McAdams on Radically Christian for a good perspective related to the issue. It has been slightly modified in format, but not content. BP*

Should Christians rule the world? It's easy for Christians to think we should be the ones ruling and governing the nations of the world. After all, shouldn't Christians be equipped to make better, more just, laws than unbelievers? And, if the leaders and rulers of the world were Christians, wouldn't God be more likely to bless the nations? It may surprise you to know that Christians are already ruling the world, and we will continue doing so forever…but not the way you might think.

How the World Rises to Power
Rulers and leaders of the world rise to power by destroying their enemies. Worldly leadership is typically like the children's game, king of the mountain. In order to be in charge, you must exalt yourself and humble your opponents. The person who demonstrates their superiority over all of their competitors is the winner and gets to be in charge. Like a couple of mountain goats, rival leaders are perpetually locking horns and struggling for dominance. In some cultures this struggle is violent and is only decided when one party is dead. In cultures like the United States, potential leaders defeat their enemies through verbal attacks. But, whether violent or verbal, the blows from both sides are typically vicious and brutal.

There is often no way to claim worldly power without engaging in this power struggle. In order to be in charge of worldly power structures, you must establish dominance. You must insult, shame, humiliate, and destroy your enemy, proving you are stronger and better. Of course, in his sovereignty, God can use the results of these worldly contests for his purposes (**Rom 13:1-7**). But it is not God's will that his people participate in this worldly striving for power. The young men Jesus chose to be his disciples initially engaged in this struggle. They butted heads and argued about who was the greatest. But Jesus rebuked them and said, *Not so among you* **(Lk 22:24-27)**

How Jesus Rose to Power
Jesus didn't refer to himself as "the Christ," even though that is who he was born to be. Claiming to be the Christ (God's anointed King) would imply Jesus planned to throw his hat in the ring to fight for dominance. If Jesus claimed to be the Christ, others would likely assume Jesus was going to challenge Herod, or even Caesar, for power and control.

Jesus certainly is the Christ, but he did not rise to power in a worldly way (**Jn 18:36**). He did not assert his dominance like any king before (or after). Meekness, humility, serving others, and sacrificing his life were the hallmarks of his ascension plan (**Mt 12:15-21**). He shunned selfish ambition and he never retaliated against anyone. His crown was one of thorns and his throne was a cross **(Jn 12:32-33**).

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Robert Modisette is on hospice care.

Lon Hobbs is in Liberty Health Care room 104.

Gayle Coleman was in the hospital last week.

Ken Coleman has covid.

Emily Nance had surgery last week.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, 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, 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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, Aug. 21st at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a Blood Drive on Monday, Aug. 28th from 4-8 p.m. in the fellowship room. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Food Bank

We served 141 families on Thursday, Aug. 17th at our food bank. That equals to about 409 individuals. We had 20 volunteers.

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

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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Scoffers in the ancient (and modern) world looked at Jesus' path to power and said, "That is ridiculous! Things don't work like that!" The idea of a crucified Christ was (and still is) "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (**1 Cor 1:23**). But the good news is, it did work! Jesus "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 2:15, NIV). Jesus won by dying.

Following Jesus' Path to Power

Followers of Jesus are commanded over and over again to follow his example of meekness, humility, servanthood, and self-giving love (see Philippians 2:1-12). Jesus made it clear: *If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.* (Luke 9:23-24) The cross of Jesus is not just a means of forgiving our personal sins. It is also a call to a new way of living our lives. Taking up our cross means we stop participating in this worldly power struggle.

Jesus has been *raised from the dead and seated…in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion* (**Eph 1:20-21**). But Paul went on to say that we have also been raised and *seated with him in the heavenly places* (**Eph 2:6**). In other words, there is a sense in which we are already reigning with Jesus. Followers of Jesus rule with him, but we must also rule like him. We rule not by demonstrating worldly strength and superiority, but by being humiliated, insulted, persecuted, and crucified with him **(Mt 10:24-25; Acts 14:22; Phil 1:27-30; 2 Thess 1:5).**

Of course, our ultimate ruling of the world is yet to come (**1 Cor 6:2-3**). We will inherit, by grace, everything that belongs to Jesus. In Romans 8, Paul refers to Christians as "children of God" and "fellow heirs with Christ." Paul says we will be glorified with Christ. However, listen closely to this important caveat, "provided we suffer with him" (vs. 17). There is a cost to rejecting the way of cross, you forfeit reigning with Christ.

No Cross, No Glory

Unfortunately, over the last 2,000 years, many Christians have rejected the way of the cross. They resort to the ways of the world. Fighting and insulting their opponents in order to gain power and control. They try to establish dominance, prove their superiority, and achieve greatness. Sadly, many have even deceived themselves into believing this worldly behavior supports the cause of Christ.

Again, as we acknowledged in the beginning, it is understandable (and even right) for Christians to think, "Things would be better if we ruled the world, rather than godless unbelievers." But we are missing the most fundamental truth of the Gospel, Jesus is already in charge of the world! And he was exalted to that position of power not because he took up the sword, but because he took up the cross (**Phil 2:8-9**). If we want to reign with him—now and forever—we must take up our own cross and follow him.

I am not saying Christians should never occupy positions of leadership. But we must NEVER fight and insult our way to the top. No matter how we are treated, Christians must be submissive to rulers and authorities, speak evil of no one, avoid quarreling, be gentle, and show perfect courtesy toward all people (**Titus 3:1-2**).

"But," some are probably arguing, "they'll walk all over us if we live like that!" Yes, of course they will! Just like they did to Jesus. And like him, our persecution will be our glory. Listen carefully to the words of Jesus: *Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him*. **(Jn 12:25-26)**