TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader / Opening Prayer by: Craig Girard
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah
#837 I Need Thee Every Hour

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch
Communion Devotional by: Zach Arthur

#701 My Jesus I Love Thee
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#2 We Praise Thee, O God
Sermon "Living with Thanksgiving"
Philippians 1:3-8

#911 Bring Christ Your Broken Life
#523 I Know the Lord Will Find a Way
Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Don Taylor's group will meet 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

Jan. 21, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Greatest Tragedy

In **1 Corinthians 11,** Paul is dealing with the abusive practice of the Lord's Supper in the church in Corinth. In the context of criticizing them, one question he asked was, "*Do you despise the church of God*?" (**1 Cor 11:22**) That's something worth meditating on.

Hold that in the back of your mind and ponder it for a moment as you consider another question: what are the great tragedies facing the church of Christ in our day and time? According to the dictionary, a tragedy is "a disastrous event, a calamity or misfortune." There are a number of "hot-button" issues current in the church that many would offer as the answer to that question.

Some would say that liberalism is one of the great tragedies facing the church. We need to be careful here, because sometimes we conflate our political and religious discourse, and that is ripe for all kinds of confusion. Theological liberalism establishes religious authority on something in addition to or other than Scripture. It is a product of the Enlightenment, elevating human reason, experience, and science over any traditional source of doctrine. So practically speaking, it results in a laxness toward or breaking of the laws that God has made. Liberalism is a form of unbelief. It assumes that God did not really mean what He said and that modifications of His word are in order. But as dangerous as this trend has been in some quarters, I would argue it is not one of the great tragedies facing the church today.

Well then, if liberalism is not one of the great calamities facing the church, then certainly legalism is. Again, a definition is in order; some on the liberal end of the spectrum see a legalist behind every bush when any sort of obedience is enjoined. Legalism is seeking to be justified before God by keeping his law. It tends toward making laws where God has made none; we can look at the tradition of the Pharisees in the New Testament for a good example of this approach. Just as liberalism is a form of unbelief, so too is legalism. It assumes that God's law does not go far enough and seeks to extend God's law by human wit and wisdom. But just as liberalism is not one of the great tragedies facing the church today, neither is legalism; most in the church are somewhere in the wide ditch between those two extremes.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Ricky Lucas will be having surgery this month.

Gayle Coleman will be having a procedure on Thursday.

Geraldine Frazier is in San Jacinto Methodist Hospital in ICU.

Jennifer Stelly, Patti Davis' daughter in law will be having surgery this month.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Kelly McCain, Wayne Noonkester

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, 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 meeting Monday night at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Feb. 6th at 8:00 a.m.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Ross an dKora Ward on the birth of their son, Parker Scott. He was born Tuesday, Jan. 16th and weighs 8 lbs 5 oz. Proud grandparents are Robert and Lynette Ward.

Food Bank

We served 93 families on Thursday, Jan. 18th at our food bank. That equals to 239 individuals. We had 8 volunteers.

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

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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So if it is not liberalism and it is not legalism, perhaps it is what we might call "uglysim." We could use other terms, but you know what I am talking about: the ugly spirit that is too quick to draw lines of fellowship and to attack reputations. This was the temper of Diotrephes in **3 John.** Certainly that divisive, prideful spirit is as active today as it was in the first century. Yet, as reprehensible as uglyism is, it is not one of the great tragedies facing the church today.

The tragedies facing the church in our day are not any sort of "ism." They are much more commonplace—and insidious—than a movement like that. One of them is an inferior standard of purity. Morally speaking, there is too much of the world in the church and not enough of the church in the world. Sometimes, there are those who want to be identified with God's people, but by their worldly and inconsistent living, they are in reality causing the church to be despised. When the world despises the church for its stand for the truth, that is to the shame of the world. When the world despises the church because it finds hypocrisy within it, that is to the shame of the church.

We could also talk of our failure to grow. Not our failure to grow numerically as a body, but our failure to grow spiritually as individuals. We often fail to grow spiritually because we do not take advantage of the opportunities afforded us to feed on the word of God—simple things like attending Bible Class on Sunday morning and Wednesday night.

There is also our failure to be soul winners. Jesus told us as we are going—wherever we are going—to make disciples. But most of us have probably never even mentioned Jesus to our neighbor next door.

We can sum up all of these practical things we have mentioned with what is probably the greatest tragedy facing the church: a lack of real commitment and dedication. You see, every member of the local church is important and should pledge their undivided interest, steadfast attachment, and sense of responsibility to it. Perhaps we should perform a serious self-examination and see if that describes us.

How deep is your personal commitment?

Do your actions say that you despise the church of God?

Bryant Perkins