TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#535 The Glory-Land Way
#480 Blessed Assurance

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#509 I Will Sing the Wondrous Story

Communion Devotional by: Don Taylor
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#470 Victory in Jesus
Sermon "Worth Living"
Philippians 3:1-11

#915 Trust and Obey
#800 What a Friend We Have in Jesus
Closing Prayer by: David Smith

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

March 17, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

How to Win Converts and Make Disciples

Some of our small groups are recognizing St. Patrick's Day as they meet this afternoon. I believe that Ken Coleman's group is having all green foods—hopefully, that is not an incentive for anyone to clean out any science experiments from the back of the refrigerator. Robert Ward's group will meet at our house, where we will have some traditional Irish dishes.

It is fun to do things like that on what is more or less a second-class holiday in this country: we wear green, in some places we have a parade, and we eat things like Irish stew or shepherd's pie or soda bread. But I imagine most of us do not really know much about the holiday or its namesake other than that.

I have written in this space about Patrick of Berniae before, the patron saint of Ireland who is responsible for bringing Christianity to the island in the 5th century, because I think he is a fascinating figure. And if you do not know much about him or if you do not recall those articles, I think it is worth a reminder.

Patrick had a very religious upbringing. He, however, was not particularly devout; as a young man, he practically renounced his faith. But when he was 16, while out working in his father's field in Roman Britain, Irish militia raided the land. He was kidnapped and enslaved in Ireland for 6 years as a herdsman. During that time, his faith grew, and he prayed daily. One day, he escaped by stowing away on a ship, traveling more than 200 miles home. He eventually became a Bishop in the church. In the latter half of his life, Patrick became a missionary to the land in which he had been a slave.

One legend states that Patrick relied on a simple illustration to teach the doctrine of the Trinity or Godhead, the Father, Son, and Spirit as one entity: he used a shamrock, or 3-leaf clover, to explain the nature of God. Each leaf is separate and distinct, yet part of a whole. By making that simple comparison, he persuaded many. Thus, Saint Patrick's Day is supposed to be a celebration both of the life of Patrick himself and of the birth of Christianity in Ireland.

We would, no doubt, disagree with much of what Patrick taught. But I think we have to admire his success. He faced a great deal of opposition, being imprisoned and beaten at times. Ireland was a field where others had tried and failed.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Gayle Coleman will be having a procedure on April.

Oscar Cantu will be having surgery on Monday, March 18th.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Kelly McCain, Wayne Noonkester, Rickey Lucas, Jennifer Stelly

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, March 11th at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, March 21st at 8:00 a.m.

Easter Egg Hunt for the youth immediately after service on Sunday, March 24th. Food will be provided. If you are interested in this a signup sheet is on the bulletin board. See River Lucy or Brooks McKelroy for more information.

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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We are not likely to be responsible for bringing Christianity to a country that rejected it for centuries. But we are all similarly responsible for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world around us: *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you* **(Matthew 28:18-20).**

This mission was given to every follower of Jesus, not just to preachers or missionaries. It belongs to the whole church and to each one of us individually. And it is not optional—if you belong to God's family, then this mission is mandatory.

The Greek verb translated "go" here is actually not a command, but a present participle. It would more literally be translated "going." In other words, we aren't commanded to travel the world. In fact, the only imperative in these verses is "make disciples." Essentially, Jesus says, "Wherever you are going, make disciples." No matter who we are or where we are, we can do that; we *must* do that. We ought to share the gospel of Christ with those around us.

That said, although we have the same faith in Jesus and the same responsibility to share it, we don't always do that in the same way. Some of us might be most comfortable with an intellectual approach, where we use reason and logic to persuade others. That's essentially what Patrick did with the polytheists of Ireland. I think of how Peter encourages us to prepare for such opportunities, *always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you* **(1 Peter 3:15).**

But most of us will probably find other approaches more effective. Some of us might use the invitational approach. Think about Phillip in **John 1**: he doesn't argue with Nathaniel or give a reasoned defense of Jesus. He simply says, *come and see.* We can all make an effort to invite friends or relatives to church with us.

Or we might consider the interpersonal approach, telling others about the difference the Lord has made in our own lives. Paul does something like this in **Acts 22,** recounting his life both before and after he came to faith in Jesus. Sharing our own story is an essential part of sharing our faith.

This is difficult, and sometimes it is hard to see results. Some of us have probably been practicing one or all of these methods without success. Jesus warned us that not every heart is fertile soil. But our responsibility is to keep planting the seed to the best of our ability. Let's all continue to practice these methods of spreading the good news, whichever suits our talents and the situation best.

Bryant Perkins