TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#867 To Canaan's Land I'm On My Way
#882 No Tears in Heaven

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#315 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Communion Devotional by: Daniel Balch
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#852 When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder
Sermon "Living by Imitation"
Philippians 3:17-21

#902 Nothing But the Blood
#784 Far and Near
Closing Prayer by: Craig Girard

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Bobby Rader'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

Apr. 14, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Logistics of Giving

Last week in this space, we laid out a theology of giving. Of course, giving is a broader topic than just the offering we take up every Lord's Day. But the weekly contribution in particular is one of the most neglected aspects our assemblies—it makes us all rather uncomfortable to talk about. That is unfortunate, because it is extremely significant. The earliest Christians were characterized by their readiness to give. And when we study it deeply, we find there are several key ideas associated with giving: it is a grace or privilege; it is an act of fellowship; it is a ministry or service; it is a blessing; and it is a test or proof.

Having established that Biblical foundation for giving, we now want to discuss the practicalities of it, specifically in the assembly. A number of relevant principles are found in **1 Corinthians 16:1-4:**

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Practical Suggestions

1. Giving is to be **periodic**. Paul's command is to give *on the first day of the week*—more literally, of every week. We know from **Acts 20** that there was a regular meeting of the church on the first day to eat the Lord's Supper. This indicates that a financial gift was to take place at those meetings Note, too, that this was not just an ad hoc practice contingent on particular circumstances, but a universal one for every church. Paul had already instructed the churches in Galatia to do the same. In other words, whether in ancient Galatia or Corinth—or Liberty or Houston or New York City or Timbuktu—a collection should be taken today, just as it was 2,000 years ago.

2. Giving is to be **personal.** Who is to give? *Each of you*, Paul says. Each and every Christian has the responsibility to give. As a practical suggestion, this is a responsibility even children can learn. I remember being given a dollar a week as a boy to put in collection plate. Even if only a bit of coins that you happen to have in your pocket, it is a good lesson that should last a lifetime. Giving is not merely a privilege and joy, then; it is a personal responsibility.

3. Giving should be **planned** and **proportional**. There is a predetermined amount*: put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper*. What we give to God should be decided in advance. Unlike the suggestion for children, for the rest of us this is not supposed to be a spare change, last minute thing. Now that is not to discourage spontaneous giving, of course; that may be necessary at times. But when we assemble together, we should have already given thought to what we will offer. This is about our attitude toward giving.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Gayle Coleman will be having a procedure on May 15th.

Ken Coleman had a procedure last week and is at home

Lydia Mallernee was released from the hospital Tuesday.

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, Oscar Cantu, Rickey Lucas, Jennifer Stelly, Kevin Coleman, Cathy Stifflemire

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, Mani Pagidopali in India

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, April 15th at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, April 18th at 8:00 a.m.

We are working a new Friend and Family directory. A copy of the old one has been placed on the bulletin board. Please check your name, address, phone number and email to make sure it is correct.

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"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;
Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

Why is that? Perhaps because it causes us to think about what God has given us. This deep reflection should ensure our giving is not spur of the moment leftovers, whatever we happen to have rolling around in our pocket that day (if anything), but instead, a generous, well-thought-out expression of gratitude and devotion. You notice that no exact amount is legislated here; it is as we have been prospered. Many of our religious friends and neighbors advocate a tithe; the NT does not do so, and that has effect of stifling the voluntary nature of this. With that said, practically, 10 percent is a good place to start. It is not required, and it is certainly not a maximum! But I am confident that if everyone did this, no church's contribution would go down. In fact, it would certainly go up here. I have no idea what anyone gives, but I can at least say that our contribution is not always proportional to our attendance. I know times are hard—but this should be a priority.

4. Giving is to be **preventative**. *So that there will be no collecting when I come.* Some argue Paul is referring to a private storing up here, not a public collection, so that there is no weekly precedent set here, but that we should just have it on hand when needed. But this would cause a gathering up—the very thing he is seeking to avoid!

5. Giving is to be **purposeful.** In this instance, this gift was to go to Jerusalem. They were not hoarding their funds in a war chest; rather, they had a specific purpose for their money and they distributed it to meet needs. That is what we should be doing as well—and if you ever wonder what we are spending our money on here, monthly handouts on the budget are always available in the foyer.

A Challenge

Now having said all that, I want you to consider its application in this church. For the first quarter of the year, our weekly contribution ran on average about $400/week short of the budget. Our attendance most weeks runs right around 100 people. Sometimes, it is considerably more—we have had a couple of Sundays over 130 in the last month; sometimes, it dips down into the 90s. But for the sake of easy math, let's just put it right at 100.

Do you realize that $400/week divided by 100 people is only $4 a person? Of course, that counts children too. But if every single individual or couple or family would just contribute an extra $4 per person a week, we would easily make up the difference. Even for a family of 4, that is only $64/month—less than it would cost to take everyone out for dinner these days.

Despite not knowing what anyone contributes, I imagine that there are some folks who are already like the widow with her two mites and literally cannot afford to give another $4; on the other hand, there might be some who have plenty of money but are so tight that we are lucky to get the collection plate back when we pass it. But I suspect that most of us fall somewhere in between those extremes: we could give a couple of dollars more if we realized there was a need. Or maybe we just haven't given it much thought; we set our contribution years ago and haven't revised it along with salary increases.

So I challenge you, if you are able to at all, to increase your contribution just by a few dollars a week. Abbey and I are going to raise ours by $10/week starting this Sunday, which takes care of both of us and half of one other person. If we would all do something similar, there would be no more deficit. And it is much easier to ask 100 people to come up with $4 now than for the church to be looking at falling $20,000 short at the end of the year and trying to decide what we will cut. Which will it be?

Bryant Perkins