TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#611 Heavenly Sunlight
#797 Lord We Come Before Thee Now

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

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

#469 Faith Is the Victory
Sermon: Living Generously
Philippians 4:14-20

#902 Nothing But the Blood
#753 Farther Along
Closing Prayer by: Gus Tristan

Our Small Groups will not meet tonight.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

May 19, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

A Little Advice

After services this morning, we will gather to honor our graduates. We are just days away from what is technically called "commencement." Why commencement? After all, "to commence" is to begin, to start—and graduation is an ending, isn't it? The word does come from a Latin word meaning "beginning." That is because, in medieval times—when academics actually wore that ridiculous cap and robe we all have forced upon us now—you did not finish at the university and go out into the world; you began your academic career. This was the name given the ceremony of initiation for new scholars into the fellowship of university teachers, the commencement of their full-fledged academic lives.

Even though it is not quite the same today, graduation does still mark a transitional point. Whether high school or college, it is the commencement of a new stage in life. If you are one of our students in that position, you are going to get tired of hearing and reading about the next chapter. But I believe that there are some thoughts from Scripture that are pertinent not only for graduates, but for all of us, as we make choices in our lives. I want to address them in particular here, but I expect we will all find this relevant.

Honor God
In 1988 Dan Quayle was selected as the vice-presidential running mate of George H.W. Bush. He soon faced the most intense media questioning of his life. One of those questions revolved around his enlistment in the National Guard during the Vietnam War: did he use personal connections to do that? Did he do it to avoid going overseas? In a news conference the next day, he answered frankly, "I did not know in 1969 that I would be in this room today, I'll confess." In other words, "If I had known back then what I know now, I would have made a different choice." How many people have echoed that same cry? Our choices have consequences that can affect not only our lives, but also the lives of those around us. I want to encourage us all to make sure our choices honor God.

Our society is consumed with the idea of success and winning. You have possibly already experienced that in grades at school or sports or applying to college. Some will do almost anything to succeed or to win. We are not all that surprised when a politician fudges things to try to smear his opponent. We are not shocked when a business puts their customers at risk for the sake of profits. Whatever it takes to win, some people are willing to do. In whatever field of endeavor, they focus only on satisfying their desires.

Paul wrote about people like that. *For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things*. In contrast, he continues *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.* **(Phil 3:18-21).** Paul effectively tells us: you have a choice. You can focus on earthly things or choose citizenship in heaven. You can allow your stomach to be your god or worship the one, true God. Your destiny can be destruction or eternal life. The choice is yours. Which choice are we making?

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Gayle Coleman had a heart procedure last week.

Jo Ella McKewen was in the hospital last week.

Wilson David, Walden's father is in St. Elizabeth Hospital and not doing well.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Wayne Noonkester, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, Cathy Stifflemire, Ken Coleman, Dr. Hugo Thomas

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis, Debbie Merritt

Our Missionaries

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

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, May 20th at 5:30 p.m..

We are working a new Friends 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.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, June 4th 16th at 8:00 a.m.

Graduating High School Seniors

Kenadi Frauenberger, Matthew Girard, Joseph Girard are our three graduating High School Seniors. We will be honoring them today. We will have a meal after morning service.

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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Don't Focus on The World

Think about those who focus on the things of the world. Paul says that these people have nothing to look forward to because they are dying every day Those who focus only on the things of the world are dying in 3 ways. First of all, they are dying physically. Now we are all dying physically, we know that. At 17 or 18, you might not have really thought about that much, but it's true. Your parents look in the mirror and find another wrinkle or another gray hair, or feel another ache or pain. We are all wearing down, dying from the minute we are born.

While we are all dying physically, we can also be dying spiritually. Scripture indicates there are moments in life when we are more sensitive to God. But if we let those moments pass, the next time the opportunity comes it's easier to say "no." I think of Paul as a prisoner before the Roman governor Felix in **Acts 24**. Felix's wife was Jewish, and he sent for Paul to ask him some questions about Jesus. As Paul *reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix trembled* **(v. 25).** Felix was was shaken in his spirit, cut to the heart. But instead of responding, he told Paul, *Go away – when I get a convenient opportunity, I'll call*. As far as we know, he never found that occasion. This resistance can happen, until finally, we become desensitized and we die spiritually.

And without Christ, we will die eternally. *The wages of sin is death* **(Rom 6:23).** Or, as Paul put it here, *Their end is destruction.*

Our Citizenship is in Heaven

But then Paul says, *Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.* This is the Christ who said, *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly*. **(Jn 10:10)** Do you want to live that abundant life? Of course you do; everyone does! But they so often go looking in the wrong places. I remember overhearing people at UT literally talking about how much fun they had over they weekend, they couldn't remember what they even did. That's not living. That's dying.

But that's not the only way to a living death. How many people—how many of us—live like we are just turning on a switch in the morning? Getting up, going to work or school or whatever, coming home, staring at the TV, going to bed, switching off. Then the next day getting up and going through the same monotonous routine. Are they really living, or are they just going through the motions?

There is something more to life than that. There is a greater motivation for life than just getting up and going through the motions. There is a purpose, a goal, a vision that God wants us to catch. There is a reason behind life higher than anything that the world has to offer, something that will last for all eternity. And through Jesus Christ that abundant, wonderful, eternal life is offered to each of us.

I want to encourage you, whether you are embarking on a new stage in life or just happen to be reading this article this morning: keep your priorities in order. For our young people, a lot of folks are going to be telling you what you should do: go to college, go to work. You're all going to take a different path, and it might not be as smooth as you thought it would be. But whether you have a 30-year plan or you don't even know what you're going to do June 1, make sure that God is always a part of your plans. Don't make your primary focus on the things of this world. Make it on the new life God offers in Christ, and doing his will. That's good advice for all of us.

Bryant Perkins