TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#742 When Upon Life's Billows
#578 We Will Glorify

Scripture Reading by:
#381 Years I Spent in Vanity

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

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus
Sermon by Daniel Balch:
"Lessons From Little League"
2 Corinthians 5:9

#915 Trust and Obey
#711 Blest Be the Tie That Binds
Closing Prayer by:

We will me watching the 3rd season of
The Chosen at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday nights
in the fellowship room.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

June 24, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Creator and Creation

As many of you know, I am on vacation in the Great Smoky Mountains this week. I am writing this around sunrise on Friday morning from the back porch of our cabin, perched on the crest of a mountain, as I look at the first rays of light peak over the mountains beyond and me and then pierce the valley below. I cannot help but think of what the Psalmist says: *The heaven declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.* **(Ps 19:1)**

The concept of Creation and of God as Creator is fundamental. And it has implications for how we understand God, how we understand the world, and how we understand ourselves.

God
As Creator, God is the source of everything that is. He is the creator of *the heavens and the earth* **(Gen 1:1).** He is the creator of human beings **(Gen 1:27).** He is, indeed, the creator of all things **(John 1:2-3)**. So he is distinct from Creation; he made it and he rules over. The term often used to describe this is transcendent That means he is above creation—greater than it, independent.

But at the same time, God is also very much involved in Creation. That is not limited to the sense of initially forming everything; its existence continues to depend on him **(Col 1:15-17)**. *In him we live and move and have our being* **(Acts 17:28).** *He upholds the universe by his word of power* **(Heb 1:3).** The term for this is immanent: God remains in his Creation. So God is distinct from Creation, but it is utterly dependent on him

That claim is in sharp contrast to non-Biblical worldviews the are prevalent in our world. There is materialism, the most common philosophy of unbelievers today; this denies the existence of God altogether. All of us would reject that, of course. But what about professing Christians who spend almost all of their efforts on earning more money, more possessions? They are practical materialists. Their lives wouldn't be much different if they didn't believe.

There is pantheism, the idea the whole universe is God or part of God; this is the concept of most eastern religions. Our goal is to blend in with the universe, becoming one. But Scripture portrays God as a unique, distinct person—and so are we, made in his image. We must reject that concept and other, similar, New Age ideas that are popular today. There is deism, that God is transcendent but not immanent. This denies God's present involvement in the world; he essentially wound it up like a watch and left it alone to run. This was the worldview of most of the Founding Fathers. How many Christians are practical deists? We act as if God is not involved in the world; we live lives devoid of prayer, worship, fear of God, trust in him. If we are lukewarm, we are basically deists. A proper understanding of God as Creator corrects false understandings of him.

Creation then reflects the glory of the Creator. God created humans *for my glory, whom I formed and made* **(Is 43:7).** But all creation is intended to show his glory, as the verse we quoted at the outset demonstrates. What does creation show about God? Mainly, his power and wisdom. *It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens* **(Jer 10:12).** Who could look into space and see the sun and the stars without seeing his power? Who could look at a leaf or a living cell and not see wisdom? His power and his design are beyond our comprehension. When we meditate on that, we should give him glory.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Winona Angelle, Pat Hobbs' mother, is in the hospital with an infection in her lower leg.

Steve Ward is at home and continues with health problems.

Leah Smith had knee replacement surgery last week.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, 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 meeting Monday, June 24th 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, July 2nd at 8:00 a.m.

VBS is Saturday, June 29th from 9-2 p.m.

Food Bank

We served 120 families on Thursday, June 20th at our food bank. That equals to 405 individuals. We had 12 volunteers.

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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Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

The World

God created the universe to manifest his glory. We should expect that it would fulfill its purpose. And, in fact, we see in **Genesis 1** that everything he created was *good.* When he was finished, he called it *very good* **(Gen 1:31).** God delighted in his Creation. It is true that sin has marred his Creation. But it is still good in God's sight. He still cares for it; he still delights in it.

That means we should see it as good, too. We ought to enjoy what God has created. Paul warned against those who *forbid marriage*—part of what he created in the beginning—and enjoin *abstinence from foods.* He called that *doctrines of demons.* Instead, he said *Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving* **(1 Tim 4:4).** God's Created world can be used in sinful and selfish ways. But that danger should not keep us from enjoying it with thanksgiving.

We ought to be more thankful for God's Creation. I hiked to Clingman's Dome, the highest peak in the National Park yesterday. Looking at the vistas stretching out for 100 miles in every direction below, how could we not be in awe? How could we not appreciate God's wonders?

And we ought to take care of Creation as good stewards. Think back to Adam caring for the garden in **Genesis 2.** Christians should be concerned with caring for the environment (which, to be clear, is not a statement about any specific policies or programs—we might reject those for good reasons; but the principle still stands).

Ourselves

Finally, the idea of Creation—and us as Creatures—should shape us. For one thing, we have a responsibility to the Creator. *Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?* **(Rom 9:21).** God created us with the freedom either to accept or reject him. But a proper understanding of our relationship will lead to our recognition of complete and utter dependence on him.

That should also prevent us from elevating anything else to his place. *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.* **(Rom 1:24-25)** How can we ever do that if we truly understand our place? We must not allow anyone or anything to be our god but God

This understanding should not only impact our relationship with God, but others. Human beings are made in the image of God. If we truly appreciate that, wouldn't we treat others better?

Finally, we must remember that the Creator is ultimately in control. This is effectively what he reminded Job. He made all things in this world; He continues to rule over them. We must trust in his wise and benevolent rule. Seeing God as our Creator, his care over his Creation, and accepting our Creaturely status, should renew our trust in him.

Bryant Perkins