TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#885 How Beautiful Heaven Must Be
#590 Jesus Is All the World to Me

Scripture Reading by: Braylen Butler
#350 When My Love to Christ Grows Weak

Communion Devotional by: Jerry Mallernee
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#453 Love Lifted Me
Sermon: "Out of Time"
Luke 16:19-31

#945 Kneel at the Cross
#412 Jesus Hold My Hand
Closing Prayer by: Don Lynn

Our small groups will meet tonight.
Don Taylor's group will meet at 5:00 p.m.
at the building.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

Oct. 20, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Church as State

For several weeks, we have considered Biblical principles that help guide us politically. We examined the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ. Now let's turn our attention to the political status that accompanies being God's people.

The church is God's holy nation **(1 Pet 2:9-10),** the place where the Lordship of Christ is recognized. Christians live in this world as *strangers and aliens* **(1 Pet 2:11)** - those who define their reality as rooted in God's empire rather than any earthly kingdom – *for our citizenship is in heaven* **(Phil 3:20).** A number of implications emerge from this understanding.

First, as the center of identity, God receives primary allegiance. Other authorities and loyalties are relativized for Christians. This draws on a great stream of Biblical tradition seen in familiar examples: three Jewish boys refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image, and Daniel continued to pray because the laws they broke, though enacted by legitimate authorities, specifically enjoined an obedience to rulers over God. Peter states this principal unequivocally when the apostles are called before the Sanhedrin to account for proclaiming the name of Jesus: *We must obey God rather than men* **(Acts 5:29).**

This outlook entails a trust in God rather than in the mechanisms of human power. While exemplified most prominently by Jesus, it is characteristic of God's people throughout Scripture. In calling Abraham out of Ur, God asked him to leave the security of the foremost civilization of his day for a life centered completely on trust in God. This stance characterizes Israel in her earliest days, recognizing God alone as responsible for deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It comes to the forefront under Joshua and the Judges, with God fighting on behalf of his people and giving them victory when they hope in him.

By choosing to be ruled by a human king, Israel effectively decides to opt for human power and wisdom—to be like the nations around her—and reject this way of life characterized by dependence on God as their ruler (**1 Sam 8:7).** Samuel warns of the negative consequences that will follow; nevertheless, when they persist in their course, God does not abandon Israel, but attempts to guide those who rule the nation. Kings prosper when they rely on God; they fail when they trust their own strength.

In establishing his people in Christ, God reasserts this principle. God's reign has arrived in a new way, and those who are citizens of his nation must depend on him alone, even in the most trying of circumstances. To be God's people is to give him allegiance, obedience, and trust above all else.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Rickey Lucas is having pain throughout his body. The Dr. will be trying some form of blocker to reduce/control his pain.

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, Dr. Hugo Thomas, Veronica Valant, Steve Ward, Geri Cryer, Gloria McKelroy, Yalonda Jackson, Cassandra Valent, Linda Frank, Scott Overton

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, Oct. 21st at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Nov. 5th at 8:-00 a.m.

Homecoming is Sunday, Oct. 27th. We will have a catered meal and will need to provide desserts.

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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Secondly, because of this orientation, Christians will subject themselves to civil rulers as a manifestation of their obedience to God **(1 Pet 2:13-17).** This is a particular aspect of a larger ethic of subordination enjoined on Christians based on the teaching and example of Christ, particularly as exemplified in his death **(1 Pet 2:21-25).** Christ submitted to the machinations of the earthly authorities. He did so voluntarily, trusting himself to God against the powers of this world. As he identified with his people in paying their penalty, so are they called to identify with him in living out his example in their life.

This is a defining attribute of God's people, seen not only in Peter's injunction but in the social codes in **Col 3:18-4:1** and **Eph 5:21-6:9,** for example. Broadly construed, the ethic of Jesus and the NT is characterized by what John Howard Yoder called "revolutionary subordination." Whether the relationship is between husband and wife, master and servant, or king and subject, this idea of radical submission is pervasive; it does not depend upon the worth of the one being served, nor is it out of fear or compulsion, but is rendered voluntarily in reflection of a Lord who emptied himself in self-sacrifice, taking the form of a servant, and in token of obedience to the God who is sovereign over all.

As such, subjection to earthly rulers is urged in other familiar NT passages. Paul makes the same demand, grounding it explicitly in God's sovereignty **(Rom 13:1).** God makes use of existing political structures to ultimately accomplish his purpose – he is in control in the end, and to him alone fear is due (**Rom 13:7).** Jesus instructs his followers to *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's* **(Mk 12:17).** Caesar has the right to collect a tax; repaying God what is due, based on his *likeness and inscription* **(Mk 12:16)** is offering one's very life in his service (**cf. Gen 1:26).**

The final implication of being citizens of God's nation is that this is a visibly counter-cultural status: the rest of the world will note the way of life characterized by trust in God alone, humble subordination, and good works. The goal of this witness is that others will be convinced to glorify God – that is, that they will be converted and decide to join God's people too **(1 Pet 2:11-12).** This is much like Jesus' call to be salt and light and do good deeds **(Matt 5:13-16).** God's people must not lose their identity by giving their loyalty to another Lord, becoming like the rest of the world, but they cannot just withdraw from the world either – they must be visible through their actions, inviting others into the community.

In sum: to truly be God's holy nation, the church must practice subjection to human rulers, trusting in God's power and sovereignty over the nations and following the submissive, non-coercive example of its Lord, in hope that the world will be drawn to its example and submit to Christ.

Bryant Perkins