TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#753 Farther Along
#679 Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Scripture Reading by: Braylen Butler
#332 Lead Me to Calvary

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

#778 Be With Me Lord
Sermon: Thanksgiving Meditation: Ingratitude
Psalms 103:1-5

#904 Have You Been to Jesus?
#738 Take the Name of Jesus with You
Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Our small groups will meet today.
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

Nov. 17, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Justin Martyr and Early Christian Worship

We have spent a good bit of time in this space recently touching on questions of both theology and history from an American perspective in particular. I thought it might be interesting to see an example of how ancient history can be instructive for us too.

From their emergence in this country in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the ethos of churches of Christ has been restoration. European nations had established churches: Roman Catholicism in many countries, Anglicanism in Great Britain, Lutheranism in Scandinavia. These were supported by taxes, given privileges by the government and, in some cases, compelled membership of all citizens.

The New World offered an opportunity for religious freedom, as most of us learned in grade school. But that freedom came with consequences: suddenly there was choice, a vast free market of competing Christian groups, each with its own exclusive claims to truth. In different parts of the new United States, people despaired at the divided state of Christianity. This was not what God intended for his people; in fact, one of the witnesses to the truth of the gospel was to be the unity of Jesus' followers (**John 17:20-21).** What was the way beyond this impasse?

The idea that several different groups hit upon independently was restoration: the beliefs and practices of the earliest Christians, as indicated in the New Testament, were taken as normative. The plea was for all professing Christians to try to get rid of their doctrinal and historical baggage, look simply at what Scripture said, and take it as their guide.

Unfortunately, that project has met with mixed results. But that does not mean the goal is not right. In fact, the very concept of restoration is rooted in Scripture. From David's reestablishment of the proper procedure for moving the Ark of the Covenant (**1 Chronicles 15)**, to Josiah's reinstitution of the Passover on finding the lost book of the Law (**2 Chronicles 34-35)**, to the rediscovery that God intended the Jews to live in little booths during the Feast of Tabernacles (**Nehemiah 8**), the constant call to God's people has been to *Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls* **(Jeremiah 6:16).**

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

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, Rickey Lucas

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, Nov. 18th at 5:30 p.m..

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

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Bobby Rader and his family on the passing of his mother, Jean Rader. She passed away Tuesday morning. The funeral is Monday, Nov. 18th at St. Patrick's Catholic church in Lufkin. Visitation is Monday from at 12:00 p.m. with the funeral following at 1:00 p.m.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor	Walden David	
Robert Ward	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

As 21st-century Christians, we are eager for every window of insight we can find into the faith and practice of the 1st-century church. We draw most heavily on the scriptures for our understanding of Christianity, of course. But we can also learn a great deal from the uninspired writings of the earliest Christians. One example is Justin Martyr, who flourished in the 2nd century. His writings are rich in showing us how Christians lived and thought a century after the church began. In his *Apology*, we read a description of early worship:

Then is brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of water and wine ... When the president has given thanks and all the people have assented, those who are called deacons with us give to those present a portion of the Eucharistic bread and wine and water, and carry it away to those that are absent. This food is called with us the Eucharist, and of it none is allowed to partake but he that believes that our teachings are true, and has been washed with the washing for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who so lives as Christ directed ... And on the day which is called the day of the sun there is an assembly of all who live in the towns and in the country; and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then the reader ceases, and the president speaks, admonishing us and exhorting us to imitate these excellent examples. Then we arise all together and offer prayers; and, as we said before, when we have concluded our prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president in like manner offers up prayers and thanksgivings with all his might; and the people assent with Amen; and there is the distribution and partaking by all of the Eucharist elements; and to them that are not present they are sent by the hand of the deacons. Those who have means and are willing, each according to his own choice, gives what he will, and what is collected is deposited with the president. He provides for the orphans and widows, those who are in want on account of sickness or some other causes, those who are in bonds and strangers who are sojourning, and in a word he becomes the protector of all who are in need. (Justin Martyr, *Apology I*, 65-67.)

Except for the strong emphasis given to the one who presides over the meetings, this account seems to be parallel to the practice that we discover in reading the New Testament itself. And it also corresponds to what we will do together this morning.

When we eat the Lord's Supper, when we offer up prayers to God, when we read and preach the Scriptures, when we praise God in song, when we take up a collection, we are not doing a few things arbitrarily teased out of a few passages of Scripture; we are doing precisely what the earliest Christians did.

Bryant Perkins