

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#535 The Glory-Land Way

#555 Seek Ye First

Scripture Reading by: Jackson Burgess

#383 Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross

Communion Devotional

#180 Jesus Is Lord

Lord's Supper and Contribution

#650 Send the Light

Sermon: "God's Story"

Joshua 4:21-24

#903 There Is Power in the Blood

#851 I'll Fly Away

Closing Prayer by: Phillip Strickhausen

Welcome by: Don Taylor

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#895 I'll Live in Glory

#797 Lord, We Come Before Thee Now

Scripture Reading: Parker Balch

Prayer by: Bobby Rader

#886 On Jordan's Stormy Banks

#852 When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder

Sermon: "The Parables of Jesus: Homecoming"

Luke 15:20-24

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

#864 Where the Gates Swing Outward Never

Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

Wednesday: 10:00am — Ladies Bible Class, 7:00pm — Bible Study Classes

October 28, 2018

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Mission of the Church

Over the last few weeks, we have studied three principles that run throughout all Scripture to help orient us in the political realm: the sovereignty of God, the Lordship of Christ, and God's people as a holy nation. Now we want to turn our attention to application, not encompassing specific scenarios, but in terms of the overall attitude of the church and Christians toward the state. A number of points could be made, but we will limit ourselves to two: the mission of the church and, next week, the method suitable to accomplishing that mission.

Mistaken Mission

The primary divergence between the understanding we have advocated here and the characteristic stance of contemporary American Christians is probably a disagreement over the mission of the church. The typical view is that the church has a responsibility to reshape culture so that it reflects God's will as closely as possible. This approach is logical on an intuitive level: if God's way of life is the ideal, as all Christians would surely agree, then it only makes sense that it would be desirable to have it widely implemented in society. Part of the role of the church is to see that through by whatever pragmatic means are available.

In the United States, that means asserting the Constitutional right to advocate for policies that promote a Christian worldview. Fundamentally, many American Christians tend to construe their relationship to the government in terms of what is constitutionally permissible instead of what their Lord requires. In other words, they act as Americans who happen to be Christians rather than Christians who happen to be Americans.

Scriptural Mission

As natural as that attitude might be, it is not the Biblical mission of the church. Consider the statement of Peter that heads an entire section on Christian ethics in **1 Peter 2:11-12**: *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.* Peter envisions God's people as converting outsiders through their conduct—bringing them from out of the world and into God's holy nation—so that they might glorify God at the judgment. There is no thought of forcing the world to comply with God's will. Instead, the goal is to persuade unbelievers and, consistent with the practice of Christians, for them to voluntarily submit themselves as servants of God. You see, Jesus did not come to make the world a better place; he came to call people out of the world.

Our Sick

Patrick Smith, Gayle Coleman's brother in law is in rehab.

Jo Ann Modisette was in the hospital last week with heart problems.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Bill Luncford, Eric Davis, J. P. Williams, Mark Wilcox, Robert White, Dayla Hale, Caitlin Smith, Phillip Cottle

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Pauline Taylor, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Ronnie Rubit, Joe Leonard, Dr. Ronald Davis, Frances Petree

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Plastic Bags

The Food Bank is in need of plastic grocery bags. A barrel is in the foyer.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, Oct. 29th at 7:00 pm.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Nov. 6th at 8:30 am.

Homecoming is today. We will be having a meal in the family life center after morning service. The meal will be catered and we will need to provide bread and desserts.

Bridal Shower for Lacey Driskell on Sunday, Nov. 11th from 2-4 pm in the fellowship room. Lacey is registered at: Macy's, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Target and WalMart.

New Address

Please note the new address for Jeanette & Eric Davis. Their address is: 19306 Kristen Oaks Ct., Humble, TX 77346.

The cold and flu season is upon us. Please remember to throw your used tissues in the trash and not leave them in the pews.

Communion Preparation: Barbara Cantu
Nursery Attendants: Lynette Ward, Debra Faneros

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Nov. 4th: Daisy Cary
Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Nov. 4th: Raven & Sharon Lartigue

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Christian political activism fails to recognize the difference between the church and the world, between God's Kingdom and the kingdoms of the earth. The central disagreement here is not really about morals, but the acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord. Christian ethics are fundamentally about following Jesus; they are nonsensical divorced from his story and from his people. We cannot expect the world to willingly accept the ethical standards of the church for the simple reason that it does not serve the same Lord. But let's imagine culture was somehow transformed on the basis of moral values abstracted from Christ – that would *still* not fulfill the church's mission. Society would be a place more amenable to Christians, sure. But it would still be lost.

This behavior is inconsistent with, even opposed to, our actual mission. Employing the Bible as a moral guidebook waters down the exclusive claims of Christianity and makes it subservient to the state in promoting a generic public virtue. In clamoring for a common public morality, we are acting as better Americans than Christians.

Stanley Hauerwas states it profoundly when he argues that “the first social task of the church—the people capable of remembering and telling the story of God we find in Jesus—is to be the church and thus help the world understand itself as world.” (*The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, p. 100) Our mission is not to make the world more comfortable for ourselves. Nor is it to improve the world as benevolent overlords. Our mission is to offer an alternative to the world in being God's people.

The church does not have a mandate for its contemporary attempt to engage in cultural engineering. In fact, rather than positioning itself as something other than the world, it unwittingly undermines its mission through such actions. Now the church appears as just one more worldly special interest attempting to push its agenda in the marketplace of ideas.

Most importantly, adopting this as a proxy for evangelism by “Christianizing” the world disrupts the more difficult mission it actually has been given: bringing people out of the world and into the Kingdom of God. We don't need political change. We need renewed focus on conversion—not in the individualistic sense in which it is often understood in the evangelical world, but through incorporation into God's alternative society.

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

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Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;
Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737