

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Walden David

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Shannon Smith

#753 Farther Along

#387 Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Scripture Reading by: Jackson Burgess

#853 Amazing Grace

Lord's Supper and Contribution

#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop

Sermon: "Remember the Poor"

Matthew 25:42-45

#915 Trust and Obey

#470 Victory in Jesus

Closing Prayer by: Chris Young

Welcome by: Bobby Rader

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Shannon Smith

#453 Love Lifted Me

#480 Blessed Assurance

Scripture Reading: Tristan Strickhausen

Prayer by: David Smith

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

Sermon: "The Parables of Jesus: Who is My Neighbor?"

Luke 10:30-36

#945 Kneel at the Cross

#851 I'll Fly Away

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

November 25, 2018

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Practical Atheism

A news story caught my eye last week. The United Church of Canada, the largest Protestant denomination in the country, reached a settlement in the pending heresy trial of one of their clergy, Gretta Vosper. The General Council of the church released a statement announcing that they had settled all issues with Vosper, and she was allowed to keep her pulpit.

Ordinarily, this sort of thing would hardly be worth noticing. In fact, you are probably wondering right now what the big deal is about the internal affairs of a religious group thousands of miles away.

It's significant because Vosper is an avowed atheist.

That's right. A United Church of Canada minister does not believe in God. But because the mainline denomination views inclusivity as one of its core principles, it has decided even someone without faith is welcome among them.

This is obviously an extreme case. But it is a good example of what happens when we subordinate Scripture, and the God revealed therein, to ever-shifting contemporary cultural norms. We make ourselves into gods and substitute our own reason for the wisdom of God. And that spirit is exhibited in less radical ways much closer to home.

As Christians, we cannot simply discard the bits and pieces of our faith we find unpalatable to our modern (or postmodern) sensibilities, even if we would not go so far as to jettison God completely. Some, even among professing Christians, argue that it doesn't matter if we find the Bible objectively reliable; for them, the Bible is not the word of God, but it contains the word of God. The fundamental principles of Christianity are in the Sermon on Mount and other teachings of Jesus. The important thing is to take those – well, some of them, anyway – and try to be a good person, whether you believe much of anything about Jesus or God or not.

That argument might work for some religions. But it can be applied to Christianity really only if we ignore its essence. Christianity isn't primarily a code of ethics or a philosophical system. It is first and foremost the gospel – the good news that God entered history in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, all of Biblical religion is about a God who acts, objectively, in history. Not a philosophical abstraction, an unmoved mover, a universal consciousness that exists in every living thing, but the great I Am who called Abraham, delivered Israel, and spoke through the prophets.

Our Sick

Tim Watts, Lois Watts' grandson, has been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, Nov. 26th at 7pm.

We will have a **Houston Food Bank truck** Tuesday, Dec. 4th at 8:00 am.

Movie Night on Saturday, Dec. 8th. More information to follow.

If you are interested in helping in the nursery next year, please let the office know. A new schedule will be coming out in December.

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.

<u>Elders</u>	<u>Deacons</u>	<u>Minister</u>
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bob Parker	Danny Balch	
Bobby Rader	Shannon Smith	
Don Taylor	Phillip Strickhausen	
Robert Ward		

Communion Preparation: Lori David
Nursery Attendants: Marsha Rader

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Dec. 2nd: Patti Davis
Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Dec. 2nd: Pat Hobbs

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The Bible explicitly claims to be the Word of God. As Paul puts it in **2 Timothy 3:16**, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God*. The word translated inspiration is the Greek *theopneustos*; it literally means "God-breathed." Paul doesn't mean the Scriptures are inspired in the same way we might talk about a song or a poem. No – Scripture is a divine product of God's creative activity.

Then there is the frequent introductory phrase in the OT, *Thus says the Lord...* That formula literally appears hundreds of times. When the prophets use it, they are claiming to be messengers from God, that the very words they speak are the decrees of God. Further, God is often said to speak "through" the prophet. When a prophet speaks in God's name, that is God speaking. To disbelieve in what the prophet says is, then, to disbelieve God.

We find the same principle in the NT, not only in **2 Timothy 3:16**, but in passages like **2 Peter 1:21**: *No prophecy was every produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*. Peter is not denying human personality in Scripture – men spoke. But the decision of what to write was God's, not theirs. Paul claims that what he preached was not from men, but the word of God (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**). He wrote what he claimed was a command of the Lord (**1 Cor 14:37**).

We could continue in this vein, but the upshot of this is that the Bible claims to be authoritative from beginning to end – it is the word of God. Just here, some will object that using Scripture to prove itself as God's word is a circular argument: we believe the Bible is the word of God because the Bible tells us so, and we know we can trust the Bible because it is the word of God. Stated that way, it IS a circular argument. But we can believe those claims because the Bible demonstrates credibility across the spectrum: in history, in prophecy, in its unity. Space forbids an examination here, and I imagine I do not need to convince you of the reliability of Scripture. But the point is, if we can trust it generally, we should take seriously its claims to be authoritative instead of merely dismissing them.

And if the Bible is the very word of God, we are on very dangerous ground when we set it aside, in full or in part, because it does not fit in our enlightened society. We might not claim to be atheists in doing so. But we might as well.

Bryant Perkins

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

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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.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Bill Lunceford, Eric Davis, J. P. Williams, Mark Wilcox, Dayla Hale, Phillip Cottle, Ann Rogers

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

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