

## TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Shannon Smith

#587 Sing and Be Happy

#878 Sweet By & By

Scripture Reading by: Cameron Cantu

#574 Oh, How I Love Jesus

**Lord's Supper and Contribution**

#753 Farther Along

**Sermon: "Why, God?"**

**Job 7:17-20**

#945 Kneel at the Cross

#535 The Glory-Land Way

Closing Prayer by: Walden David

Welcome by: Don Taylor

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#469 Faith Is the Victory

#586 May Faith Looks Up to Thee

Scripture Reading: Parker Balch

Prayer by: Phillip Strickhausen

#528 I Know That My Redeemer Lives

#452 Standing on the Promises

**Sermon: "One Word"**

**John 1:1-5**

#538 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

#537 Here We Are But Straying Pilgrims

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

January 6, 2019

## ***“Stand Firm in...Liberty”***

Galatians 5:1

### **Refresher Course**

In AD 64, a great fire engulfed the city of Rome. It burned unchecked for nearly a week, driving innumerable people from their homes and devastating a vast swath of the city. Of the 14 districts of Rome, 3 were virtually destroyed, and a further 7 were reduced to a handful of scorched ruins. Only 4 completely escaped damage.

In the aftermath, a rumor started that Nero, the emperor, had started the fire to clear land for his massive new palace. (This legend has passed into English idiom when we speak of someone “fiddling while Rome burns,” which Nero supposedly did.) Nero almost certainly was not responsible. Nevertheless, the rumor persisted; he had to do something to quell it. So he settled on a scapegoat. “To destroy this rumor Nero supplied as perpetrators, and executed with elaborate punishments, people popularly called Christians hated for their perversions.” (Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44) Tacitus describes those punishments:

Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. (Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44)

Rome obviously became an extremely dangerous place for Christians. During this persecution, the apostle Paul was somehow arrested again and held in prison in Rome. This time he would not be released; he would be executed. Try to visualize him there, and let's imagine a day in his life. Paul is usually a very cheerful soul, even in such dire circumstances. The guards have likely heard his songs in the night again and again. They have heard Paul urge others to rejoice in the Lord. But, this morning, the old preacher seems depressed. It is no wonder, with death staring him in the face. Winter is coming and he has no cloak. The ungrateful Demas has deserted him.

Suddenly, his thoughts are interrupted by the arrival of a visitor. It is Onesiphorus. This is not his first visit to Paul, and Paul is certainly glad to see him. They greet each other warmly. By the time he leaves, Paul's whole mood has changed. He is no longer holding his face in his hands. There is a new light in his eyes and a new spring in his step. He is even singing softly to himself.

Our Sick

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

**Joe Edd Stifflemire** had a heart catheterization last week.

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

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

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

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, Deacons, Minister** meeting Monday at 7:00pm.

Deacons meet today at 4:45pm.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Jan. 8th at 8:00 am.

We will be working through the book "One Word" together starting this evening. This is a daily devotional book, and our Sunday evening lessons will relate to it. If you are interested in participating in this program, please pick up a book from the office. One free book per household; additional books may be purchased for \$5/each.

<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: Pat Hobbs  
Nursery Attendants: Debra Faneros

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>: Judy Jones  
Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>: Marsha Rader, Lynette Ward

**continued from front page**

The details are imaginary, but we know that something like this occurred. Paul tells Timothy that Onesiphorus *often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me (2 Tim 1:16-17)*. We don't know what was said on those visits. They may have talked about the weather. They may have discussed the future of the young Church. They may have prayed together. But whatever the nature of their conversation, it brought Paul new courage and fresh hope.

This is not a description of one single visit from this man, as we imagined. It is a picture of the kind of visit he was constantly making. And Paul alluded to service he rendered in Ephesus as well (v. 18). We can also safely say that what this man did for Paul, he did for others too. He was a man who refreshed people. How he earned his living, we are not told. Whatever his occupation, his real vocation was being refreshing. He brought courage to the cheerless and depressed.

In refreshing others, Onesiphorus chose the same vocation as Jesus. Remember, Jesus said in his invitation, *Come and I will give you rest*. That is to say, "I will refresh you." Jesus brings cheer to the cheerless and light in the darkness. Jesus refreshes those who respond to that invitation.

We need those who refresh us. Paul was a man of tremendous courage and great faith. He himself had refreshed and cheered others in his ministry. Yet, even Paul needed the refreshing ministry of Onesiphorus. If someone like Paul needed a visit from one who refreshed, it is no wonder ordinary people like us need it! There are so many who are discouraged. There are so many who are baffled and defeated. There are so many finding more tears than laughter. There are so many who are lonely. There are so many who are dead tired and ready to faint. No one is more greatly needed than someone who can change our hopelessness into expectancy and our self-contempt into self-respect. I have no idea what Onesiphorus said to Paul on those visits. But the mere fact that he was there showed that he cared. That real sympathy is always refreshing to those with burdened hearts. There are times when we all need it.

Onesiphorus refreshed Paul simply by being a brother in Christ. We can do that too. When we drink at the fountain of Living Water, Jesus Christ, we can then refresh others with a Christlike spirit. May we all resolve to be more like our Lord – and like Onesiphorus.

**"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

**Bryant Perkins**