

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Michael Simmons

#121 Come Let Us All Unite to Sing

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah!

#286 Wonderful Story of Love

#387 Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Medley

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch

#349 Ten Thousand Angels

Lord's Supper and Contribution

#759 Shall We Gather at the River

Sermon: "Passing the Test"

2 Corinthians 13:5

#852 When the Rolls Is Called Up Yonder

#875 Home of the Soul

Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Welcome by: Daniel Balch

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Michael Simmons

#570 A Beautiful Life

#786 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Scripture Reading: Rock Cary

Opening Prayer: Robert Ward

#122 The Love of God

Sermon: "One Word: Faith"

Romans 4:18-22

#549 There is Sunshine In My Soul

#452 Standing on the Promises

Closing Prayer by: Kelly McCain

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

Aug. 4, 2019

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

Renaissance, Reformation, and Restoration

The Renaissance

When we divide world history into discrete periods – realizing, of course, that nothing in reality is ever as neat and tidy as it appears in a textbook – the ebb of learning that characterized much of the Middle Ages is followed by the Renaissance (c. 1300-1517). The dependence on institutional authority that defined much of medieval life for common people – not least in the church – was rejected for an individualism manifested primarily as faith in the abilities of humanity. The Humanists, as they called themselves, felt that knowledge had been corrupted and looked back to the wisdom of antiquity for guidance: they learned ancient languages and studied subjects in the original texts. From back in our school days, we are probably most familiar with the Italian Humanists and their obsession with pagan Greece and Rome. But in northern Europe, Humanism took another form. A Christian form.

We can think of this Christian Humanism as a sort of “Restoration Movement.” These thinkers were not so concerned with wisdom in general, but with Christianity; they did not seek wisdom in the works of Plato and Cicero, but in Scripture and the Church Fathers. The most important of these was **Erasmus** (1466-1536), who produced a text of the Greek NT that was invaluable for study. They also endeavored to restore the piety of the early church, pointing people away from the irrelevant debates of the clergy to Scripture. Erasmus encouraged people to look to the Bible, which he called *the hidden storehouse of everlasting wisdom*, to recover the forgotten *philosophy of Christ*. The Church, resistant to change, ironically attacked this “new” teaching. But Erasmus said they were confused, calling “new” what was oldest of all, and “old” what was really new. They should look instead to what was truly old: Jesus, the Apostles, and the Church Fathers.

With that said, we should not suppose that the Humanists necessarily favored restoring the early church. Their concern was primarily with the spiritual and ethical life of the earliest Christians rather than their forms. But they did lay a foundation for those who would seek restoration in their insistence that the ancient faith was normative. That perspective came to dominate European universities and influenced a new generation to go further.

The Reformation

We sometimes think of the Protestant Reformation as a unified movement, but there were actually 4 main streams, and not all influenced churches of Christ equally. One thing they all had in common was an emphasis on the authority of the Bible, like their Humanist predecessors. This was one of the principles declared by **Martin Luther** (1483-1546): *sola scriptura*, “Scripture alone.” What

Our Sick

Bill Lunceford is in Magnolia Place Health Care for rehab.

Randy Snell, a friend of Danny Balch's is having health problems.

Nancy Hempel will be having eye surgery.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Eric Davis, Dayla Hale, Minny Owen, Doris Trahan, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Phillip Cottle, J. P. Williams

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Dr. Ronald Davis, Larry Hicks, Mark Wilcox

Our Missionaries

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

Sunny Glen Children's Home

We are collecting 200 boxes of macaroni and cheese for Sunny Glen Children's Home. A barrel has been placed in the foyer. We have collected 104 boxes.

Upcoming Activities

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

Deacons meet today at 4:45 pm.

We will be having a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Aug. 6th at 8:00 am.

Primetimers will be going to El Toro in Baytown on Tuesday, Aug. 13th at 5:15 pm. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. The September event will be another Bunco night. More information to come.

Back to School Get Together

The Perkins will be having a back to school get together from grades 6th-college on Saturday, Aug. 10th at 5pm at their house. Boys bring chips, girls bring desserts. See Abbey Perkins for more information.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Vanessa Simmons and her family on the death of her cousin, Tiss Jackson. The funeral was Saturday.

Privilege to Serve Sunday, Aug. 4th

Communion Preparation: Tania Balch

Nursery Attendants: Tania Balch, Pat Hobbs

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Aug. 11th: Jane Tinkle, Rita Upton

Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Aug. 11th: Dani Brister

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was new about this was not so much a recognition of Scripture as authoritative, but the rejection of church tradition, which had come to take precedence. Luther's statement when tried for his views at the Diet of Worms in 1521 is characteristic: *Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the Word of God.*

That cry, "Scripture alone," was a central principle of the Reformation. The problem the Reformers soon discovered was, what does that mean in practice? We can see the way this played out between the Lutheran and the Reformed branches of the movement. The Lutheran approach was "reformation": purify the institutional church, reject its abuses, but preserve what is good. The Reformed attitude could be rightly called "restoration": restore the essence and form of the primitive church based on biblical precedent without regard for tradition. Each of these believed in "Scripture alone" but applied that very differently. Our roots, as you might have guessed, come primarily through the Reformed tradition.

Not surprisingly, these tended to be the most molded by Humanism. The Swiss Reformer **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484-1531), for instance, was very influenced by Erasmus: he made a copy of his Greek NT to carry with him and study wherever he went, read the Fathers, and even learned Hebrew! He came to believe that Scripture must be the standard for all matters in the church, an impulse alien to Erasmus or even Luther. Zwingli thus introduced reforms in Zurich based on emphasizing biblical precedent: the cathedral was stripped of its statues, relics, and pictures; the organ was destroyed (he even went further and forbade singing!); the Mass was reduced to a simple memorial meal. In all of this, the goal was the recovery of primitive worship.

What can we say about the influence of the Renaissance Humanists and, subsequently, the Reformation on us? The stress on Scripture, the rejection of tradition, the insistence on individual Bible study are all legacies of the Reformed branch in particular. We often reject the Protestant label, insisting we are "Christians only," but we are shaped by this heritage whether we realize it or not. While we would, no doubt, disagree with many of the particular views of these men, we are indebted to them for their willingness to break with the established church at great personal risk and ask instead, "what saith the Lord?"

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

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