

TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman  
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#753 Farther Along  
#742 When Upon Life’s Billows

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch  
#701 My Jesus I Love Thee

Communion Devotional by: Daniel Balch  
Lord’s Supper and Contribution

#869 We’re Marching to Zion  
Sermon: Guest Speaker: Matt Perkins

#915 Trust and Obey  
#878 Sweet By & By  
Closing Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will not meet today.  
Don Taylor’s group will meet at the building next  
Sunday, May 21st at 5:00 p.m.. If you have  
signed up and not been contacted, get with Bryant  
or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship  
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

May 14, 2023

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

Fear Not

For several weeks now, we have talked in this space about the daily problems we face. As we draw this series to a close, let’s discuss something we all contend with regularly: fear. In the face of fear, God says *fear not*. Did you know that God says that more than anything else in all the Bible? When Abram had come to the Promised Land at God’s direction and prospered greatly, but had had no child, we find God saying “*Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.*” (Gen.15:1). He said it to Isaac: “*Fear not, for I am with you.*” (Gen. 26:24). A generation later, when Jacob was in a quandary about what to do about the invitation to move into Egypt, we find God using the familiar words again, “*Fear not to go down into Egypt.*” (Gen. 46:3).

We hear it from Genesis to Revelation, from Abraham down to John on Patmos. It is spoken by the prophets, by the apostles, by Jesus himself. It is a message given to Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, and Israel as a whole. It was told to Mary, Simon, Paul, and the women at the empty tomb. It was spoken under all kinds of conditions and circumstances. And it is the word God continues to speak to us today: *fear not*.

Scripture talks about fear in two senses. One type is positive, even commanded: this is the fear that involves respect, honor, reverence, awe. Thus, we are told to fear God repeatedly (e.g., Pro 1:7, Job 28:28, Ecc 12:13). But fear in the normal sense—terror, anxiety, dread—is forbidden. *Fear not, little flock!* (Lk 12:32) We ought not to confuse this type of fear with caution: fear of getting run over will cause you to look both ways before you cross the street, for instance. Prudence is good; fear is not. We know the difference.

Fear operates in a number of areas in our lives. We fear failure. That’s what caused the one talent man to do nothing (Mt 25:25). But God promises our labor is not in vain! (1 Cor 15:58) Our responsibility is to do our best according to our ability, and to leave the results in the hands of God. How many of us are so afraid that we never try?

We fear insecurity. Jesus taught against that at length in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:24-34). God has always provided for his people, and he still will. Closely related to that, we fear the future, because it is uncertain and unknown. This has kept many churches from doing more work for Christ, preventing them from undertaking new missions, programs, or growing; that sort of fear is the opposite of the faith we should have.

We fear what other people say and think about us or do to us. That often makes us do wrong: think about Peter denying Jesus because of fear for his life. Indeed, *the fear of man lays a snare* (Proverbs 29:25). Instead, we need to be motivated by fear of the Lord.

# Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

## Our Sick

**Kelly McCain** is in the VA Hospital in Egypt, TX.

## Continued Prayers

### (Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka’Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stiflemire, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthia Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen

## Shut Ins

### (Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

## Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

## Upcoming Activities

**Elders, Minister** meet Monday, May 15th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, May 18th at 8:00 a.m.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Zach and Lacey Arthur on the birth of their son Hudson. He was born Monday, May 1st.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Joseph Girard and Matthew Girard. They both received an associate degree from Lee College.

<u>Elders</u>	<u>Deacons</u>	<u>Minister</u>
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

We fear old age. This is perhaps more true in our society than ever before. Scripture teaches honor and glory are attached to old age—we touched on this Wednesday evening, with the association between gaining years and wisdom—while we worship youth in contemporary culture. But God calls the mature to special duties! The older men and women are to teach the younger (**Titus 2:1-5**). The very term “elder” for the leaders in the local church implies the wisdom and experience lacking in those younger. We fear it, but God values the aged in his church. And we fear old age ultimately because we fear death. But death is inevitable. As Christians, we remember there will be a resurrection (**1 Cor 15**).

Fear is commonplace, in these and other areas, and it has terrible effects. It can warp our personality, making life miserable; think about the last days of Saul, living in constant dread of the Philistines (**1 Sam 28**). Fear can prevent us from doing God’s will, causing us to rationalize our way out of obedience; that’s precisely what Moses did in **Exodus 3-4**, making excuses for why he was not the right man to lead Israel. How often have we heard people say those same sorts of things? I’m afraid of what others will say, so I can’t become a Christian; I’m afraid I don’t know enough, so I can’t evangelize; I’m afraid someone will call me a fanatic. And it not only causes sins of omission, but commission: how many “thou shalt nots” are broken over fear of ridicule? Fear spreads and is contagious; the faithless 10 of the 12 spies sent into Canaan persuaded Israel to not take the Promised Land. Fear ultimately will cause a person to be lost, as the aforementioned one talent man learned (**Matt 25:25, 30**).

Knowing that fear is both commonplace and disastrous in its consequences, how can we overcome it? Remember first of all that fear is strictly prohibited. In fact, fear is characteristic of the wicked (**Pro 28:1**). We mentioned above how God says *fear not* more than anything else: it actually appears nearly 180 times in Scripture. To fear is to disobey God! I know that won’t eliminate the visceral reaction, but it might help us to realize how serious this is.

Secondly, work at living one day at a time, as Jesus talks about (**Mt 6:34**). Most of our fears either relate to the past or the future: we cannot change the past, and most of the things we fear in the future never happen. One study found that fully 85% of the things we stress over never come to pass.

Above all, we must put our trust in God. Faith is the enemy of fear. Remember that God is our Father, as Jesus teaches; Jesus compares him to a human father, but shows that he is better in every way. If we had a good relationship with our natural father, we have all experienced him calming our fears at some point; now realize that God will do that same thing, only better. Never forget that we are in his presence, that he is near to us: *Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”* (**Is 35:4**) God is accessible, and he will fight for us. *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?* (**Ps 118:6**) *If God be for us, who can be against us?* (**Rom 8:31**) We should, then, access him in prayer. We mentioned above how, because of fear, Peter denied Jesus. But just a few weeks later, on Pentecost, he stood up and boldly proclaimed Christ. What was the difference? He spent time in the upper room in prayer (**Acts 1**).

Jesus puts the same question to us that he put to the disciples caught in the storm on the Sea of Galilee: *Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?* (**Mk 4:40**). Rest assured, he can calm the storm. Fear not.

**Bryant Perkins**

## ***“Stand Firm in...Liberty”***

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