

## TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward  
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#895 I’ll Live in Glory  
#874 Walking Alone at Eve

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary  
#350 When My Love to Christ Grows Weak  
#383 Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

Communion Devotional by: Jerry Mallernee  
**Lord’s Supper and Contribution**

#882 No Tears in Heaven  
**Sermon: “Faith Is Dependent”**  
**James 4:13-17**

#904 Have You Been to Jesus?  
#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop  
Closing Prayer by: Gus Tristan

### Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet today.  
Don Taylor’s group will meet at the building to-  
day at 5:00 p.m.

### **Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth**

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

May 21, 2023

## “Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

### Living Abundantly

Inspired by the practical wisdom found in James, we have written about some of our common everyday problems for about three months now. Let’s draw some of the threads together from those previous articles to tie a bow around this series: what are some basic, general principles to help guide us in life?

In **John 10:10**, Jesus states part of his purpose in coming: *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly*. Everyone is looking for that abundant life in one way or another, searching for the secret to success, contentment, fulfillment in life. And there are some solutions that are commonly offered.

Most people want to live a long life. But the art of living isn’t necessarily found in length of days. This sounds like one of those trivia questions Bobby asks on the Facebook prayers: who was the oldest man ever? Methuselah. He lived 969 years (**Gen 5:27**) But do you know anything else about him? As far as we know, he never accomplished one worthwhile thing.

Successful living isn’t dependent on secular knowledge. I think education is vitally important. But Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, exclaimed, *For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow* (**Ecc 1:18**). If you remember the end of the book, after searching for knowledge in every worldly avenue imaginable, he concluded that to *fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man*. A knowledge that forgets God is useless.

The secret to life isn’t in the accumulation of wealth. *Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.* (**Lk 12:15**). Our society is obsessed with keeping up with the Joneses. But as we all know, you can be a financial success and be completely and totally miserable.

Our success in life depends on centering it. Rear Admiral Richard Byrd was a pioneer in aviation and polar exploration. On his first expedition to the South Pole, he left his hut one day when a sudden blizzard caused him to become totally lost. The whiteout conditions were so disorienting that if he were to strike out blindly, he might freeze even a few feet from his hut. He carried a long pole to locate holes in the ice; he stuck that in the snow and tied a scarf to it. “That was my center,” he later wrote. “If I failed to find my hut, I could return to the center and try again.” It took him four tries, but he eventually succeeded.

Every life needs that central reference point. If we really want to live abundantly, we will find it in Christ. He is *the way, the truth, and the life*. What are some practical principles that work out from the center?

# Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

## Our Sick

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

Brooke Ann Smith, Gloria McKelroy's granddaughter, is having pregnancy complications.

## 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 22nd 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 Tuesday, June 6th at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be meeting at Tuscany in Dayton on Tuesday, June 6th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

## Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to David Warren and his family on the death of his sister Delores Hanks. She passed away last week.

## Food Bank

We served 119 families on Thursday, May 18th at our food bank. That equals to about 310 persons. We had 20 volunteers.

**1. Living abundantly requires hope.** In Scripture, that is not just wishful thinking, as we commonly use it, but confident expectation. It is rooted in the promises of God: we know that he keeps his promises! The same word translated *hope* in Hebrew is the word for *wait*; the difference has to do with expectation. In hope, we are waiting with anticipation that God will act. It is an optimistic outlook, and Christians should be the most optimistic people in the world! Just think of some of the great passages that remind us why. *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (Phil 4:13). If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31) I will fear no evil, for you are with me (Ps 23:4).* God is with us; we should trust in his power and presence. I cannot think of any better reason to be hopeful and optimistic.

**2. Living abundantly avoids faultfinding.** We will be hesitant to criticize others. We must be characterized by humility, conscious of our own imperfections and more sympathetic towards others. *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Gal 6:1).* In fact, we often condemn ourselves through criticizing others. *For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things (Rom 2:1)* Criticizing others might make us feel bigger or cleaner—but at what price? It kills relationships. It repels people. And, ultimately, it brings our own condemnation.

**3. Living abundantly includes compassion.** We need to sympathize with others. That includes being moved to minister to their needs, of course, but also to see things from their point of view. Try to put ourselves in their shoes. Compassion, in that sense, is rooted in the incarnation: Jesus entered this world and took on human form, identifying with us, experiencing the same things we do physically, mentally, emotionally. God in the flesh put himself in our shoes. If we would emulate him, we will do that with others. That means that we will give people the benefit of the doubt. And closely related...

**4. Living abundantly involves humility.** We must be able to admit we were wrong. In theory, that is not be difficult; it is, after all, the same as saying you're wiser now than you were before. And yet we are so reluctant to do it. But some of the greatest heroes of Scripture made mistakes: Moses struck the rock and took credit for himself, Peter denied the Lord, Saul wreaked havoc on the church. Why should we be any different? The confession of guilt and sin is a necessary quality of the Christian life **(James 5:16)**. We should try to avoid mistakes in the first place, but when they inevitably come, own up to them. And when they do come...

**5. Living abundantly entails forgiveness.** *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you (Eph 4:32).* We cannot receive it unless we are willing to give it **(Mt 6:15)**.

**6. Living abundantly means living courageously.** As we saw last week, fear is one of the greatest enemies of the abundant life, and it is ubiquitous: we fear disease, economic hardship, societal turmoil, death, on and on. But fear is overcome by faith, hope, and love **(1 Cor 13:13)**. Faith is trust in God. Hope, as noted above, is the confident expectation that he will act. And our love for him, for others, and knowledge of his love for us is what binds this together. *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18).* Be of good courage, friends. We may get beat up in life. But through him, we will live on. And we will thrive.

*Bryant Perkins*

## ***"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