

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~Matthew 16:18



October 20, 2019

Contact Us:

3201 4th Street
Brownwood, TX 76801

325-646-7102

www.4thstreetcoc.org
office@4thstreetcoc.org

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

John Barnum

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
World Bible School

Liberalism? No Thank You

In one sense, Christians are to be defined by their liberal qualities. We should be liberal in our contribution to the Lord's work (2 Cor. 9:6-7); we should be liberal in the amount of patience we extend one another (Eph. 4:2); we should be liberal in the number of prayers we offer (1 Thess. 5:17); we should be liberal in our encouragement of one another (Gal. 6:2; Heb. 10:24-25). *Merriam-Webster* defines *liberal* in the context we have just used: marked by generosity, openhanded, given or provided in a generous way, ample, full.

In another sense, however, Christians shouldn't touch liberalism with a 10-foot pole. **We may define this kind of liberalism as the movement in modern Christendom to liberate oneself (and the church) from the authority of the inerrant, infallible, and "once for all delivered" Word of God (cf. Jude 3).**

Liberalism as a Movement

Gary Dorrien, in his excellent volume *The Making of American Liberal Theology* (1805-1900), defines liberalism as "**the idea that Christian theology can be genuinely Christian without being based upon external authority** [i.e., the Bible]. Since the 18th century, liberal Christian thinkers have argued that religion should be modern and progressive and that the meaning of Christianity *should be interpreted from the standpoint of modern knowledge and experience.*" In other words, the *Bible* shouldn't have the last word—*modern human wisdom, contemporary ethics, and the most recent scientific theory* should. Dorrien explains that liberalism regards "many traditional beliefs as dispensable, invalidated by modern thought, or liable to change." **Liberalism, by design, is structured to produce a religion that is fluid.**

While there is nothing new under the sun, today's theological liberalism did not become a widespread religious movement until the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Dorrien observes that up until the 19th century, nearly all religious groups "took for granted the view of Scripture as an infallible revelation and the view of theology as an explication of propositional revelation." However, the Age of Enlightenment and the subsequent Industrial Revolution ushered in not only an explosion of scientific advances but also several infamous theories. Most notable was Darwin's theory of evolution, which came onto the scene in the 1850s, and the Big Bang theory of the universe's origin, which was proposed in the 1920s. Atheism and agnosticism were on the rise as people started leaving Christendom as they knew it. Modernism lends itself to humanism, which convinces people to stop relying on the law of God and to begin trusting in man-made technology and philosophy to fix our human predicament.

Dorrien observes that theological liberalism was the attempt to provide an alternative, or "third way," between two supposed extremes. On one extreme was traditional, orthodox Christianity; the other extreme was atheism and humanism. **Thus, liberalism was a sort of pseudo-Christianity that exchanged the rigid authority of the Bible for the more flexible authority of modern science and philosophy.**

From the beginning of the movement, liberalism was fundamentally a distortion of the Bible's inspiration. William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), an early Unitarian preacher and pioneer of modern theological liberalism, very cleverly made a distinction between Scripture being the verbally, inspired revelation of God and Scripture being a mere record of God's revelation to ancient cultures. Do you see the subtle distinction? Karl Barth (1886-1968) would later fine-tune this theory, arguing that "the Bible is God's Word to the extent that God causes it to be His Word, to the extent that He speaks through it." Adam Hamilton, a well known Methodist preacher and influence today, teaches that "the Bible is the timeless, inspired word from God found *within* the writings and reflections of very human authors." Notice that the **common thread running through the history of modern liberalism is this redefinition of the Bible. The exact words of Scripture don't necessarily matter—it's the general thoughts of Scripture, interpreted through the lens of contemporary ethics, that should be our guide.**

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Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

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Today’s “scientific community” largely denies the supernatural. **In response, the purest form of theological liberalism argues that the miracles of the Bible didn’t occur in reality—they were nothing more than moralistic stories or allegories written to convey a deeper truth.** Purebred liberals view Biblical accounts like the “young earth,” prophecies, and the resurrection of Jesus as myths—mere virtuous lessons recorded by primitive man. George Burman Foster (1858-1918), a leading early liberal among the Baptist denomination, wrote that any educated person “who now affirms his faith in such stories as actual facts can hardly know what intellectual honesty means.”

Today’s ethics denies the morality of the substitutionary atonement of Jesus. William Channing believed the Biblical teaching that “Christ had to die to appease the wrath of God for sin and pay off the debt of sinners was simply horrible.” Human wisdom is offended by the notion that sins are against an infinitely holy God, thus requiring an eternal punishment in Hell (eternal punishment being a concept the purest of theological liberals flatly reject). Add to this the notion that only God the Son could adequately pay the debt of our sins with His blood, and liberals find the substitutionary atonement of Jesus “pernicious, unscriptural, and absurd.”

The Humanism of Liberalism

Patrick Deneen, in his excellent book *Why Liberalism Failed*, notes that secular liberalism is the belief in humanity’s “ability of self-correction and its belief in progress and continual improvement.” Deneen continues, “No matter our contemporary malady, there is no challenge that can’t be fixed by a more perfect application of liberal solutions.” Thus, secular liberals believe that human ethical values will always improve over time, just as technological advances seem to improve over time.

When you apply this *secular* liberalism to *theological* liberalism, we find Biblical morality bowing to contemporary ethics. **According to modern liberalism, what God’s Word clearly says about gender roles, homosexuality, marriage, or any other ethical category, was only relevant only to the ancient culture in which it was originally written.** Because liberals argue that human ethical values have improved over time, thus what is written years ago in Scripture is now antiquated. **We no longer need God’s guidance as it was originally communicated—we’ll take it from here. Theological liberals believe it is their job to see past the exact words of Scripture (since the words are no longer relevant) to find the timeless truths hidden underneath.**

Thus, **modern liberalism is ultimately humanism disguised as Christianity.** It speaks in religious ways, but it is far from the Christianity of the Bible. Full-fledged liberals today deny that the universe was created in a week’s time and that mankind was

created on the literal sixth day. They deny the virgin birth, the miracles, and the resurrection. And because they deny the precise words of Scripture, they deny the timelessness and relevance of how the Bible presently reads. For example, contemporary society finds what the Bible clearly teaches about gender roles, homosexuality, marriage, and the sanctity of human life as offensive. In lockstep, the most liberal denominations (e.g. United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal church, etc.) also reject God’s Word on these matters.

It Is Not Within Man

Louis Baker’s 2019 hit “The People,” contains a lyric which is representative of liberalism today: “We are the problem; we are the solution.” Those who fear God, however, understand things much differently. *We are* the problem (we sinned against God, and the human predicament is a consequence of our sin), but *we are most definitely not the solution.* Our wisdom is what got us into this mess, and it can’t get us out. Jeremiah wrote, “it is not in man who walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). **Human wisdom is inherently flawed.** We are bound by time, easily influenced by our surroundings, susceptible to our passions, handicapped by our limited knowledge, and marred by sin. God is not limited by any of these things; He is infinite in every dimension (time, space, knowledge, and holiness). God’s ways are flawless; He is always good; He never makes a mistake; He never forgets a promise. He tells us, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). Thus, **the only safe way is God’s way.** “Uphold my steps in Your paths, that my footsteps may not slip” (Psa. 17:5, NKJV).

What is Faith?

Christians “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Neither human ethics, cultural morality, or popular science are our standard. (We are not “anti-science.” We of all people love science! Natural revelation is from God, too. Science and the Bible never contradict one another. We simply recognize there are limitations to what humans can observe in and conclude from nature.) Instead, faith only has one source—God’s Word (Rom. 10:17). We are to live by “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). So closely is faith tied with Scripture that sometimes the entirety of the gospel message is referred to as “the faith” (Jude 3). Every example of apostasy in the New Testament was a result of straying from inerrant Word of God (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:8; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:3-5). **And the solution to apostasy was not to start listening to the intelligentsia of society, but to simply return to God’s verbal revelation (Phil. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13).** God’s faithful understand that His word does not change. The Bible is inerrant, infallible, and as such has verbal, plenary inspiration.

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Television

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)
Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB
Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)
Sunday @ 10:00am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)
Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org
Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God’s Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).
Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)
Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)
Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)
Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

video.wvbs.org/access/interactive-bible-reading-plan/

Oct. 20 Proverbs 13—15
Oct. 21 Proverbs 16—18
Oct. 22 Proverbs 19—21
Oct. 23 Proverbs 22—24
Oct. 24 Proverbs 25—27
Oct. 25 Proverbs 28—31
Oct. 26 Ecclesiastes 1—5
Oct. 27 Ecclesiastes 6—12

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

(2 Timothy 2:15)



Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Last week **46** contacts were made.

Announcements

- ◆ There were 53 ladies present yesterday for our **Ladies Day**, representing 15 congregations. 19 of our ladies participated. I hear that Denise Surles had an excellent lesson. Thank you to Tammie Ross for coordinating this year, and to all the ladies for making it a success!
- ◆ Our **Gospel Meeting** begins next Sunday!
 - There is a sign-up sheet on the table to host Bryan for lunch.
 - Fellowship Meal at noon Sunday.
 - We will need snacks for Monday and Tuesday evenings.

Upcoming Special Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ Oct. 27-30—Fall Gospel Meeting w/ Bryan Braswell. “*Evangelism in Word and Deed*”

Other Upcoming Opportunities to Learn and Grow

- ◆ Nov. 10-13—Annual Schertz Lectures. “*Studies in Genesis*”

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God is never illogical or unreasonable. At the same time, He does not owe us an explanation for all of His commands. God didn't explain why He wanted Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (Heb. 11:17). God didn't consult Habakkuk's opinion about how He should punish Judah (Hab. 1:5) There's no evidence that Job ever understood why he had to suffer. **We don't have to fully understand why God says what He says and does what He says. We just have to trust Him. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psa. 46:10).**

“We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). **God's Word is what illuminates our path (Psa. 119:105), not our own wisdom and pragmatism. We trust God more than we trust ourselves. Liberalism, then, is the antithesis of faith.** If the majority of scientists believe in the theory of evolution, the Bible as it reads must be wrong. If the majority of society believes homosexuality should be celebrated and that gender is only a social construct, then the Bible as it reads must be wrong. If society views a distinction in gender roles as oppressive and antiquated, both Jesus & Paul are now outdated. **Liberalism is the rejection that God's Word is both relevant and sufficient as it is presently written.** It is the idea that we must be *liberated* from the external authority of Scripture, and instead, find the freedom to do as we please—bound only by what seems right to us.

Conclusion

Along the way, a Christian may find that he holds a different opinion about something than another Christian. This doesn't have to be a cause for alarm. We can both (a) hold the Bible up as our only standard of faith, and (b) have personal judgments and scruples in areas the Bible may not address. For example, it isn't liberalism for someone to think you don't have to wear a suit and tie to worship. It isn't liberalism for someone to think it's okay to engage in fun, friendship-building activities as a church family (e.g., a candy-filled egg hunt after church service, a meal, or a community service project). It isn't liberalism to have refreshments during a Bible class or use a different [*relatively literally-translated*] Bible translation than you. Yes, we should use the right judgment in all matters. But differing matters of judgment aren't necessarily instances of liberalism—sometimes they are just matters of immaturity or lack of wisdom. **We should use the word *liberal* with great precision. Theological liberalism is an attitude toward the Bible—a predisposition in favor of popular psychology and modern values over God's pattern of morality and doctrine.**

What are we to do with the Bible? Does the Bible “thoroughly equip us” (2 Tim. 3:16-17) or does the Bible need to conform to culture? Should the church “preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2-5), or should we update the Bible to suit our felt needs? Who will have the last word?

Ben Giselbach (plainsimplefaith.com)

Celebrate

“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15)

October Birthdays: Lisa Greer (5), Matthew Churchwell (7), Jo Maninger (12), Hank Wheeler (13), Tina Barnum (14).

October Anniversaries: Rafe & Becky Smith (16), Mike & Patti Bannister (27).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Oct. 6, 2019	Oct. 13, 2019
Bible Class	44	46
AM Worship	49	48
PM Worship	33	29
Wednesday PM	29	41
Contribution	\$1,937	\$1,727

	This Week: 10/20/19	Next Week: 10/27/19		
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	<p>October 2019 Make Announcements: John Barnum Prepare Communion: Johnny & Cindy McCaghren Clean Building: Johnny & Cindy McCaghren</p> <p>November 2019 Make Announcements: James Fuller Prepare Communion: Tom & Carol Wilcox Clean Building: Dennis Family</p>	
Greeters	Mileen & Ashley Kahlich	John & Tina Barnum		
Opening Prayer	John Barnum	James Fuller		
Communion	Joe Dennis*, Caleb Dennis Ken Maninger, Chase Churchwell	Don Smith*, Keven Ross Vernon Zier, Randy Huckaby		
Closing Prayer	Randy Huckaby	John Barnum		
Attendance Cards	Aaron Smith	Ian Barnum		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: James Fuller	Song Leader: Ken Maninger		
Opening Prayer	Ryan Rudloff	Allen Griffith		
Scripture Reading	Vernon Zier	Tom Wilcox		
Communion	Joe Dennis	Don Smith		
Closing Prayer	Rafe Smith	Joe Dennis		
Wednesday Devotionals:	October 23 Don Smith	October 30 Gospel Meeting	November 6 Barry Hatcher	November 13 Joe Dennis

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of October 20, 2019

Sunday Class *1 Corinthians 7:12*
 Wed. Class *Servant Training: Leading Singing*

<u>False Views of Truth</u>	<u>Is Truth Attainable?</u>
<p>As Christians, what is our obligation to search out, discover, and obey truth? Is it acceptable to simply "agree to disagree" about Biblical truth? Consider the following false views of truth.</p> <p>I. It is a false view of truth to hold that it can be diluted with the addition of mere human doctrine and still be acceptable to God (Rev. 22:18).</p> <p>II. It is a false view of truth to hold that men can "take away from" it and the result still be acceptable to God (Rev. 22:19; Deut. 4:2; 12:32).</p> <p>III. It is a false view of truth to hold that man can pervert it and still be pleasing to God (Gal. 1:6-9).</p> <p>IV. It is a false view of truth to hold that it is not the exclusive means to salvation from sin.</p> <p>A. In a positive way, the Bible makes clear that those who both believe and obey the <i>truth</i> will be saved (Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Pet. 1:22; Jn. 8:32).</p> <p>B. In a negative way, the Bible makes clear that those who do not <i>believe</i> and <i>obey</i> the <i>gospel</i> will be condemned to everlasting punishment (Mk. 16:15-16; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:10-12).</p> <p>V. It is a false view of truth to hold that a teacher can teach anything else and still be pleasing to God. Jesus did not commission His disciples to teach merely some religious message.</p> <p>VI. It is a false view of truth to hold that it can rightly be regarded as true by one person and as false by another. Every precisely stated proposition is either true or false.</p> <p>VII. It is a false view of truth to hold that truth is unattainable (Jn. 8:32).</p> <p>VIII. It is a false view of truth to hold that there is a middle ground between truth and error (Lk. 11:23; Mt. 6:24).</p> <p>IX. It is a false view of truth to hold that men have the right to be wrong.</p> <p>X. It is a false view of truth to hold that it does not need to be defended (Jude 3; Phil. 1:17; 1 Pet. 3:15).</p> <p>XI. It is a false view of truth to hold that it has nothing to do with logic (1 Thess. 5:21).</p> <p>The only good reason why a religious doctrine should be accepted is that it is <i>true</i>! God has given us the truth. We can <i>learn</i> that truth. And we can <i>obey</i> it.</p>	<p>I. What Is Truth?</p> <p>A. Our Lord, before Pilate, stated He came into the world to "bear witness to the truth" (Jn. 18:37); Pilate then asked, "What is truth?" (v. 38).</p> <p>B. What is truth? The answer is God.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He is the <i>great Truth</i>, the <i>supreme Fact</i> in all the universe, the <i>great Reality</i>. 2. Jesus, God in the flesh, emphatically declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6). 3. The <i>Spirit of Truth</i> recorded the <i>law of truth</i> in the <i>Eternal Book of Truth</i>, the Bible! <p>II. Is Truth Attainable?</p> <p>A. Expressions such as "Who knows?" and "Can we be sure?" would indicate that perhaps the truth is not accessible.</p> <p>B. Five reasons for believing the whole truth of God is attainable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are told to "buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). 2. We are able to know the truth and this truth will make us free (Jn. 8:31-32). 3. Through obedience to the truth our souls are purified (1 Pet. 1:22). 4. Acceptable worship is possible only by abiding in the truth (Jn. 4:23-24). 5. The Lord's truth will continue with us forever (Ps. 117:1-2). <p>III. Are We Willing to Accept the Truth?</p> <p>A. Some would rather <i>change the Bible to fit man</i>, than <i>change man to fit the Bible</i>.</p> <p>B. <i>Reception of Truth Depends Upon Attitude Toward It</i> (Mt. 13:10-16; Jn. 7:17).</p> <p>C. <i>Proper Attitude Toward Truth</i>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is most important that we <i>believe</i> the truth (Jn. 8:45-46). 2. A proper attitude toward the Bible will cause us to <i>obey</i> it (1 Pet. 1:22). 3. Faith in the truth and obedience to it will lead us to <i>defend</i> it. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again, The eternal years of God are hers, But error, wounded, writhes in pain, And dies among his worshippers."</i></p>