

Family & Friends..... April 19, 2023

“How Great Thou Art”, a powerful hymn first written as a poem by Carl Boberg, a Swedish minister, in 1885 as “O Store Gud”. He was 26 and on a hike in the countryside when a terrible thunderstorm appeared and he took shelter in an abandoned farmhouse. There were loud claps of thunder, lighting flashing across the sky, and strong winds swept over the meadows and billowing fields of grain. It was soon over and the sun came out brilliantly and a rainbow appeared in the sky. He heard the calm sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted him to fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God and gave him the words he wrote. While working as a missionary in the Ukraine Stuart K. Hine took the Russian version of this hymn and wrote the original English lyrics and made his own arrangements and contributed heavily to the version of How Great Thou Art in 1949, that we are familiar with today. Thank You Lord, for your amazing creation and intervention in our world and lives! To God Be the Glory!

*Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders.
Glory in His holy name. Psalm 105:2&3*

Love our visitors: Jerry & Margo Bradley (Conway), Breland & Kristin Walker (Shreveport, LA), Ben Waldron (Owasso, OK), Sharilu Brown, Alyce Johanson (Centerton), Joe & Kristina Costello and Ricky Naron (Bentonville), Joyce Parks (BV), Mason & Ashley Sites and John & Andy, Christopher Taylor.

Those on our prayer list: Our deepest heartfelt sympathies go to Mike Lunsford in the loss of his sister, Debbie Vance. Please keep Mike & Vicki and the family in your prayers. Continue to remember Don Cope in the loss of his sister, Glenda Jones and The Lacey Family in the loss of Mike. Mark Bagwell’s mother, Dorothy, passed away on Monday. Sue Gartrell had Pace Maker surgery last week after being in AFib. Continue to remember and pray for Susan Duffy, Mike Harrington, Mike Hale, Chris McSweeny.

Care Group 15 is meeting at Cliff & Linda Wheelock home this Sunday after 10:30 services for lunch and devotional, April 23rd. Don’t forget!

Children’s Home List: Popcorn, BBQ sauce, paper plates, salad dressing, and trash bags. Food Pantry: Cereal, Mac & Cheese, peanut butter, jelly, canned spaghetti/pasta sauce.

God never sleeps. Stay safe, love you.

Karen

**Bella Vista
Church of Christ**

Highway 71 and County Road 40
989 NW McNelly Road
Bentonville, AR 72712

Return Service Requested

LORD’S DAY	8:15 AM
Early Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed)	10:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed)	
WEDNESDAY	9:45 AM
Ladies’ Class	7:00 PM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed)	

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ELDERS

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Don Butcher.....636-548-0458
Dallas Dobbs.....479-640-49439
Perry Johnson.....913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Josh Porter Joe Hott Mike Spencer
Randall Hunt Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Tyler White Mike Martin Jerry Snyder

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

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WHEELMINERS

Idolatry

Scripture tells us that, to us, God is to be exclusive: "No other God's before Me." The second Sinai Principle is "no graven images." These two eternal principles are repeated positively in the New Testament: "Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve" (Matthew 4.10).

There's a temple in Japan, the Temple of the Thousand Buddhas. Inside are one thousand statues of Buddha, each one slightly different than any of the others on display. The idea is that the worshiper can select the image of Buddha that suits him, and then worship that particular one to the exclusion of all others.

This tendency to shape God into our own chosen image has been prevalent throughout history:

- For those bent on conquering nations, they created "War Gods." The Romans did this, so did the Christians during the Crusades.
- Those who wanted to have sex with whomever they pleased, conjured up "Love Gods," and built temples where prostitution was religiously practiced.
- Egyptians had their sun god, worshiping nature.

Making God to be what we want Him to be is idolatry!

Satan doesn’t mind us worshiping Jehovah as long as we reshape Him into a form that suits our purpose, but God calls this idolatry! Here are some gods we have created:

Video gods: Television, theatre, the internet. Our god is the one we spend most of our time with, the one which influences our lifestyle, shapes our thoughts, molds our character. We must ask ourselves: "How much time do we spend in this idolatrous medium and has it influenced our thoughts and lifestyle?"

Materialism: Augustine once said: "Idolatry is worshipping anything that ought to be used and using anything that ought to be worshiped." Is it possible that we worship money, things?



Jesus insisted that we cannot have two gods. Jehovah is to be worshiped, money is to be used. It's true, our culture, our generation, may be the most difficult to go to heaven from, simply because of our materialistic abundance and how it influences our thoughts and behavior.

Our own bodies can become an idol: Health spas and gyms are filled with those who have given in to this idol.

Sports: Do you think it a disgrace that we: Know more batting averages than we do Bible verses? Name more Heisman Trophy recipients than Jesus' Apostles. More NFL teams than Bible books? More university basketball players than Old Testament prophets?

Self-righteousness: Believing we can save ourselves by our own goodness.

Here it is, idolatry is not out of vogue today, we're all guilty. Most of us, if asked: "Do you practice idolatry, would indignantly answer, no, of course not, but we do."

Idols will always disappoint us. Idols always promise more than they can deliver. Idols will ultimately dominate us. If we're not careful, idols end up controlling our life. How many can we name who were once faithful in the Lord's Kingdom, but have fallen away because they've given-in to their idol, become addicted to: Work, materialism, pleasure, false teaching, television, sports, drugs, drink, pornography, etc. The Rich Young Ruler came to Jesus asking: "What must I do to inherit the Kingdom, eternal life?" In effect Jesus said: "Get rid of your idols and come follow Me!"

Idols have the power to change us. Read Psalm 115:4-8 carefully: "Idols are... made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see, ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats." Listen now..."Those who make them 'will be like them,' and so will all who trust in them." Indeed, God says we will become like that which we prefer, reverence, worship, and serve.

Scripture teaches that idolatry will squeeze us into its own mold. It was Tim Keller who wrote: "When anything in life is an absolute requirement for our happiness and self-worth, it is essentially an idol, something we are actually worshiping." So, each must ask: "Who or what have I placed on the throne of life? Is it God or an idol? Who rules and reigns over my thoughts and activities?"

-RANDALL CASELMAN
From *Lifelines* September 20, 2017

Following His Lead

John the Baptist had an incredibly important role. He was the one sent from God to prepare the people for the arrival of Jesus. He called Israel to turn their hearts toward God and be ready for what God was about to do; namely the deliverance that would come through Jesus. A lot of folks went out to see John at the Jordan, and many of them submitted to his baptism. Others, specifically the Jewish leadership, went out to see him, but rejected his purpose supposing that they didn't need his baptism.

Jesus knew the importance of John's work and affirms that work in his teaching and in his actions. It is in the context of praising the work of John that Jesus addresses those who didn't see their need to listen to the message John carried. We find these words spoken by Jesus in Luke chapter seven.

"To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'

For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by all her children." (Luke 7:31-35)

It seems that Jesus is pointing out a real troubling issue in the hearts the Pharisees and teachers. They believed they knew exactly how God would or would not work. Maybe even worse than thinking they knew, they wanted to determine how God would or would not act. They seemed to think that God would dance to their tune.

This kind of thinking is dangerous, and quite honestly a real temptation for us still today. It is a great thing to learn about God. It is a great thing to know God. Pursuing deeper knowledge of his character, his heart, his will for our lives is a great way to spend our time. Continuing to deepen our relationship with him is something that he wants from and for us. It is important to realize that as much as we know about him, we don't determine his actions. We don't define him.

We often want a god we can define. Although we may not say this out loud to anyone, we would like a god that we can control. Somehow we are tempted to think that if we could just get God to do what we want, if he would just dance to our tune, everything would be better. This is the impulse that made idolatry so attractive to Israel. This same impulse makes idolatry attractive to humanity now.

While that may be what we want, God knows what we need. We need God to define us, to direct us, to lead us, and to rescue us. As we make our way through Scripture, we see God in control of defining his people. In Genesis we see God rename (define) Abram to Abraham, and Jacob to Israel. In Exodus, God tells Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." In other words, God is the one beyond our definition. In Mark 3, Jesus names twelve of his disciples as "apostles." (Mark 3:14) To early Christians, Peter writes, "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (1 Peter 2:10)

We may want a god we can define, but what we desperately need is the God who defines us. Perhaps we would like God to dance to our tune. The problem is that we don't know the whole song. What he is asking for us to do is to follow his lead. He is the one who knows where everything is headed. He is the one who will make all things right. What he wants from us is to grow deeper in relationship with him, and trust him enough to follow where he leads.

-JEFF GRISHAM

SUNDAY SERVANTS: 4/23/23

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Kim Metheny Song Leader Mike Martin
Greeters: Terry Balentine, David Saunders, Gary McCool Communion Scripture & Prayer Bill Alumbaugh
Closing Prayer Perry Johnson
Nursery Workers Brenda Tucker, Alana Tucker

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Hershel Ward Song Leader Austin Bishop
Greeters Terry Balentine, Eric Gibson, Zach Ballard Communion Scripture & Prayer Bryan Busbee
Closing Prayer Tracy Bowman
Nursery Workers Kelli Homeyer, Karla Winslow Van Driver Phillip Strickhausen

April Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator Mike Lunsford Streaming Coordinator Aaron Bagwell
Audio Coordinator Homer Makinson Video Coordinator Marquis Elliott