St John Church of Christ August 1, 2021

Worship Service

Premiers

Welcome to Worship!

We're glad you're here. Bible classes begin at 10:00. For kids, Pete & Penelope, our children's puppet program, is followed by songs and classes.

How much do you know about the Holy Spirit? For most people, the Spirit seems mysterious and, perhaps, a little frightening, but this is the Age of the Spirit! Join us for Bible Class at 10:00 and learn to appreciate the Spirit of God. Worship follows at 11:00.

If you are unable to be with us in person, our worship is shared through our website:

www.StJohnChurchOfChrist.org

Simply select "Sermons" from the menubar at the top, or click this link to visit our page on YouTube:

St. John Church of Christ

Excellence



Elijah thought winning the battle with the prophets of Baal would restore the faith of the Israelites in God. For three years the prophet had waited and dreamed about this moment. It had been an incredible spectacle on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18), but, in the end, it really made no difference. It sadly culminated with an exhausted Elijah wishing he was dead, (1 Kings 19).

Dreams can die hard. Ask a child what he wants to do when he grows up and you'll hear, "I want to be an astronaut," (or a superhero). Not one will say, "I want to be a drug addict or a bum."

Perhaps you've reached the age when you doubt your dreams

will ever be fulfilled. You might even feel like a failure. "I'm never going to be …" It's the great heartache of middle age. Batsell Barett Baxter called failure one of the four destructive emotions (anger, guilt, and fear round out the list).

It's a fact of life that we can't all be president or pro-golfers, so perhaps, the problem is with our definition of success. Peter told us to "make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue," (2 Peter 1:5). I believe virtue is better translated "excellence." The Greek word behind the English translation, *arete*, is extraordinary.

Originally, *arete* described being the best in something good.

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So, "in the Odyssey, Penelope has *arete*, because she is the best wife a woman can be. But Achilles in the Iliad also has *arete*, because he is the best warrior that a man can be. Odysseus has *arete* because he is so clever, and thinks up effective plots. Athletes have *arete* when they win the foot-race. Being very good at something good is the definition of *arete*; Medea's witchcraft, for example, isn't *t* because it's a bad thing."[1]

Elsewhere *arete* describes "manliness" or valor in battle, fortune, fame, and success, but as time went on the word was used to describe an excellence – including moral excellence – that is so remarkable, it must be miraculous. It is obvious God is working in your life.

Success then doesn't depend on the accomplishments listed on your resume, but on the excellence of your life. Be excellent in your craft, whatever it may be. Be excellent in your relationships. Be excellent in your soul! Be excellent! You're a child of God.

[1] Downloaded from https:// quatr.us/greeks/arete-virtue-greek-philosophy.htm

News & Prayer Requests

The end of summer is fast approaching. School will be starting soon, and many of our members are squeezing in last minute vacations. Let's pray for their safety!

Covid and the Delta variant have returned to Stafford County! Let's pray hard for our community!

Vacation Pictures

News is a little sparse this week, but that gives me room to share some pictures from Buena Vista, Colorado. I especially enjoyed getting down on my hands and knees and enjoying the flowers close-up!



"Consider the líllies of the field"