

# The South Florida Avenue **MESSENGER**

**A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.**  
The Messenger is published weekly by the South Florida Ave. Church of Christ meeting at 1807 South Florida Ave - Lakeland, FL 33803 Vol. 69 No.50 12-13-16

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.  
Worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

## HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

## MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia  
Don Iverson.....India  
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald..Scotland  
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.  
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands  
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

## At What Precise Point Is A Person Saved?

Brian R. Kenyon

No person who believes in a religious system founded by human beings can accurately answer the question posed in the title above. The only source that contains the correct answer is the Bible, the inspired word of God. Whatever our answer, if it is anything more or less than what the Bible teaches, we are wrong and must, therefore, change our view if we are to please God. Even more significant, if our answer to the question is Biblically wrong, we are still lost in sin and must, therefore, repent and obey the Gospel.

### Points At Which A Person Is NOT Saved

Below are some of the more common Biblically incorrect answers to the question, "At what precise point is one saved?" These common beliefs are so subjective that they place human beings as the authors of salvation, when Jesus really is the only "author and finisher" of the true faith that saves (Heb. 12:2 cf. Mt. 28:18; Eph. 4:4-6).

**"When You Accept Jesus in Your Heart"** This is probably the most common answer in the denominational world. While it is true, as will be shown later, that one must accept Jesus into his or her heart, what is meant by the answer above is not what the Bible teaches. This answer goes along with the next answer, and both will be dealt with in the next section.

**"When You Pray the Sinner's Prayer"** Praying the so-called "sinner's prayer" is how many think a person accepts Jesus into his or her heart. This is simply not true. There are many prayers in the Bible, but not a single one even resembles the "sinner's prayer," which goes something like this: "Dear Lord, I admit that I'm a sinner and need your forgiveness. Please come into my heart." The "sinner's prayer" is nothing more than man-made invention that contains absolutely no power to save (cf. Rom. 10:1-3; 1 Cor. 2:5).

**"When You Just Believe in the Lord Jesus"** Believing in Jesus is a necessary part of salvation (Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:30-31; Heb. 11:6), but belief alone will not save. Consider two examples. First, James acknowledged, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (Jas. 2:19). The demons believe, but who would affirm that they are saved? Second, after asking, "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?," Paul stated, "I know that you do believe" (Acts 26:27). What was it that Agrippa believed about the prophets? The answer is found a few verses earlier: "that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23). Agrippa believed Jesus' vicarious death, His resurrection, and the light of His mission, yet the earthly king responded, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian" (Acts 26:28). Mere belief is not the point at which one is saved! (continued on page 2)

**“When You Start Sincerely Serving God”** Some people think the point at which they were saved is the time they “joined” a church and began doing benevolent work. Sincerely serving God is a necessary part of salvation, but neither sincerity nor serving is the point at which one is saved. Consider Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul. He was sincerely “zealous toward God” (Acts 22:3-4), even while persecuting the church. He later acknowledged, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1). Sincerity does not save! Also, when it comes to “serving God,” how do we know that what we are doing is what God wants in service to Him? We cannot arbitrarily decide how God wants to be served (cf. Zec. 7:5-7). We must learn true service from correctly understanding and applying the Bible.

## **Baptism Is The PRECISE POINT At Which A Person Is Saved**

Salvation is not subjective. Our thoughts and/or feelings do not determine when salvation takes place. God has already determined that, and He has revealed it through His word! God’s word teaches that baptism is the precise point at which the sinner who is outside of Christ is forgiven of his or her sins, and thus saved. Consider the Biblical evidence.

**Acts 2:38** When those who gathered on Pentecost realized their sin of crucifying the Lord, they asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:37-38). Notice that “the remission of sins” comes after repenting and being baptized. It is impossible for a person to be saved without having his or her sins forgiven (Isa. 59:1-2). Since baptism is the point at which a person’s sins are forgiven, and since a person’s sins being forgiven is necessary for salvation, then baptism is the point at which salvation occurs.

**Romans 6:1-6** After forcefully declaring in Romans 5:12-21 that the negative consequences resulting from Adam’s sin are so thoroughly overwhelmed by the grace of God, Paul anticipated and answered the question: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?<sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Rom. 6:1-2). How is it that we are “dead to sin”? Note Paul’s answer: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?<sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death” (Rom. 6:3-4). He further stated, “knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Rom. 6:6). Clearly, the context shows that baptism is how the old person of sin is put to death. Since putting to death the old person of sin is necessary for salvation, and since baptism is the only thing that puts to death the old person of sin, it follows that baptism is the point at which one is saved.

**First Peter 3:21** After mentioning the “eight souls ... saved by water,” Peter declared, “There is also an antitype [like figure, KJV] which now saves us—baptism...” (1 Pet. 3:20-21). It cannot get any clearer than that! “Baptism... now saves us” (KJV)! While it is true that the Bible declares that other things also save us (i.e., Christ’s blood, God’s grace, faith, repentance, confession, etc.), baptism is the culminating act of obedience that saves a person outside of Christ and places him or her into the church, the body of Christ (Acts 2:41, 47 cf. Eph. 1:22-23).

## **Conclusion**

Having examined the Biblical evidence as to precisely when a person is saved, can we honestly say we saved? Have we been Scripturally baptized into Christ? Sometimes we may think we have obeyed God, when we really have not. Thank God for the opportunity He gives us to make things right (Acts 19:1-6). Let us not trust in man-made schemes. Rather, let us “Repent, and be baptized.” ❤️ *Brian*

## **Are Feelings Trustworthy?**

A preacher from West Tennessee was driving one afternoon on I-40 to East Tennessee so he could participate in a television program the next day. As he came over a hill, he saw a very disturbing sight. There had been a massive accident involving several mangled vehicles, including an eighteen-wheeler and a loaded school bus. Fire-Rescue personnel were extricating people from the twisted wreckage; EMS personnel busily helped bloodied victims in a triage area. There were even a few sheets covering bodies on the ground. This sight really hit the preacher hard. He felt a pit in his stomach and even shed tears as he contemplated the ramifications of what he had just seen. Imagine the lives that were lost, perhaps even eternally, and the families that were now forever be changed.

That evening, in his hotel room, the preacher watched the news. The lead report was about the success of a multi-county emergency disaster drill. What the preacher had seen was not what he thought! There really were no bloodied victims; there really *(continued on page 4)*

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Bob Pratt has been admitted to L.R.M.C. and is undergoing testing. Also keep Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Jacqueline Dopwell, Joe Dopwell, JoAnne Mitchell, Kenny French, Genifer Johnson, JoAnn Hobbak, Carol Eason, Elizabeth Tubbs, Jim Edmondson, Melody Baxter, Dorothy Trice and Margaret Coone in prayer.

**Relatives:** Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Blanche Dopwell and Dayne Romine.

**Shut In Members:** Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler and Duane Nelson.

**Others:** Jackie Stearsman is now under hospice care. Also Joyce Stearsman and Chrissi Fuesner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

## Upcoming Events

**Saturday December 17th:** Annual Christmas party at the Sweeney's at 5:30 p.m. Please bring finger foods, drinks and a gift if you plan on participating in the fun and crazy gift exchange.

**Saturday December 17th:** Men's breakfast at the Hilltop Church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 a.m.

## Sympathy

Louise Stewart, the mother of Becky Sheumaker, passed away on Sunday 12-11. The funeral will be held Thursday 12-15 at the Shackelford Funeral Home in Middleton, TN. Faye Luke, a former member, passed away on 12-10, that funeral will be held in Gainesville, OH. Janet Lathan, sister of Ron Ford, passed away on Monday 12-12. Also keep Tammy Mills and Bonnie James in your prayers in the loss of their grandmother, Nina Hart. These families all need our prayers while going through this difficult time.

## Visitors

Peter Saunders, Mary Moore, Eric, Annabelle and Jackson Kelley, Kyle, Shayna and Dana Colyer, Gary Richardson, Terry & Betty McCormack, Larry Williams, Dale Moore, Cheryl Barker, John & Cecelia Allison, Darrell Brown, Jarrell Brown and Gwen Bethea.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### December

Frank Hamby ..... **Table** ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
 Matt Willcut ..... **Assist** ..... Kyle Williams

### Sunday, December 18, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Prayer** ..... Tim Croson

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements** ..... David Williams  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin  
**Sermon** ..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Josh Estridge

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Opening Prayer** ..... C.J. Grimes  
**Sermon** ..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters** ..... The Williams  
**Att. Cards** ..... Paul & Ian  
**Closing Prayer** ..... David Deal  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Bob Cooper

Wed. December 21, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer** ..... John McShane  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Kyle Bingle

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231 or 602-9005*

### Sunday, December 25, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Jim Turner  
**Prayer** ..... Ken Walker

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements** ..... David Williams  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Sermon** ..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tyler Anderson

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Fred Strickland  
**Sermon** ..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters** ..... The Bingles  
**Att. Cards** ..... Quadarius & Antonio  
**Closing Prayer** ..... C.J. Grimes  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Bob Cooper

Wed. December 28, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Closing Prayer** ..... David Deal

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov. 20	.....	\$4,152.00
Nov. 27	.....	\$4,485.00
Dec. 04	.....	\$5,985.50
Dec. 11	.....	\$4380.00
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....		<b>\$4,929.90</b>
<b>2016 Weekly Budget</b> .....		<b>\$4,422.60</b>



Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (of 6th Street) and our own Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!



(continued from page 2) were no people trapped in mangled vehicles; and there really were no dead bodies. It was all just a drill! Yet, there was no denying the feelings the preacher felt. His insides really did quiver at what he thought was mass carnage. The tears he shed were real and truly came from a heart broken at all those families whose lives he thought were ruined.

This incident shows that feelings do not always correspond to reality. Jacob really felt his beloved son, Joseph, was killed by a beast (Gen. 37:31-35), but he really was not. There are many people in the religious world who “feel” that what they believe and practice is right. They may even say something like, “Yes, I know the Bible says ... but I just feel in my heart that ...” Our feelings, no matter how strong they are, do not erase what God

teaches in His word. If God’s word says, “There is one body [church] ... one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:4-5), our feelings cannot in a million years change God’s mind into approving the “church of your choice” or accepting any belief as long as the one holding it is a nice sincere person. Feelings are based on thoughts. Let us lay aside our thoughts about God’s dealings with humanity and accept His thoughts, which are only revealed in the Bible (Isa. 55:8-9)! ❤️ Brian



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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

## Learning from Noah

As we contemplate the devastating things that will happen to this world when Jesus returns, we cannot help but reflect upon Noah and his experience. **Hebrews 11:7** provides great insight into his faith and the steps he took to preserve his family in light of the impending flood. Consider these elements: **(1) the basis of Noah’s faith: “being warned by God;” (2) the nature of Noah’s faith: “about things not yet seen;” (3) the motive of Noah’s faith: “in reverence [moved with fear, KJV;” (4) the exercise of Noah’s faith: “prepared an ark;” (5) the scope of Noah’s faith: “for the salvation of his household;” (6) the testimony of Noah’s faith: “by which he condemned the world;” and (7) the reward of Noah’s faith: “became an heir of righteousness which is according to faith.”** (Bill Davis, Arlington church of Christ, Jacksonville, Florida)

**Special Thanks** to those who helped with the FSOP graduation after last Sunday night’s service. We had a large crowd, but your help made it run smoothly. What a great display of Christ’s body working as one! Thanks!



We are planning again for a YES II mission trip to Penonome, Panama, July 1-9, 2017. If you want to go, please see Brian ASAP. If you would like to contribute funds, please see one of our elders. Please pray for us!