

The South Florida Avenue **MESSENGER**

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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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
since 1969

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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WEB PAGE



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

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

Keeping the Momentum Going

Brian R. Kenyon

What a great time we had last week! The Florida School of Preaching lectureship, "Do You Understand the Biblical View of the Home," was well attended. The lessons were much needed and very practical, especially when considering the state of the family in America these days. This lectureship dealt with some unique and very helpful topics. Now that the lectureship is over, how do we keep the positive momentum going?

Momentum is defined: "strength or force gained by ... a series of events" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). The series of spiritual events that was the lectureship definitely gave strength and force. It motivated better service to God! Spiritual momentum can be broken in two ways. First, seemingly bad things can happen along the way. Before, during, and after this lectureship, many people got sick with colds and even the flu. Nothing inherent with the lectureship caused this, but when people from all over the "flu-epidemic" country come together in one place, such is understandable. It has the potential to break momentum. When Jesus was crucified (a seemingly bad event), momentum was temporarily broken for some. Peter initially thought what they had been so intensely involved with was over. He, along with the other apostles, said, "I am going fishing" (Jn. 21:3). The disciples on the road to Emmaus were also initially sad and forlorn that Jesus was crucified. They had an "all is lost" mentality (Lk. 24:17-21). Their spiritual momentum was temporarily broken. Second, reaching tremendous goals can also contribute to breaking momentum. Sometimes, after a lofty goal is accomplished, we are left with a "now what?" attitude. We must not allow apathy to set in, but begin working on other spiritual goals. This seems to be a lesson we can learn from the "unclean spirit" who returned to the house from which it was driven to find it swept clean and then brought "seven other spirits more wicked than himself" to take up residence (Lk. 11:24-26). That house should not have been left clean, but it should have been inhabited to keep the undesirables out!

Paul gives us good instruction on how to keep the momentum going. "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14). Note three ways to keep the momentum going.

(continued on page 2)

Forget What's Behind

We cannot allow the past to dominate the present, whether that past is good or bad. Jesus said, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk. 9:62). The past can serve as motivation to continually improve and grow more into the likeness of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 8:29). Sometimes our past is shameful. Paul acknowledged, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:9-10). He also thanked “Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, ¹³although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:12-14). In both these passages, Paul used his past and the wonderful forgiveness he received as motivation to better serve the Lord! He did not live in the shame of the past. Even if our past as Christians involves great spiritual qualities, we cannot “rest on our laurels.” For example, the Thessalonians were commended for their Christian love (1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:3), yet Paul also encouraged them to “increase and abound in love to one another and to all” (1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9-10).

Reach What's Ahead

The word translated “reaching” basically means to stretch out. It only occurs in Philippians 3:13. A few sources make reference to the word’s picturing the body of a racer bent forward with his eyes focused on the goal, lunging ahead to cross the finish-line. The same idea is expressed concerning hope in Romans 8:24-25: “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” The term “eagerly wait” captures the idea of certain expectation! Although our hope, or ultimate object for which we are “reaching ahead,” is not a reality, we can live our lives in such a way as if it were! We must, however, keep focused and disciplined. Paul often used athletic imagery to get this point across. “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown ... ²⁷I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:24-27). In order to keep the momentum going, let us keep reaching ahead to the ultimate goal!

Pursue What's Upward

We must not live as though we have “already attained” or are “already perfected” (Phil. 3:12). The “I have already arrived” mindset will lead to complacency, thus breaking spiritual momentum. Paul used the term “press on” twice. Once in Philippians 3:12 and again in verse 14. “Press on [follow after, KJV]” is actually translated from the same word that is often translated “persecute” (Mt. 5:10-12; Gal. 1:13, 23). The word means to pursue, chase, hunt down. It can also be used in a positive way, as here, to mean “diligently go after” (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thes. 5:15; 1 Tim. 6:11). In this context, the upward pursuit involves at least two objects. First, it involves final salvation. “That I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me” is a reference to final salvation awarded at the resurrection (cf. Phil. 3:9-11). There is a sense in which we have salvation now (cf. Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21; 15:1-2), but final, ultimate salvation will not come until the Lord returns (cf. Rom. 8:23-25; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Thes. 4:13-18). Second, the upward pursuit involves “the prize” (Phil. 3:14). Paul again used athletic imagery to convey victory. Elsewhere, Paul wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8 cf. Rev. 2:10). We must keep the momentum going until that final salvation is given, eternity with God (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28)!

By God’s grace, we have come too far to allow our past, good or bad, to break the momentum and jeopardise our salvation! Let us “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and ... run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). Last week’s events were great, even though some challenges arose. Let’s keep the spiritual momentum going! ♥ *Brian*

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: We had quite a few members home sick with the flu this week. Among them were Hiram Kemp, Nadia and Andre, Dolly Martin, David Williams, Darlene Thompson and Bettye Bolding. Carol Eason is in Consulate Care for re-hab after falling. Also remember Wanda Bruno, Ginny Hamby, Jim Turner, Brenda Mask and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Evelyn Wyatt and Sharon Edler.

Others: Lynn Stevens, Bob McAnally, Jerry Cole, Joan Shanes, (Jeanelle Thrower's sister in law), Doris Smith, (Margaret Norman's former sister in law), Joyce Stearsman, Jack Pinckert and Jamie Tobias, (friend of Brenda Mask).



Coffee and Conversation

Coffee and Conversation before morning services every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. What a great way to get to know everyone better!

Upcoming Events

Friday Jan. 26th: Lads to Leaders young ladies will be providing free babysitting from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. Any questions see Jagie Kenyon.

Saturday Feb. 3rd: Ladies Day at the Sebring Parkway church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday February 4th: Fellowship In-Service after evening services.

Saturday February 10th: Youth Explosion at the Orange St. church of Christ 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Vince Daugherty, C.J. Grimes and Dylan Johns will be speaking.

Sympathy

The brother of Ginny Hamby passed away this last week. Please keep Ginny and her family in your prayers.

Appointed Deacon

The elders have appointed John McShane as one of our deacons. He will be a great asset to our congregation.

Visitors

Tiffany Hash, Sam and Megan, Bitsy Thomas, Teresa and Kaylen Reeves, Emily Hernandez, Lawunda Blake, Brandy Lawrence, Jamya Blake, Adrianna Morena, Bobby & Peggy Cole and Fran Gabaldon.



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 (6th Street) and Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

February

David Anderson **Table** David Williams
Paul Romine **Assist** Robert Cooper

Sunday, January 28, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer C.J. Grimes

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Bobby Sheumaker
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney
Sound Booth Paul Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer C. J. Grimes
Sound Booth Paul Sweeney
Greeters Bingles
Att. Cards Paul/Ian
Open & Close Building Jason Hendrix

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Song Leader Matt Willcut
Opening Prayer Jason Hendrix
Closing Prayer Bobby Simpson

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005

Sunday, February 4, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Frank Hamby
Prayer Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Fred Strickland
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Matt Willcut
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tim Croson
Sound Booth Casey Paulin

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Kyle Bingle
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin
Sound Booth Casey Paulin
Greeters Paulins
Att. Cards Willcut boys
Open & Close Building Bobby Sheumaker

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Closing Prayer C.J. Grimes

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Dec. 31 \$6,927.43
Jan. 07 \$6,026.20
Jan. 14 \$5,421.19
Jan. 21 \$5,223.60
Contribution Average \$5,557.00
2018 Weekly Budget \$4,716.51

"But I Don't Like to Sing!"

Many congregations designate one service per month as a "singing service." During this time, the church sings songs of praises to the Lord. Sometimes new songs are learned and practiced, but always God is worshiped and members are taught and admonished by words depicting aspects of God and Christianity (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). However, it is not uncommon to hear from those, who attend other services regularly, as to why they do not attend the singing services, "But I don't like to sing!" One question always stands out in my mind when such statements are made: If we do not like to sing here, how are we going to like heaven? The apostle John wrote of those who through Christ were victorious over the beast: "They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying ..." (Rev. 15:3). Singing is part of our worship and service to God (Mt. 4:10; Jn. 4:24 cf. Ps. 95:1; 100:2). In heaven we will, "serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. 7:15). We may have a "low self-esteem" of our voice, but that is no excuse to neglect our service to God (cf. Ex. 4:10). In fact, that may even be more of a reason to attend the singing services! If we truly "love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt. 22:37), we should want to be the best we can for the Lord! That desire should also include our ability to worship God and to teach and admonish one another in song. ❤️ *Brian*



South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested



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

A tremendous **Thank You** is in order for the South Florida Avenue congregation for all the help in making the 43rd annual FSOP lectureship a great success! Many of you worked tirelessly in making every aspect run smoothly! May God continue blessing our eldership and His church here!

Save the Date
Feb. 23-25, 2018
YESWeekend

Forrest Park, Valdosta



If you would like to attend YES Weekend, see Hiram or Brian so we can work on accommodations & travel logistics!

Let us continue to pray for our young people as they prepare for the Lads to Leaders convention in Orlando. What they are doing is not easy but rewarding!



Pray as we gear-up for another YES II mission trip to Panama, June 1-9, 2018. Our young people and their chaperones will be giving out tracts, inviting people to a Gospel meeting, and conducting Bible studies.

Remember to bring "pop-top" cans for the food pantry! We may not always realize the people we reach through benevolence. Let's maximize our efforts by giving the needy "user friendly" cans.

