

# 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. 72 No. 7 2-12-19

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

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

## First Corinthians 7:17-24

# Abiding in the Same Calling

Brian R. Kenyon

In First Corinthians 7:12-16, Paul discussed Christians being married to non-Christians. In such cases, it is the unbeliever who determines whether or not the marriage will continue. That is, if the “wife who does not believe ... is willing to live with” her Christian husband, he is not to divorce her, and if the “husband who does not believe ... is willing to live with” his Christian wife, she is not to divorce him (1 Cor. 7:12-13). The faithful Christian has already determined to follow God’s word in all things, including marriage (Mt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-3).

However, if the unbelieving spouse insists on departing the marriage, then Paul said, “let him depart,” and then added, “a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace” (1 Cor. 7:15). As discussed in the previous bulletin article, “not under bondage” does not give license for the believer to divorce and remarry at the mere departure of the unbelieving spouse. Rather, Paul was saying that because the unbelieving spouse left the marriage does not mean the Christian spouse must also leave the marriage—two wrongs do not make a right! When such tragedy happens in marriage, the Christian spouse is not to live in fear and guilt because his or her non-Christian spouse left the marriage. A person can acceptably serve God regardless of his marital or social status. This is what Paul went on to explain in this section of First Corinthians 7.

## The General Principle of Contentment

Paul began this section, “But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches” (1 Cor. 7:17). The Lord calls people to salvation through the Gospel (2 Thes. 2:14 cf. 1 Cor. 1:9), and a person is to be content in whatever vocation he or she was called. “As God has distributed” suggests that it is from God’s blessings that people even have a vocation. The phrase, “so let him walk,” has been construed by some to teach that Paul was saying that no matter what a person’s marital status was when he or she obeyed the Gospel, he or she could remain in that marriage. However, the phrase “so let him walk” is obviously limited to those vocations that are not sinful (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thes. 5:22). A person living in adultery, for example, which resulted from an unscriptural remarriage (Mt. 19:9), is obviously a sinful state, and would be excluded from the phrase, “so let him walk.” To use a comparative illustration, suppose that two homosexuals were living together and practicing *(continued on page 2)*

homosexuality and then later were taught the Gospel. Can they be saved? Absolutely! But can they remain in their homosexual relationship? Obviously not! Why? Because practicing homosexuality is sinful (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Jude 7). Obeying the Gospel involves repentance (Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30-31), and one cannot repent of a sinful sexual relationship and remain in it. Adultery and homosexuality are both sinful sexual relationships. The same word of God that condemns one condemns the other (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10). One can no more remain in an adulterous relationship and be pleasing to God than he can remain in a homosexual relationship and be pleasing to God! What Paul said here about contentment is universally applicable “in all churches.”

## Circumcised or Not, Christians Can Still Serve the Lord

Under the Law of Moses circumcision was a sign of the covenant (Ex. 12:48; Lev. 12:3), but physical circumcision is not required under the Gospel system of salvation (Gal. 5:3-4 cf. Col. 2:14; Rom. 2:28-29). It simply does not matter to God any more. Thus, Paul says, “Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (1 Cor. 7:18-19). A person can answer the Gospel call in circumcision or in uncircumcision. What definitely matters is “keeping the commandments of God.” Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision will influence God’s favor (Gal. 5:6; 6:15). Submitting to God’s will is more important than mere ritual observance (cf. Isa. 1:10-15; Mt. 7:21-23)!

## Slave or Free, Christians Can Still Serve the Lord

Slavery was a fact of life in the first century Roman world. While slaves were definitely regarded as “lower” class citizens socially, there were no such distinctions in God’s kingdom! Paul restated the principle of contentment, “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called” (1 Cor. 7:20). A person who answers God’s call while being a slave should not be bothered by it. “Were you called while a slave [servant, KJV]? Do not be concerned about it” (1 Cor. 7:21a). The term “do not be concerned [care not, KJV] about it” shows that slaves could serve and glorify God as much as anyone (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-24; Titus 2:9-10). Although Christians are to be content in whatever vocation they are called, as long as those vocations are not inherently sinful (Phil. 4:11), they are to take advantage of opportunities to improve. Paul went on to encourage the slaves who were called: “but if you can be made free, rather use it” (1 Cor. 7:21b).

In Christ, a person is both free and in bondage. “For he who is called in the Lord while a slave [servant, KJV] is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave [servant, KJV]” (1 Cor. 7:22). Christians enjoy a freedom that no person can take away (Jn. 8:32-36; Rom. 6:6-7, 14, 22; 8:2; Gal. 5:1). Though free from men, Christians are in bondage to the Master because they have voluntarily surrendered to His will (Gal. 2:20). Because Christ paid their debt of sin on the cross, Christians are not to be the slaves of men. Paul reminded them, “You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men” (1 Cor. 7:23). Although many Christians in the first century were slaves (such as Onesimus, Phile. 10-19), their ultimate Owner was Christ. They served Him by serving their earthly masters (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25). “Do not become slaves of men” (1 Cor. 7:23b) and “not under bondage” (1 Cor. 7:15b) are thus related in that no person—whether earthly master, spouse, or otherwise—is to override a Christian’s obedience to Christ (cf. Jn. 12:42-43; Rom. 2:29b).

## Conclusion

Paul concluded this section as he began it, “Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called” (1 Cor. 7:24). A person can serve God no matter his or her social standing, so long as that standing does not violate the law of Christ. Even a Christian whose spouse has departed and/or has been divorced can serve the Lord. The question for Christians today is: Are we serving the Lord? Let us not use our marital status or social standing as an excuse for not serving. Rather, let us make sure our marriages and social standings are not compromising the Gospel so we can serve God with every fiber of our being! *Æ Brian*

*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. (Philippians 1:27)*

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Ginny Hamby, Brenda Murray, Wayne Shearer, Sharon Washington, Dorothy Trice, Faith West, Jim Turner, and Margaret Coone.

**Shut In Members:** Carol Eason, Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage and Cheryl Barker.

**Others:** Wayne Shearer's parents, Paulisky Irizarry, Sandra Hutchins, Lynn Stevens, Chrissi Fuesner, Bobby Cole, Paula (Brenda Murray's daughter), Cheryl, (Melody Baxter's sister), Debbie Bush's son, Linda Sheffield (Hamby's sister in law), Chip Bolding, Tony Seibert (Dotty Fife's brother), Peggy Nabors (member at Orange Street), Richard Coone (Margaret's brother), and Bob Shaw (fiance to Wayne Shearer's sister).

## Upcoming Events

**Thursday Feb. 14th:** Sweetheart Dinner here at the building at 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday Feb. 16th:** Men's Breakfast here at SFA at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday Feb. 16th:** Sebring Youth Seminar at 9:00 a.m. Youth group skating at 4:00 p.m.

**Sunday Feb. 17th:** Teacher training session for upcoming quarter in the church library at 3:30 p.m.

**Feb. 17th-20th:** Gospel Meeting at the Sebring church of Christ.

**Tuesday Feb 19th:** Senior Saints meeting at 10:00 a.m. Presentation by the Polk County Sheriff's office.

**Tuesday Feb 19th:** FSOP Ladie's class at 7:00 p.m.

**Feb 22nd-24th:** YES weekend. If you plan to attend please sign up and put your t-shirt size on the sheet.

**Feb 24th-28th:** Gospel Meeting at North Lakeland church of Christ. The speaker will be George Beals.

## Up-Coming Series of Sermons

For the next 4 weeks there will be a series of Sermons on Sunday mornings titled "Why We Do What We Do In Worship Service." Please invite family and friends!

## Response

Alex Szabo, a student at FSOP, requested prayer for his wife and himself. Please keep them in your prayers.

## Visitors

Heath & Rachel Woodruff, Jerry Green, Eric Bunch and Sherman Williams, Alex Szabo, Denise Gulizia and Jennifer Wilson.

### ~ Communion to Shut-ins ~

February 17th.....Kemp or Kenyon  
February 24th.....Van Allen  
March 3rd.....Shearer

### **We still need Volunteers!!**

**Sign up sheet is on the announcement bulletin board.**

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### February

Bobby Sheumaker ..... **Table** ..... Wayne Shearer  
Phil Fife..... **Assist** ..... Ken Walker

**Sunday, February 17, 2019**

**9:30 A.M.**

**Song at Bible Class**.....Jim Turner  
**Prayer**.....Casey Paulin

**10:30 A.M.**

**Announcements** .....Fred Strickland  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**.....Wesley Brunson  
**Sermon**.....Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**.....Dustin Walling  
**Sound Booth**.....Alex Parramore

**6:00 P.M.**

**Song Leader**.....Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer**.....Casey Paulin  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**.....Phil Fife  
**Sound Booth**.....Alex Parramore  
**Greeters** ..... McShane/Smith  
**Att. Cards**.....Willcutt boy's  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Bobby Sheumaker

**Wednesday, February 20, 2019**

**Song Leader**..... Ken Walker  
**Opening Prayer**..... David Williams  
**Closing Prayer**.....Alex Parramore

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Stacey Paulin so he can get a replacement - (863) 838-8911*

**Sunday, February 24, 2018**

**9:30 A.M.**

**Song at Bible Class**.....Kyle Bingle  
**Prayer**.....David Anderson

**10:30 A.M.**

**Announcements** .....Fred Strickland  
**Song Leader**.....Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**.....Kyle Faneuf  
**Sermon**.....Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**.....Wadi Khoury  
**Sound Booth**.....Casey Paulin

**6:00 P.M.**

**Song Leader**..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Sermon**.....Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... Jeff Bingle  
**Sound Booth**.....Casey Paulin  
**Greeters** ..... Fife/Sweeney  
**Att. Cards**.....Caelen/Cam'ron  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Bobby Sheumaker

**Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Song Leader**.....Jim Turner  
**Opening Prayer**..... David Deal  
**Closing Prayer**..... Wayne Shearer

### ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Jan. 20.....\$5,397.55  
Jan. 27.....\$4,875.62  
Feb. 03.....\$6,846.75  
Feb 10.....\$12,749.03  
Contribution Average.....\$7,158.51  
Weekly Budget.....\$6,524.52



### New Member Spotlight

## Cieara Edwards



Cieara was born in Lakeland and grew-up in this area. As a child she wanted to be a lawyer. Her first job was as a cashier at Publix. She currently works as a transportation program administrator. She has visited Japan and Bermuda. She likes to shop, travel, and eat at restaurants. When she has free time, she enjoys watching football, searching houses online, and watching “do it yourself” shows. The best advice she’s been given is “Trust God; He’s still in control.” She and her husband, Michael, have 5 children. Welcome, Cieara, to SFA!



### Member Spotlight

## bettye bolding



bettye was born in Clay County, Arkansas. She married Sam (“from Alabam”) in 1945. They met while he was in the Merchant Marines during WW II. Her first job was trimming windows at J. C. Penney. She is now retired. When she has free time, she likes to read and visit shut-ins. When she owned a house, she liked yard work. Her most satisfying accomplishment is working as secretary for FSOP. The best advice she’s been given is “When you are married, it’s for life; if problems arise, work them out.” She has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren.



*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 . . .



At last week’s FHU lectureship, Brian and Hiram “tag-teamed” on a roundtable discussion titled “How Can a Congregation Begin to Fellowship and Work Together Across Racial Barriers?” There were about 70 in attendance. The session was designed for participation from those in attendance and lasted two hours. Many good questions were asked and suggestions made. The bottom line, though, is that Christ reconciled all “unto God in one body by the cross” (Eph. 2:11-22), and that all Christians are to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called .... endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-7). The main obstacle among some brethren is not a skin color issue but a Christian issue. When we have the mind of Christ, we will correctly treat one another. May each of us cultivate the mind of Christ and show the world how to love one another!



**We Look Forward To A  
 Great Weekend Feb. 22-24**

**There will be a brief info & logistics meeting in the north wing following Wed. night Bible study.**