

How Well Do We Measure Up?

How well are we doing as Christians? Often, we are tempted to compare ourselves with others, and since we are not as bad as some, we think we are doing alright. Consider, though, the words of Paul, "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12, NKJ). Paul was writing about people who thought they were right with God, and based their assessment by comparing themselves with their peers. It is sometimes easy to compare ourselves with those we hang out with at school, who often see nothing wrong with the way they live, and then think that because we measure up to, or even exceed their standard, we are doing alright. However, this is not wise! Rather, we must realize that "not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the



Lord commands" (2 Cor. 10:18). It does not ultimately matter how "good" we are in comparison to our friends. Our friends at school may use inappropriate language, pursue lustful desires, and/or engage in sinful behavior. Measuring up to God's standard is what is important! The majority is not the standard by which to measure ourselves (Ex. 23:2). Popularity is not the standard of approval either (Phil. 3:4-8).

Only God's will is the standard and doing His will is the means of approval (Jas. 1:22-25). Good friends are nice, but the most important thing is measuring up to God!

Heart **Brian**



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CHURCH OF CHRIST**
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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

Upcoming Events

Sunday, March 9 will be the next L2L day. Our young people and their mentors are working very hard. All of our youth group took the Bible Bowl test on the Book of Acts last Sunday. Stay tuned for announcements concerning individual practices before that time.

Saturday, March 15 There will be a youth devotional and activity at the Kenyons. Stay tuned for further details.

Weekend, April 18-20 is the "big meeting" (aka L2L Convention). Adult chaperons for a day (half a day or an hour, etc.) would be much appreciated. See Brian if you can help.

Sunday, April 27 will be the L2L banquet after morning services. Stay tuned for details on location. We are thinking of reserving space and having it at a local restaurant.



Ladies Days are not just for "grown-ups." Our teenage girls can benefit greatly from them as well. SFA's Ladies Day will be held Saturday, May 3, 2014. Let's make plans to attend, even those young ladies in our youth group!



Pray for our young people and their chaperones as they travel to Valdosta, Georgia, this weekend!

VBS
June 22-26

The South Florida Avenue **MESSENGER**

CHURCH OF CHRIST



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

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SUNDAY SERVICES

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

WEDNESDAY

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

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

MISSION FIELDS

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

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WEB PAGES

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com

www.sfacc.net

Portraits of Jesus

George Jensen

Have you ever seen a picture of Jesus? Some people have a framed picture that is supposed to be of Him. Many of these depict Jesus as pale-skinned and frail-looking, neither of which would be accurate. We have no Bible record of specifically how He looked, except that physically "*he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him*" (Isaiah 53:3).

However, it is as if God commissioned four portraits to be painted of His Son. The artist was the Holy Spirit, and words paint the picture. The first four books of the New Testament each give a picture of the life of Jesus.

Matthew wrote initially to a Jewish readership. His picture paints Jesus as King. In Chapter 2, the earthly king Herod felt threatened by the birth of this King, and he ordered the infant males in Bethlehem to be slaughtered. In Chapter 13, a series of parables tell about Jesus' kingdom. In Chapter 16, we learn that the terms "church" and "kingdom" are used interchangeably (vv.18-19). Chapter 21 tells of the King Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on the back of a lowly beast of burden. In Chapter 27, we see Him humiliated and mockingly called "King of the Jews!" (v. 29).

Mark's portrait was intended to impress upon Romans that Jesus was a Servant. His followers had questions about greatness (9:33-35), so He emphasized servitude. This portrait shows Jesus serving others. "*For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (10:45).

Luke skillfully depicts Jesus as a Man of compassion, which the Greeks appreciated. On one occasion, Jesus had been invited into the home of a Pharisee. A sinful woman came before Jesus and wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. The host was incensed and wished for the woman to be expelled, yet the Savior showed compassion (7:36-50). "*For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost*" (19:10).

John's portrayal appeals to a general audience. This portrait radiantly displays Jesus as God (1:1-3). Before Abraham even came into existence, Jesus existed (8:58). If Jesus had had a beginning, the sentence would have read: "Before Abraham came into existence, I came into existence." It does not so read. Jesus had no beginning. Thomas rightly exclaimed about the risen Jesus: "*My Lord and my God*" (20:28)!

Whenever we read the Gospel records, we see the true portrait of Jesus. Man made pictures of Jesus cannot portray accurately Jesus Christ.

Beware of the Smooth-Talker

Andy Robison

Many professions require proficiency in the art of talking. Beyond the obvious application to public speakers—such as preachers and teachers—are the lawyers who present cases to juries and the salesmen and women who make pitches to potential customers. A temptation in each of these professions is to allow a talent for manipulative language to override any concern for a matter’s truth. A preacher can twist the Word of God to the destruction of himself and those who hear him (cf. 2 Peter 3:16 and 1 Timothy 4:16). Lawyers are often blamed for the avoidance of truth through clever exploitation of the law’s loopholes. Salesmen are accused of exaggerating the benefits of their products. Anyone of any occupation can be guilty of saying too little or too much to mask the faults of some used item he may have for sale. When these things take place, the guilty have earned the label, “smooth talker.”

Whenever the aptitude for persuasive speech is used to deceive, the devil has won a victory. He has somehow convinced the talker to forfeit the good standing of his soul in trade for a sale, a verdict or a superficial conversion. But, the devil may win another victory if listeners are not vigilant. Yes, in spiritual things, those who hear the false ones will still be held accountable for being deceived, a fate quite reasonable when one considers all the biblical warnings against such self-motivated prophets.

“By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words...” reminds Peter (2 Peter 2:3). “Beware of false prophets” was the predictive counsel of the Lord (Matthew 7:15). Christians are told to mark and withdraw from those who “by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17-18).

Inevitably, when one such deceiver comes along, he still gains his following. Many will cling to his ear-tickling doctrines and willingly abdicate their responsibility of discernment. This makes the task of objecting all the more difficult for those who see through the faulted one’s ploy. Secular history abounds with back and forth arguments about whether key political figures were correctly and honestly motivated. Sometimes, years later, a public still wonders if it has been duped.

But, inspired history clarifies unquestionably some times that smooth speech wrought havoc. David’s son Absalom was an early practitioner of the campaign promise. He connected with the populace by decrying his father’s administration’s ineptitude, and promising complete justice in his own—should he get one (2 Samuel 15:1-6). First century scribes evoked Jesus’ rebuke. Among their sins were the beautiful long prayers which made them appear holier than they were (Mark 12:40). The Proverb writer even warned of the harm of flattery (Proverbs 29:5; 26:28).

Somewhere this side of mental paranoia is a balanced and healthy alternative to two extremes. One extreme is never trusting anyone. Another is believing everything from everyone who seems sincere. The Christian has the obligation to discern (1 John 4:1). This can only be done by constant training in the Word of God, and the application of the Scriptures to all that anyone says (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14). Beware the smooth-talker; he can work ruin for one’s soul

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Ron Ford and Jim Turner are both having health problems. Jacqueline Dopwell is to have more tests. Sam Bolding, Ken Luigs, Artis Bassett, Duane Nelson, Ann Howard, JoAnn Hoback, Margaret Coone & Sharon Washington.

Relatives: Gary Thrower, Jimmy Puckett, Danny Stephens, Dorothy Trice & Lewis Tillis.

Shut In Members: Artis Bassett, Ann Howard, Kenny Luigs, Virginia Plumlee & Louise Starks.

Others: Marilyn Eick, Frank Woods, Timothy Teel, Ann Caldwell, Michael Ray, Christina Fuessner, Bonnie Hendricks & Kathy Peel.

Upcoming Events

Mar. 1st: - "Ladies Day" at Orange Street Church of Christ in Auburndale.

Mar. 7h - 9th: - Gospel meeting at Osprey Avenue Church of Christ in Sarasota.

Mar. 15th: Semi Annual Picnic/Sing @ Mary Holland Park, Bartow -- N. Jackson Ave. will host this event. See bulletin board for more information on the above events.

Visitors

Mrs. Lawunda Blake, Myisha & Jamya. Adam Black, Jaheem Coleman, DeJarius Lanier, Dr. Debra Okolichany.

Thank You Notes

Thank you for all the cards, thoughts and prayers during my recent illness. It means so very much, and truly does help in recovering. Wanda Bruno

Thank you for your prayers during my medical tests. My test results were good. It is very comforting to belong to a caring Christian family. Sharon Egolf

Hither, Thither and Yon

Kenny and Reba French left Tuesday traveling to Texas and back through Arkansas. They will be gone for about three weeks. Please keep them in your prayers. Also remember those who are serving in the Military.

HEAR OUR RADIO SPOTS

This Week's Message

"The Sahara Desert"



1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

February

Stacey Paulin	Table	Josh Estridge
Tucker Sweeney	Assist.....	Antonio Martin
March		
Paul Romine	Table	David Anderson
Kenny French	Assist.....	Jeremy Padilla

February 23, 2014
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class	Tucker Sweeney	
Prayer.....	Jimmy Sweeney	
10:30 A.M.		
Announcements.....	Jim Turner	
Song Leader	Jason Hendrix	
Opening Prayer	Fred Strickland	
Closing Prayer	David Williams	

6:00 P.M.
Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Ken Walker
Closing Prayer Frank Hamby
Greeters The Padilla Family
Att. Cards.....Quadarius Askew & Sebastian Rapley
Open & Close Building.....Bobby Sheumaker

Wed. February 26, 2014

Song Leader	Ken Walker
Opening Prayer	Fred Strickland
Closing Prayer	Steve Hunley

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Jason Hendrix, so he can get a replacement - 537-0857

Sunday, March 2, 2014
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class	Kyle Bingle	
Prayer.....	Tucker Sweeney	
10:30 A.M.		
Announcements.....	Stacey Paulin	
Song Leader	Jason Hendrix	
Opening Prayer	Josh Estridge	
Closing Prayer	Charles Sanford	

6:00 P.M.
Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Jeff Bingle
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

Greeters The Sweeney Family
Att. Cards.....Quadarius Askew & Paul Sweeney
Open & Close Building.....Fred Strickland

Wed. March 5, 2014

Song Leader	Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer	Chuck Wyatt
Closing Prayer	Jim Turner

~ HOW WE ARE GIVING ~

Jan. 26	\$4,092.10
Feb. 02	\$5,074.00
Feb. 09	\$4,427.30
Feb. 16	\$4,432.00
Contribution Average	\$4,292.50
2014 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,256.38