



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST *MESSENGER*



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 78 No. 08 February 20, 2024

ELDERS

David Anderson
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Stacey Paulin

MINISTER

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

OFFICE PHONE
(863) 682-4702

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SFA.church@gmail.com

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.....6:30 p.m.

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Florida School of Preaching
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Casey & Emily Paulin

MISSION FIELDS

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

YOU'RE INVITED

MARCH 22-24, 2024

GOSPEL MEETING



Join us
for a weekend
of studying
God's word
and enjoying
fellowship



STEVEN FORD
PREACHING

MEETING TOPICS:

Friday March 22

@ 7:00pm Existence of God *

Saturday, March 23

@ 7:00pm Three Portraits of Faith *

Sunday, March 24

@ 9:30am A Christ Centered Life

@ 10:30am The Love of the Father

@ 6:00pm Serving from an Empty Cup *

***Please stay for refreshments & fellowship
following each evening service.**



SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 S. Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33803

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LET'S INVITE OUR FAMILY, FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS!

Have You Been Asked About the Hope in You?

Brian R. Kenyon

Recently, while reading First Peter 3:15, I made a connection that did not hit me before as it did then. Many times I have emphasized the first part of this verse, “sanctifying” God in our hearts, and on many occasions I have focused on the last part of the verse, being ready to give a defense, but the implication of both parts together is worthy of a good look. The verse reads, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

The Context

After giving practical instruction concerning husband/wife relationships (1 Pet. 3:1-7), Peter exhorted Christians to be of “one mind, having compassion for one another ... knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing” (1 Pet. 3:8-9). Immediately before our verse, Peter spoke of what needed to be done to “love life and see good days” (1 Peter 3:10-13), but then reminded his readers, “But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. ‘And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled” (1 Peter 3:14 cf. Isaiah 8:12-13). To counter not being afraid, there are two general parts to First Peter 3:15. First, the command to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” Second, the instruction to “always be ready to give a defense.”

The Command

The only imperative verb form in First Peter 3:15 is the command for Christians to set apart the Lord in their hearts. “Sanctify [regard ... as holy, ESV]” is translated from a word (*hagiazō*, ἁγιάζω) that means set apart as sacred to God; make holy, consecrate; regard as sacred (John 17:17, 19; Acts 20:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 5:26). It is the verb form of the word often translated “holy.” It is the same imperative verb found in Jesus’ model prayer to the Father, “Hallowed be Your name” (Matthew 6:9). The command to “sanctify” the Lord God, or as some translations render, “sanctify Christ as Lord” (NAS) and “regard Christ the Lord as holy” (ESV), was a request to give God first place in our hearts (cf. Matthew 6:33). God will not force His way into our hearts, but He will gladly come in when we answer His invitation (cf. Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 17:20-21; Revelation 3:20; 22:17). When the Lord is enthroned in our hearts, we cannot help but be an influence for good to all who observe us (Jeremiah 20:9; Matthew 6:13-16)!

The Connection

In the second part of the verse, Peter exhorted that Christians “be ready to make a defense” (1 Peter 3:15). The word translated “be ready [prepared, ESV]” (from *hetoimos*, ἑτοιμος) carries the idea of being prepared so, at a moment’s notice, a person stands ready (Matthew 24:44; 1 Peter 1:5). The word translated “give a defense [give an answer, KJV]” (from *apologia*, ἀπολογία) refers to a verbal defense; answer, reply (Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Corinthians 9:3; 2 Corinthians 7:11; Philippians 1:7, 16; 2 Timothy 4:16). It is the word from which “apologetics” comes. In most passages where it is used, the “defense” was in response to people who noticed and questioned a drastic difference the way Christians lived and taught compared to world (cf. 1 Peter 4:3-5)!

Conclusion

First Peter 3:15 shows a connection between “sanctifying” deity in our hearts and people asking us about our hope. When the Lord truly has first place in our hearts, we will live differently from the world (cf. Matthew 5:3-10; 2 Peter 1:5-10), and people will want to know why. However, if we are like the world, they will see no difference, and thus have nothing to ask about our hope. Has anyone asked us lately about the hope that is in us?

Upcoming Events

February

18-21 — Don Blackwell @ Sebring Parkway

23-25 — YES Weekend (Valdosta)

25-29 — Joshua Cantrell @ North Lakeland

March

22-24 — Steven Ford @ SFA

29-31 — Lads to Leaders (Orlando)

PRAYER LIST

Current: Stacey Paulin is in LRH and still in extreme pain, awaiting surgery. Fran Gabaldon is awaiting an appointment at Moffit. Flo Duffy's tests came back with good news and thanks everyone for their prayers.

Continual: Debbie Bush (struggles); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Linda Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Jim Turner (health)

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.

Pray for our elders/deacons and their wives! Their task is not an easy one and they need our prayers and support



Gospel Meeting

N. Lakeland church of Christ

Feb. 25-29, 2024

Speaker: Josh Cantrell

Mon-Thurs

7:00 PM

- **Navigating the Storms of Life**
 - **Tried by Fire**
- **These All Died in Faith**
- **Being Branded in the Image of Jesus**

The Elders would like to meet with each SFA family to hear your ideas, concerns and questions.

They will be at the building on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Please call the office of set up a time and day that works best for your family.

"Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."
Hebrews 13:17

Please Join us for FELLOWSHIP IN SERVICE on Sunday Feb. 25 at 5:30 in the FSOP Classroom.

30 MINUTES OF YOUR TIME COULD MAY A LIFETIME OF DIFFERENCE FOR SOMEONE WHO IS SUFFERING OR DISCOURAGED!

All are invited to join us as we sign cards and write notes to encourage our family in Christ.

Hope to see you there!

Scheduled to Serve in February

Designated Elder	David Anderson
Wednesday, February 21, 2024	
Announcements	Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader / Prayer	Brian Kenyon
Devotional / Invitation	Kurtis Leaks
Closing Prayer	Matt Willcut
Sunday, February 25, 2024	
10:30 am Sermon	Rick Kenyon
"The Little Things" (Matt. 25:31-40)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Roberson LouisSaint
"Am I My Brother's Keeper?" (Gen. 4:1-5)	
Those to Serve 10:30 am	
Greeters	Brenda/Darlene
Song/Pray before class	Dave Williams
Announcements (both)	Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader (both)	Tucker Sweeney
Prayer / Bible reading	Steve Tydings
Lord's Table (both)	George Davis
Closing Prayer	Jeff Bingle
Open/Close Building	Jason Hendrix
Attendance Cards	Sawyer/Declan
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix
Those to Serve 6:00 pm	
Greeters	Olivia/Ingrid
Announcements	Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader	Tucker Sweeney
Prayer / Bible reading	Kyle Bingle
Closing Prayer	Jeff Stewart
Wednesday, February 28, 2024	
Announcements	Frank Hamby
Song Leader / Prayer	Terrance Dindy
Devotional / Invitation	Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer	Camron Bailey
How We Are Giving	
February 4	\$10,077.00
February 11	\$7,192.00
February 18	\$4,726.00
Contribution Average	\$7,355.00
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

Pull the Good

Recently our church building has had some major repair work done and therefore we have been displaced from our auditorium and are worshipping in the fellowship hall temporarily. Needless to say, it is ...different. However, we are still able to worship together and that is a blessing. A girl I used to work with would always say "pull the good" when something that didn't seem good happened (Romans 8:28). I have tried to do that, so here are some positive things I have "pulled" from this time:

- 1) Being in a smaller area for worship has allowed us to get closer to one another- (physically and in other ways). It has been easier to talk to one another and get to the visitors before they escape. We are sitting closer together and therefore we are talking to and getting to know members who we may not have met had this situation not arisen.
- 2) The singing sounds better too! Not that the singing is for our entertainment, but it is to praise God and to edify one another. (Eph. 5:19-20) However, when we are closer together it just sounds better and I'm sure it's encouraging to the song leaders as well.
- 3) This current situation makes me appreciate what we had and will have in the near future when the construction is done. We are a blessed people who sit on padded pews and air-conditioned rooms, not everyone has those blessings. If you have ever been to a foreign country and worshipped there you will realize that it's not about the seats and the size of the room, it's about the level of love for our God and the worship He deserves no matter the conditions in which we find ourselves on the Lord's Day. I've seen people walk for miles to church, sit on hard chairs, with no a/c, less than adequate restrooms, dogs roaming around and dirt floors and not even notice because they are so happy to just be there hearing God's word and fellowshiping with the saints.

Therefore, let us try to be content through this time of change (Phil. 4:11-13). We read in Ecclesiastes 3:3 that there is a time to break down and a time to build up. As we go through this breaking down time may we not let it hinder our love and devotion to God but let it build us up and try to grow closer to God and to one another. Pull the good!(Rom. 8:28)- Rene' Bingle

Annual Meeting (for civil law requirement)

To comply with state regulations, nominations must be made and a vote taken for corporate officers each year. This business will be taken care of March 10, 2024. The following nominations have been made: David Anderson, chairman; Brian Kenyon, vice-chairman; David Deal, secretary; Bobby Sheu-maker, treasurer. Nominations may be made from the floor if the nominee's willingness to accept the nomination is presented in writing to the chairman prior to the election.

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com
Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

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1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

**"But those who wait on the LORD shall
renew their strength; They shall mount
up with wings like eagles, They shall run
and not be weary, They shall walk and
not faint"**

Isaiah 40:31



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.