

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. 71 No. 10 03-06-18

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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

Are We Guilty of Murder?

Brian R. Kenyon

None of us would think about murdering someone else. We are appalled with the very idea. Yet, where does murder begin? Anger without cause! That's right, anger in hearts is where murder starts. Now, how many of us are in danger of committing murder?

In this article we will examine Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount about anger. It is important to know that in this section of the Sermon (Mt. 5:21-48), Jesus was contrasting what the traditions of the "old timers" taught with what God truly meant. Each section began with a statement, "You have heard that it was said to those of old ..." (Mt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43), followed by Jesus' assessment, "But I say to you ..." (Mt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). Jesus was not correcting Moses, but simply reinforcing what God taught through Moses all along. Jewish traditions had blinded them to the truth.

Is Unjust Anger Justified?

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder [kill, KJV], and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment'" (Mt. 5:21). On the surface, this seems like the truth. After all, Moses did write, "You shall not murder [kill, KJV]" (Ex. 20:13). Murder is intentionally taking innocent human life. Under the Law, it was punishable by death (cf. Gen. 6:9; Ex. 21:12-14; Num. 35:16-34). The "judgment" to which Jesus referred may have been a human court of law or even to the day of judgment at the end of time (cf. Mt. 5:27). In either case, the murderer would be held accountable.

However, based upon Jesus' response to this saying, tradition taught that as long as one did not "pull the trigger," he was justified in whatever treatment he saw fit toward his brother, no matter how harsh. As Jesus continued, He showed that unjustified anger was wrong, for it is the seed of murder!

Murder Begins with Anger

Jesus answered what they meant by "You shall not murder" with these words: "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire" (Mt. 5:22). Truth says that murder begins with an attitude of anger, or hatred. "Brother" probably here refers to one's fellow man (cf. Lev. 19:17-18), but how tragic it is when spiritual brothers are angry at each other! This *(continued on page 2)*

person's anger is "without a cause," which means that there is no just reason why he is angry at him. This anger expresses itself in spiteful name calling. "Raca" is a term of abuse, likely derived from an Aramaic expression that meant "empty headed" (Max Zerwick, *Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, page 11). "You fool" must be kept in this context of unjust anger. It is not inherently sinful to call someone a "fool" — Jesus did (Lk. 12:20) — but when anger is behind it, we must not do it! Of course, in our culture, we may use other words (i.e., stupid, jerk, etc.), but the same principle applies. We must not use these terms as expressions of anger. Those who use words of derision motivated by anger are in serious danger. The "court [council, KJV]" refers to the Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews. "Hell fire" (literally, "the Gehenna of fire") is the place of eternal punishment (Mt. 5:29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33). The point is that we will be held accountable even for our words (cf. Mt. 12:36), and if we do not curb our anger, the consequences will get worse, even to the point of "hell fire"! Being angry at our brother is serious, and we must repent!

Anger Renders Worship Unacceptable

Since harboring anger and resentment is incompatible with God, one who harbors such anger cannot worship God acceptably. Jesus said, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt. 5:23-24). The two-fold equation for worshiping God acceptably is that we worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). "In truth" refers to doing the specific actions authorized by His word (cf. Col. 3:17). "In spirit" refers to having the proper attitude. The proper act of worship must correspond with the right attitude and life (Isa. 1:11-15; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8 cf. Mt 6:14-15). It is impossible for us to have the right attitude in worship if we are harboring anger and resentment toward our brother. In the example Jesus gave, there was something more urgent—to be done "first"—than completing an offering; namely, being "reconciled to your brother." Obedience to God is more important than outward "sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22-23; Hos. 6:6). We cannot obey God when we harbor anger and resentment toward our brother.

We Must Seek Harmony

Jesus concluded this section on anger by urging, "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny" (Mt. 5:25-26). We must not delay in establishing friendly relationships. An "adversary" is an opponent in a lawsuit (cf. Lk. 12:58; 18:3; 1 Pet. 5:8). "Quickly" shows the importance of haste, and "while ... on the way" shows where the friendship is to be established. Once the punishment resulting from anger enters to the courts, it is too late to lessen the consequences.

Conclusion

Anger, in and of itself, is not sin (cf. Eph. 4:26). However, some, perhaps even most, anger is sin. What makes us angry? Are we angry at our brother? Why? Is it because we think he has offended us? If so, why not go to him (Mt. 18:15-17)? If, however, we are angry at him without just cause, how can we expect to worship and please the Lord? We must let go of any anger and resentment we may be holding against our brother, be reconciled to him, and pursue peace and harmony. ♥ Brian

Anger Analysis

Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. (Psalm 4:4)

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm. (Psalm 37:8)

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression. (Proverbs 19:11)

Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools. (Ecclesiastes 7:9)

"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,²⁷ nor give place to the devil ...²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (Ephesians 4:26-29)

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be ... slow to wrath. (James 1:19)

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Wanda Bruno is unable to continue chemo at this time due to a low red blood cell count. Wanda Turner is home from the hospital after a mini stroke. David Deal is in the hospital with high blood sugar. Also remember in prayer Bill Long, Faith West, Ginny Hamby, Jim Turner, Brenda Mask, Margaret Coone and Carol Eason, (who is now at Palm Terrace and can have visitors).

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

Others: Lynn Stevens, Bob McAnally, Rea Rice, Jerry Cole, Joan Shanes (Jeanelle Thrower's sister-in-law) is in intensive care in Nashville TN, Lydia Irizarry, who has lung cancer, Doris Smith, Nellie Anderson and Joyce Stearsman.

Upcoming Events

Sunday March 11th: Elders and Deacons meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Saturday March 17th: Semi-Annual Picnic and Sing at Mary Holland Park in Bartow, hosted by N. Jackson Ave. C of C.

Tuesday March 20th: Senior Saints will meet at 10:00 a.m. The Lakeland Police Dept. Crime Prevention team will address them about "Stolen Identity." Coffee and doughnuts at 9:30. All are invited. Please bring a friend.

Thank You

To our Christian Family, Thank you for being here for us during this difficult time. To those who brought food, sent cards or offered prayer on our behalf, to all those who were able to be with us at the funeral, thank you, your love and support makes all the difference at a time like this.

In Christian love, The Florida and Maine Smith Families

Placed Membership

We are happy to announce that Ed & Dee Parramore and Alex and also Wesley Brunson have requested to place membership here with us at S.F.A. Let us welcome them into our family.

Visitors

Jody & Evelyn Apple, Alex Szabo, Mr. & Mrs. Darnell Kirkland, Chad & Sabrina Tagtow & family, James Egolf, Dana Robertson, Dustin Walling, Mr. & Mrs. David Stearsman and family, Jennifer and Lamarian Wilson, Jada Patterson, Meagan Cox, and George & Marion Beals.

Special Worship Schedule

Every last Sunday of the month, starting on **Sunday, March 25th**, we will have morning worship, then a fellowship meal and go right into our second worship service. At the fellowship meal, we will celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries for the month. Also, in conjunction with our second service, we will have a brief singing service to learn new songs, instead of having it on the first Wednesday night of the month.



" Fellowship Meal "



SCHEDULED TO SERVE

March

C.J. Grimes..... **Table** John McShane
Bobby Sheumaker **Assist** Tucker Sweeney

Sunday, March 11, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class..... Tucker Sweeney
Prayer David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Matt Willcut
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Jimmy Sweeney
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal
Sound Booth..... C.J. Grimes

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Stacey Paulin
Opening Prayer..... Steve Hunley
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker
Sound Booth..... C.J. Grimes
Greeters Williams
Att. Cards..... Paul/Colby
Open & Close Building David Anderson

Wednesday, March, 14 2018

Song Leader..... Ken Walker
Opening Prayer..... David Williams
Closing Prayer..... Paul Romine

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

Sunday, March 18, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class..... Jim Turner
Prayer Kenny French

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Matt Willcut
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Paul Romine
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Tyler Anderson
Sound Booth..... Tucker Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Stacey Paulin
Opening Prayer..... Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal
Sound Booth..... Tucker Sweeney
Greeters..... Fifes
Att. Cards..... Antonio/Paul
Open & Close Building David Anderson

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Song Leader..... Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer..... Phil Fife
Closing Prayer..... Ken Walker

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Feb. 11.....	\$4,884.53
Feb. 18.....	\$5,657.69
Feb. 25.....	\$6,080.68
March 4.....	\$6,487.13
Contribution Average	\$5,796.36
2018 Weekly Budget	\$4,887.98

Are We Devoted to Prayers?

Luke summarized the first church of Christ, established in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The term, "continued steadfastly" means to be devoted (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 6:4; Rom. 12:12). There are four specific areas, all spiritual in nature, to which these early Christians were devoted. In this article, we will examine the fourth and final of these items. They were devoted to "prayers." Prayer was a very integral part of the lives of first century Christians and the local churches, as it should be in our lives and congregations. The definite article in the original language (literally, "in the prayers") suggests a particular reference, either to specific prayers or specific subjects. In the first century church as today, prayer was not limited to certain times only (cf. Acts 3:1). Paul taught that Christians should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17). The vitality of the first century church corresponded to the reality of their prayers, whether it was replacing Judas (Acts 1:14-26) or that people would be healed of sickness (Acts 28:8) and all points in between (cf. Acts 4:23-31; 6:4; 7:55-60; 8:14-17; 9:11, 36-43; 10:1-4, 9; 12:1-11; 13:1-3; 16:13, 25; 20:36; 21:5; 27:35). Prayer can, and will, make a difference in the church today. Let us as individuals set aside time to pray. Men designated to lead prayers in assemblies should give forethought and preparation. How devoted are we to prayer, individually or collectively? ❤️ *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 . . .

Think souls! Let's Invite our friends and neighbors to church assemblies and/or to one-on-one Bible studies!



GET INVOLVED Thanks to a lot of people working behind the scenes, there are plenty good works and activities going on with the South Florida Ave church of Christ. Now is the time to "let your light so shine"!



Pray as we gear-up for another YES II mission trip to Boquete, 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.



Special Thanks to Jody Apple for a wonderful series of lessons on the "Big Questions" concerning God, the Bible, Christ, faith, redemption, and Christian living! We also appreciate those who encouraged us by their attendance! An event like this could not happen without many working behind the scenes. For you, we are especially grateful! May God be glorified as we put into mind and practice the Biblical truths we learned!