



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ

MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 74 No. 12 March 23, 2021

ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Stacey Paulin
Jimmy Sweeney

MINISTER

Hiram Kemp

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

SECRETARY

Dee Parramore

OFFICE PHONE
(863) 682-4702

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.

EMAIL

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WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

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Florida School of Preaching
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MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
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Marc Veary....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
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Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

MOVE OVER JOSEPH

Vince Daugherty

There are many wonderful narrative sections in our Bibles, but one that seems to stand out for many is the narrative of Joseph's life. It has long been one of my personal favorites. His story dominates the latter part of the Book of Genesis from chapter 37 through 50. I was recently listening to a scholar who said the story of Joseph is not the main storyline. The real story is about Judah and Tamar found in Genesis 38. The story of Judah and Tamar would definitely not receive a PG rating from the film industry. Considering how much of the narrative is dominated by the story of Joseph, how could this be the main storyline?

THE NARRATIVE OF JUDAH AND TAMAR (GENESIS 38)

Judah, the fourth of Jacob's twelve sons, had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Over time, Judah secures Er, a wife by the name Tamar. The Scripture says, "Er, Judah's firstborn was wicked in the sight of the Lord and the Lord killed him." Judah calls on Onan to perform his duties for his deceased brother's wife. He was to help "raise up an heir". But, the Scripture says, "Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass when he went into his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother." This was a shameful thing for him to do, and so "the thing which he did displease the Lord; therefore He killed him also." Tamar was again without a man who could give her children. Judah told her to wait until his third son, Shelah, is old enough to help produce an heir for her.

As Tamar lived with her in-laws, she saw that Shelah was not given to her. When Judah's wife died, Tamar hatched a plan. "She took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way." She schemed to lie to Judah pretending to be a harlot. As a pledge for payment, she had Judah give her his signet and cord and his staff. He went into her, and the Scripture says that she conceived by him. When Judah returned home, Tamar put back on her widowhood clothes and returned without anyone knowing her absence. But, as Tamar had conceived she could no longer hide what is growing inside her. When Judah found out she was with child, he was furious. He said, "bring her out and let her be burned!" Tamar produced the signet and cord and staff, proving who the father was. Judah was shocked and said, "She has been more righteous than I because I did not give her to Shelah my son." By Judah, Tamar bore twins, Perez and Zerah.

GOD'S GRAND NARRATIVE

Before we call up the raunchy daytime cable shows, God has something to say on the matter. Going back to almost page one of the story of humanity, God gave a prophetic announcement about a special line that would come from the woman, "I will put enmity Between you [the serpent, or Satan] and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (Gen. 3:15). It may seem like a crazy side story in Joseph's narrative, but the story of Judah and Tamar is much more significant than one might think. From the beginning of humanity's story and the advent of sin, God had been working out His scheme of redemption. If we isolate the story of Judah and Tamar to just Genesis 38 and lose sight of God's grand narrative, we miss how their story fits. The reader might not think anything of it, and yet it is a crucial story of humanity. God had not forgotten His plan, and even through some unlikely characters, God was moving the story forward towards His goal through Judah and Tamar.

After the Judah and Tamar story, the narrative shifts back to Joseph's adventures in Egypt and how God was providentially working to preserve Joseph, and ultimately, to preserve Jacob's family, the Children of Israel. Joseph rose to power and dealt with the major famine. It was precisely because of the famine that brought Jacob's sons, and eventually Jacob, to Egypt to be reunited with Joseph.

On Jacob's deathbed, he blessed his sons (and grandsons of Joseph). A father's blessing was of great significance in their time, similar to a will or inheritance in our time. It is here that we need to be clued in on the blessing that comes specifically to Judah. The special "Seed" [or line] would typically fall to the oldest son. Jacob, no doubt providentially by God, gave interesting blessings to his oldest few sons. First, Jacob gave a double blessing to Joseph through his sons, Ephram and Manassah. Then, he went in order from the eldest, Ruben. He was denied the blessing of the special Seed because he defiled his father's concubine, Bilhah (see Gen. 35). Next in line would have been Simeon and Levi. They were unworthy of being a part of the special Seed because, in anger, they put a sword to an entire village out of vengeance for their sister, Dinah (see Gen. 34). So, the special blessing fell to the fourth son, Judah. "Your father's children shall bow down before you." "Judah is a lion's whelp... The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people." (Gen. 49:8-10)

Through Judah, God was preserving the Seedline that was promised back in Genesis 3:15. When you fast forward in your Bible to the established kingdom of Israel, David becomes Israel's 2nd King. It is from David's line that the Messianic picture takes a clearer form (see II Sam. 7). David, Israel's greatest king, is of the tribe of Judah and directly connected to Jacob's blessing. Fast forward to the New Testament gospels that trace Jesus' lineage back through the line of David, from the tribe of Judah. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of Jacob's blessing of Judah and the ultimate fulfillment of God's prophecy from Genesis 3:15. The same Judah, whose line could have been cut off if not for the actions of one, Tamar! Many scholars point to Jesus as the central character of Scripture, and rightfully so. Therefore, there is the justification that the key storyline of the last parts of the Book of Genesis may not be Joseph after all, but the preservation of the Seed of Woman by Judah and Tamar.

CONCLUSION & LESSONS

For me, this is certainly a different line of thinking for the last parts of Genesis, but besides a different perspective, what is the big takeaway? #1 - If Judah and Tamar are the central narrative, God's sovereignty is even greater than you might think. I have always thought of Joseph as one of the greatest stories of God's providence working His plan to preserve the Children of Israel, which is true, but the story of Judah and Tamar lets me know that God's sovereignty is so much deeper than just Joseph. Through Judah and Tamar, God is not only working to preserve one family, but all the families of the world would be blessed through their Seed. #2 - God can work through the most unlikely of characters. If you had a quiz about Joseph and Tamar,

I would imagine people would know much more about Joseph's story than Tamar's. We can often overlook details, and even whole stories from our Bible, and say they are not important, or just filler. Not so! The Scriptures are fully and completely God-Breathed. There is a reason God tells the story of Dinah. There is a reason God adds the story of Ruben going into his father's concubine. And, there is a reason for Judah having sons by Tamar. #3 - We should keep Jesus at the center of our theology. God's grand narrative was working its way to Jesus, the One who would save humanity from their sins. While the story of Joseph is a great and beloved storyline, if we only see Joseph, we would miss a rich and impactful story of Judah and Tamar. When Jesus is the center, we not only get the story of Joseph, but we get Judah and Tamar as well. #4 God is concerned about your story! You may think your life and your story are insignificant to the main storyline. There will always be people more important than you, more famous than you, more wealthy than you, but God sees you! Sometimes the parts that seem insignificant can actually hold the most significant part. You cannot always see how God is working out His plans, and that is OK. Our job is to trust in faith in the One who is in control of that grand narrative and to do our part to be righteous before Him.

Senior Saints by John McShane

I found the following on a Facebook post, and it definitely needs sharing. Can you think of anything in the Bible that backs this up? "An elderly woman got on a bus and sat down. At the next stop, a strong, grumpy young woman climbed up and sat down beside the old woman, hitting her with her numerous bags. When she saw that the elderly woman remained silent, the young woman asked her why she had not complained when she hit her with her bags? The elderly woman replied with a smile, 'There is no need to be rude or discuss something so insignificant, as my trip next to you is so short because I am going to get off at the next stop.'" This answer deserves to be written in gold letters: there is no need to discuss something so insignificant because our journey together is too short. Each of us must understand that our time in this world is so short that darkening it with useless arguments, jealousy, not forgiving others, discontentment, and bad attitudes are a ridiculous waste of time and energy. Did someone break your heart? Stay calm. The trip is too short. Did someone betray, intimidate, cheat, or humiliate you? Relax - don't be stressed. The trip is too short. Did someone insult you without reason? Stay calm - ignore it. The trip is too short. Did a neighbor make a comment that you didn't like? Stay calm - ignore it and forgive. The trip is too short. Whatever problem someone has brought us, remember that our journey together is too short. No one knows the length of our trip. Nobody knows when it will arrive at its stop. Our trip together is too short. Let us appreciate friends and family. Let us be respectful, kind, and forgiving and be filled with gratitude and joy. After all our trip together is very short. Share your smile with everyone. Our trip is very short!

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Our Members:

PRAYER LIST

Bob Pratt	Brenda Mask	Carol Edmonson
Chuck Wyatt	Linda McShane	Jim Edmonson
Adeline Hine	Bernetta Green	Jim Turner
Bill & Carlene Long	Bobby Simpson	Melody Baxter
Cieara Edwards	Brian Smith	Geny Johnson
Kathy Nester	Margaret Coone	Sharon Roy
Sharon M. Washington	Annette Phillip	George Davis
Joyce Williams	Ron & Judy Ford	Ray Nashick
Antoine & Marcella Swain		

(Please update the office of any changes)

The **EXTENDED FAMILY** and **FRIENDS** prayer requests are emailed every week and posted on the bulletin board

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Faith West	Joyce Burbage	Carol Eason
Ellen Shearer	Chuck Wyatt	

Phone numbers are in the directory. Let's call to let them know we miss them and love them.

UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Carol Edmonson is now in remission from her cancer.

Jim Edmonson is improving. He has been able to walk using a walker. He and Carol have been able to visit more often.

Sharon Washington is home recovering.
Sharon Roy is also home from rehab.

OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES

Ron Cox and family on the passing of Tyronne Cox on Monday, March 22, 2021. Tyronne was the son of Ron Cox, Sr. and brother of Ron Cox, Jr.

HOW TO CORRECT RELIGIOUS ERROR

PUT TEACHERS TO THE TEST
1 John 4:1

TEST EVERYTHING AND HOLD TO THE GOOD
1 Thessalonians 5:21

CORRECT GENTLY AND IN LOVE
Acts 18:24-28

KNOW THE TRUTH
John 8:32

HANDLE THE TRUTH PROPERLY
2 Timothy 2:15-16

SPEAK UP AGAINST IT AND DO NOT COMPROMISE
Galatians 2:5

THINK OF SAVING SOULS
2 Timothy 2:24-26

TEACH THE TRUTH IN LOVE
Ephesians 4:14-16

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

March

Designated Elder - Brian Kenyon

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Song Leader/prayer David Williams
Devo Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Anderson

Sunday, March 28, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"6 Things God Wants to Say to Everyone"
John 3:16

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
*"A Church Pleasing to God:
Dedicated Deacons"*
1 Timothy 3:8-13

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both times) Jimmy Sweeney
Greeters Sweeney
Song/prayer before class Brian Kenyon
Announcements Brian Kenyon
A.M. Song Leader Rick Kenyon
Scripture reading/Prayer Tucker Sweeney
Lord's Table Wayne Shearer
Closing Prayer Phil Fife

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Bingle
P.M. Song Leader Rick Kenyon
Scripture reading/Prayer Alex Parramore
Lord's Table Wayne Shearer
Closing Prayer David Deal

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Song Leader/Prayer Vince Daugherty
Devo Bobby Sheumaker
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

ASSEMBLING UPDATE

We still encourage those who do not feel well and those who consider themselves high-risk to stay at home.

To side with caution, we are still requiring masks to be worn upon entering the building as we have since July 2.

We will continue live-streaming the services on YouTube as we have since March 22. Thank you for your cooperation. - Elders

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Mar. 7	\$7,337.65
Mar. 14	\$6,135.05
Mar. 21	\$7,217.00
Contribution Average	\$7,126.20

The Chief Shepherd



The chief shepherd is Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:4)
He is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6)
Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

Chief Shepherd who leads His flock (Psalm 23:1)
He leads us beside the still waters (Psalm 23:2)
In Him we live, and move, have our being (Acts 17:28)
Every day He makes intercession for us (Romans 8:34)
Follow His lead to pastures green (Psalm 23:2)

Sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13)
Holds us up and keeps us safe (Psalm 119:117)
Eternal life is found in Him (1 John 5:11)
Purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28)
Hears our cries and comforts us (2 Corinthians 1:4)
Endured the cross for our sakes (Hebrews 12:2)
Restores our souls daily (Psalm 23:3)
Died for the sins of the world (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 John 2:2)

Jesus' prayer life

Jesus prayed early in the morning - Mark 1:35

Jesus prayed all night - Luke 6:12

Jesus prayed after His baptism - Luke 3:21-22

Jesus prayed before the transfiguration - Luke 9:29-31

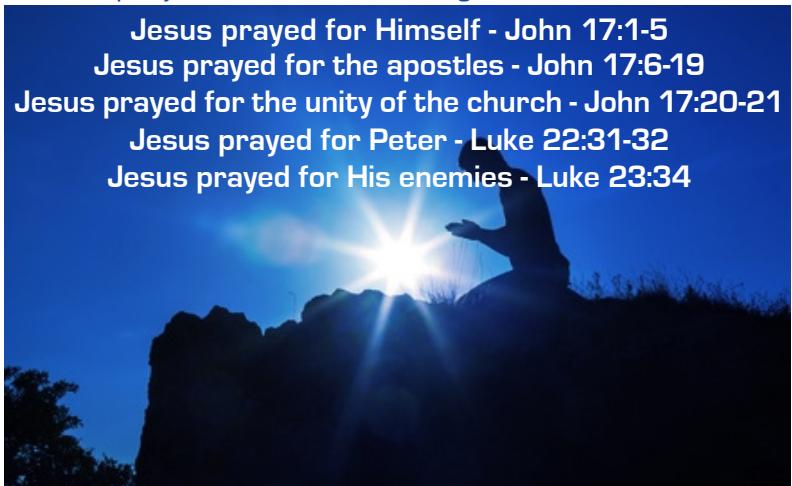
Jesus prayed for Himself - John 17:1-5

Jesus prayed for the apostles - John 17:6-19

Jesus prayed for the unity of the church - John 17:20-21

Jesus prayed for Peter - Luke 22:31-32

Jesus prayed for His enemies - Luke 23:34



Dates to remember

March

March 22-26 - Polk County Spring Break

March 30 - Taco Tuesday at the Kemps, 6:00 pm

April

April 2-4 - Lads2Leaders, Orlando

April 4 - Youth Group Easter Egg Hunt, 4:30 p.m., church field

April 4 - Fellowship In-Service, after evening service

April 11 - Elders, Deacons, Preachers meeting, 4:00 p.m.

April 24 - Ladies' Swap, fellowship hall

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

Find us on social media



"SEEK THE LORD
WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND,
CALL UPON HIM WHILE
HE IS NEAR"

ISAIAH 55:6

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

Return Service Requested