



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

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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

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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.

EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

YOUTUBE.com

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist

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.

You Don't Want To Follow Jesus If

Hiram Kemp

The thrust of Christianity is to make disciples (Matt 28:18-20). The basic meaning of a disciple is someone who follows Jesus Christ. When Jesus came into first-century Palestine, he encouraged people to follow him and become his disciples (Matt 4:18-22). From the first century until now, Christians have been persuading the world to follow Jesus.

Sometimes, in our efforts to convert our family and friends, we may fail to tell them the difficulty of being a Christian. While Jesus was interested in the souls of men, he sometimes taught hard things that turned people away from him (John 6:60-66). Christianity is not for the lukewarm or those who are wishy-washy in their commitments.

To follow Jesus involves commitment (Matt 16:24). Jesus even seemingly even talked some people out of following him if they are not willing to count the cost (Luke 14:28). So, we may not want to follow Jesus if:

Comfort and Ease Are High Priorities

Following Jesus is sometimes extremely uncomfortable. On one occasion, a man attempted to follow Jesus, and Jesus impresses him with the difficulty of discipleship: "As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'" (Luke 9:57-58).

This man wanted to follow Jesus, and Jesus tells the man that He is homeless. The birds and foxes had it better than Jesus when it concerned shelter. If this man wanted to follow Jesus, he had to face the fact that he might not always enjoy the comfort of a nice place to lay his head. While Jesus does not command His disciples to take a vow of poverty, it's important to realize that following Jesus may result in a loss of comfort. Christianity is often inconvenient.

Those who would follow Jesus must prepare for schedule interruptions, loss of material wealth, and possible abandonment from family and friends (Lk. 14:33). Those in the Bible who followed Jesus faced difficult circumstances and were often in danger, hunger, and discomfort (2 Cor 11:22-31).

If we present a problem-free, lackadaisical Christianity to the world, we present them with a false view. If you must always be comfortable and always operate on a smooth schedule, you might not want to follow Jesus.

God is Not a Priority

Some people are simply too busy for Christianity. It has been said, "God does not want weekend visitations as our father, but full custody." Some have sports, shopping, hobbies, and many other activities ahead of their relationship to God.

While one may not quit Christianity altogether, the attempt to squeeze in a little Jesus when convenient is not going to work. Jesus often stressed the total commitment necessary to be His disciple. A divided allegiance simply will not do (Matt 6:24, 13:44-46, 22:37-40).

There have been those who wanted to follow Jesus but wanted to do other things first, and Jesus would not accept it: "To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' And Jesus said to him, 'Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:50-60).

Jesus was not harsh or insensitive to someone burying their deceased loved one. This man seems to be wanting to go back home just in case his father dies. He is delaying his discipleship for another event that he wants to put first. Jesus is saying, let the spiritually dead bury the dead, but you should get busy proclaiming the kingdom. If I have many other priorities like becoming successful in business, getting my degree, or finding the right mate ahead of being a Christian, I might not want to follow Jesus.

While those things are not inherently sinful, they need to take a back seat to my relationship with God. The Jesus who left the glories of heaven and came to earth to be spat upon, beaten, tempted, and mocked on our behalf will not take second place to my calculus homework or my fairytale love story (see Phil 2:5-11). If you believe you have more important things to do, Jesus is not the one to follow.

The Past is Priority

The Bible has a lot to say about looking back. The Bible encourages us to have a healthy handle on our past as sinners (Eph 2:1-9). We were sinners and have been saved. We need to remember this so we can reach out to others without a proud and arrogant spirit.

However, the Bible also warns against being so stuck in past success or failure that we fail to live for the future (Phil. 3:13-14). Some people are so wrapped up in how bad they were that they never look ahead to see how bright their future with God can be.

~ YOUTH GROUP NEWS ~

Living UP to Your Potential

Have you ever had a parent or an older person say, "you have great potential?" Genesis 1:27, says God made both males (boys) and females (girls) in His own image. Being created in God's image is great, but to be made the image of God brings great responsibility. Everything we say or do is a reflection of the One who made us, God. We have great potential for good, but we also have great potential for bad. How you choose to think, speak, and behave will bring glory or shame on you and on God your Creator.

Are you living UP to your potential?

Others are so enamored with their former days of service to Jesus that they forget that life must be lived in the present. Jesus discouraged people from looking back when they wanted to follow Him: "Yet another said, 'I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:61-62).

Again, Jesus tells this man not to worry about the family left behind but to face forward and follow Him. Turning back is not an option for the disciple of Jesus. If there is something in your past more important than your future with Jesus, you do not want to follow Him.

The calendar of the Bible always reads today, not yesterday or tomorrow (Prov 27:1; Matt 6:34). If we assume it was better when we served sin in the past and Christianity has only made our lives boring, we will eventually turn back and be in a worse condition than before (2 Pet 2:20-22).

In Luke 9:58-62, three times people wanted to follow Jesus, and three times Jesus just about talks them out of it. We should not make Christianity harder than Jesus did, but we also should not make it easier. We should not lead people to think following Jesus will erase all of their problems, make life smoother, and always be expedient.

The way to Jesus is still narrow (Matt 7:13-14). Some people treasure comfort, hobbies, and the past so much that they may not want to follow Jesus.

Senior Saints by John McShane

We all know that the Bible is the inspired word of God. The Bible can also be used in other ways than Bible study. One way is as a history book. The Bible mentions a lot of historical places and events. Even though many of us will never get to see a lot of the places, we can view some of them today thanks to technology. If you have a computer or smartphone, you can use the Google Maps app to view the places as they are today. You can trace the rivers and look at the seaports and mountains mentioned in the Bible and have a better idea of their locations. You can also use the Bible in times of mental overload. The book of Psalms has many verses that pertain to the struggles we endure in our daily lives. I believe that many of the suggestions that psychiatrists and other mental health experts present to us are based on Bible passages.

When we are faced with personal troubles, the following two verses contain excellent advice.

1 Peter 5:7 "**Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**"

Philippians 4:6-7 "**do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**"

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

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

Our Members:

Bob Pratt
 Chuck Wyatt
 Adeline Hine
 Bill & Carlene Long
 Ciara Edwards
 Kathy Nester
 Sharon M. Washington
 Joyce Williams
 Antoine & Marcella Swain

PRAYER LIST

Brenda Mask
 Linda McShane
 Bernetta Green
 Bobby Simpson
 Brian Smith
 Margaret Coone
 Annette Phillip
 Ron & Judy Ford

Carol Edmonson
 Jim Edmonson
 Jim Turner
 Melody Baxter
 Geny Johnson
 Sharon Roy
 George Davis
 Ray Nashick

(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.

RESPONSES

Brian Smith wants to get his priorities in order; asks for the church's help and for God's forgiveness.

Wadi Khoury requests prayers for stress that he's been struggling with; also he requests prayers for a Bible study that he is leading.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Ray Nashick is planning to move to Oregon soon but has not been doing well.

Antoine Swain is suffering with Sickle Cell.

Gina Anderson (Kathy Nester's daughter) is having family problems.

Let's remember those affected by recent tornados in Alabama.

Thank you

There are cards on the bulletin board from

Kimberly Kemp
Annette Phillip
Ingrid Stewart

"In every thing, give thanks" 1 Thessalonians 5:18

If you would like to participate in our card ministry, please see Anita Shearer.

You are also invited to participate in the Fellowship In-service every 1st Sunday evening after worship. Please see Rene' Bingle for details.

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." 1 Thess. 5:11 ESV

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

April

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

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

Sunday, April 4, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Vince Daugherty
 "Lift Him Up"
 John 3:14

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Vince Daugherty
 "Passing the Mantle"
 1 Kings 19:19

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both times) Jason Hendrix
 Greeters Shearer
 Song/prayer before class Ian Enamorato
 Announcements David Anderson
 A.M. Song Leader David Williams
 Scripture reading/Prayer Tyler Anderson
 Lord's Table Jimmy Sweeney
 Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Fife
 P.M. Song Leader David Williams
 Scripture reading/Prayer Paul Sweeney
 Lord's Table Jimmy Sweeney
 Closing Prayer Terrance Dindy, Jr.

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Song Leader/prayer Ian Enamorato
 Devo Johnny Singh
 Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

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, 2020. Thank you for your cooperation. - Elders

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Mar. 7 \$7,337.65
 Mar. 14 \$6,135.05
 Mar. 21 \$7,361.00
 Contribution Average \$7,144.26

Peter declared Jesus as the Christ then rebuked Him about His death and resurrection (Mark 8:29-33). Peter saw Jesus transformed on the mountain but equated Jesus with Moses and Elijah out of ignorance and fear (Mark 9:1-8).

Peter vowed not to fall away, even to death, but didn't stay awake while Jesus prayed (Mark 14:29-42). Peter went for the kill shot to protect his Savior but fled from the crowd that was arresting Jesus (Mark 14:46,50).

Peter followed Jesus all the way into the courtyard of the high priest but denied knowing his Friend three times (Mark 14:53-54, 68-72).

Do I rebuke my Savior for convicting me of sins? Do I see His transformation in my life even when I cling to my ignorant and fearful ways? Do I vow to be faithful unto death but get tired of serving others? Do I follow close enough for the kill shot but don't have Bible studies in their courtyard?

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Matthew 14:30-31

People Who Acknowledged the Innocence of Jesus

Judas said he betrayed innocent blood Matthew 27:4

Pontius Pilate found no fault in Him Luke 23:4

Herod said He did nothing worthy of death Luke 23:15

Pontius Pilate's wife called Him a just man Matthew 27:19

The centurion said He was a righteous man Luke 23:47

Other soldiers called Him the Son of God Matthew 27:54

LADIES' CLASS

Ladies' Bible Study

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7pm

What is Truth? Part 2

John 18:38

Teacher: Shenia Brownlow-Dindy



All ladies are invited to join us in person or online. The Live stream will be through the Facebook Group: FSOP Ladies Class. If you are not already a member, please request to join the group. If you have questions please contact the Florida School of Preaching at (863) 683-4043.

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

Find us on social media



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

"BUT WHOEVER DENIES ME BEFORE MEN, HIM I WILL ALSO DENY BEFORE MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN"

MATTHEW 10:33