

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. 70 No. 015 04-11-17

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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

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

Being Our Best in Babylon

Hiram Kemp

The adult Bible class has been studying the Book of Daniel on Sunday mornings. The studies have been both interesting and encouraging. The basic message throughout the Book of Daniel is that God is with his people even in the most difficult circumstances, like in Babylon (Dan. 4:25). Israel had been sent to Babylon for seventy years of punishment, due to their disobedience to God and failure to heed his word (Jer. 25:8-11). God would not abandon those who were faithful to him while serving him in a foreign land. Though Babylon was an actual place in historic times, the word eventually became synonymous for any place where God's enemies dwelt. When the Christians in the first century suffered from Roman persecution, Rome itself was referred to as Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13; Rev. 18:2). When we consider that Christians are living in a world today that is hostile to everything we believe and cherish, it would not be wrong to refer to the world as Babylon. We can learn some lessons from the faithful Hebrews that were in ancient Babylon that will help us navigate through our time in this world (Babylon).

Protect and Maintain Our Diet (Dan. 1:8)

The first battle that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced in Babylon was over their diet. The Babylonians determined that those in the king's court were to eat certain meats and drink wine (Dan. 1:5). Daniel and his friends determined in their hearts that they would not defile themselves with the king's meat (Dan. 1:8). Daniel and his friends rejected the Babylonian diet and at the end of the testing period they were ten times better than the other men who ate the food of the Babylonians (Dan. 1:18-20). We need to be on guard concerning our diet while in Babylon. The world has a diet it would like us to digest. This diet is often offered up on silver platters through: magazines, television, news, and sports. While the things previously mentioned are not inherently sinful, we should be wise not to make them the main source of our diet (1 Cor. 6:12). We are told to desire the sincere milk of the Word of God as new born babies (1 Pet. 2:2). We need to eventually graduate from the milk of the word to the more complex and mature teachings of the Bible, described as meat (Heb. 5:11-14). If we will navigate through Babylon safely and stand out like the four Hebrews did, it will be because our diet was different from the world. We need to set aside time to enjoy the spiritual feast provided in God's word. When testing time comes, in the day of judgment, we will be shown "ten times better" than the Babylonians (Jn. 12:48).

Withstand the Fire (Dan. 3)

The most famous story in the Book of Daniel may be the fiery furnace scene. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego failed to bow to King Nebuchadnezzar's image when the music played (Dan. 3:12). Nebuchadnezzar gave the Hebrews another chance, but they rejected once more and were thrown into the fire. When they were cast into the furnace a fourth figure was seen in the furnace, and the men were free from harm, walking around without any injury from the fire (Dan. 3:24-27). The Babylon that we inhabit constantly wants us to bow, and threatens with fire if we do not. We are told that the music is playing and we must bow to the gods of atheism and evolution. There are statues being built by post-modernist which claim absolute truth is dead and we need to bow to this truth. How ironic. The statues of same-sex marriage and transgenderism have been erected and we are told to bow or else there will be fire. Like our spiritual ancestors, we need to determine in our minds that no matter how loud the music is played and no matter how hot they turn up the fire, we will not bow (Dan. 3:16-18). We believe that God can deliver us from ungodly circumstances and even if does not, we still will not surrender our allegiance to him (2 Cor. 1:9-11). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not harmed by the fire because of their faith. There is an eternal fire coming to punish all who have bowed to the images of Babylon and not to Jehovah God. We will be spared from that fire if we can withstand the fire that surrounds us here (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

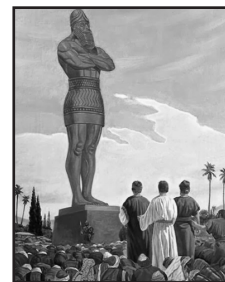
Keep Communication with God While Away from Home (Dan. 6)

If our enemies can find nothing bad to say about us except that we pray too often, we will be in good company. Daniel was accused by the high officials in Darius' court of praying too much. They deceived the king into signing a decree which forbade anyone from praying to any God except the king for thirty days (Dan. 6:7). Daniel did not let the decree stop him, he continued praying to God three times a day as he had done previously (Dan. 6:10). Daniel was thrown to the lions where God protected him, and he was not harmed by the lions that surrounded him (Dan. 6:21-22). Heaven is described as the Christian's eternal home (2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 3:20). We should consider ourselves a long way from home and in need of constant communication with our heavenly father. Thirty days is far too long a time to go without praying to our God. If we will make it safely through our temporary stay in Babylon we need to be sure to pray incessantly (1 Thess. 5:17). Daniel prayed three times a day and did not worry about lions having him for lunch. We eat three times a day and squeeze in prayer when we can. The lions that surround us are often disguised as doubt, death, discouragement, financial hardship, family trials, or worry. Like the officials in Darius' court, some say we should worry more about the lions than about prayer, but this is advice from the devil. We can enjoy the peace that was Daniel's if we will pray to God to deliver us from the threats that surround us and trust him to do so (2 Thess. 3:1-2). There will be no miraculous angel to show up in person and destroy our enemies and difficulties, but God still delivers the righteous in times of trouble (2 Pet. 2: 9).

Conclusion

Babylon is no fun and we would much rather be home with the Lord. The Psalmist asked long ago, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psa. 137:4). The answer is, we can sing the Lord's song in a strange land because we will not be here very long. We live in a fallen world and must overcome here if we ever plan to live in the world where these struggles do not exist. While in Babylon and often overcome by all that surrounds us, let us remember we can triumph because Jesus did. Jesus assured his disciples as he headed to the cross to pay the price for our salvation "In the world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33).

Concerning Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego



They wouldn't bend.

They held on to the will of God so we are told.

They wouldn't bow.

They would not bow their knees

to the idol made of gold.

They wouldn't burn.

They were protected by the fourth man in the fire.

They wouldn't bend, they wouldn't bow, the wouldn't burn.

--Arthur Smith, "The Fourth Man"

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Duane Nelson was admitted to L.R.M.C. last Thursday with a lung infection. He hopefully was to be discharged Sunday. Continue to keep in prayer Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Kenny French, JoAnn Hoback, Bob McAnally, Grace McAnally, Sharon Washington, and Margaret Coone.

Relatives: Tonya Mathis, Sarah Blevins, Owen Lewis, Bobby Cole, Preston Craft and Evie McCormack.

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

Others: Joyce Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner, Elizabeth Tubbs, Robin Pack and Jack Pinckert.

Upcoming Events

Saturday April 15th: Easter Egg Hunt at the Bingle's at 10 a.m.

Saturday April 15th: Men's Breakfast at the Eagle Lake Church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday April 18th: F.S.O.P. Ladies Class at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday April 22nd: Youth Seminar at the Kissimmee Church of Christ from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. See Hiram or Brian if you can attend.

May 5th-7th: Weeki Wachee Youth Retreat. Please see flyer and slide for more information.

Membership Information Questionnaires

We are in the process of updating our church members' information questionnaires. If you have not already filled one out, please pick up a form in the foyer, complete it and turn it into the office, even if you have filled one out in years past. The elders thank you for your cooperation.

Visitors

Cathy Garland, Brian and Zach, Barbara Farmer and Oliver Munchel, James George, Katrina Greene, Jane Jessee, Victor Travis and Alexis, Amanda Patterson and Mary Moore.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

April

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** Josh Estridge
Fred Rapley **Assist** David Anderson

Sunday, April 16, 2017

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Bingle
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Ken Walker

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jim Turner

Greeters The Bingles
Att. Cards..... Paul and Antonio
Open & Close Building David Anderson

Wed. April 19, 2017

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer John McShane
Closing Prayer Fred Strickland

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005

Sunday, April 23, 2017

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Williams
Prayer..... Paul Romine

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Matt Willcut
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson

Greeters Darlene T./ Brenda M.
Att. Cards..... Paul and Ian
Open & Close Building David Anderson

Wed. April 26, 2017

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Jimmy Sweeney
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Mar. 19	\$4,800.48
Mar. 26.....	\$5,396.66
Apr. 02.....	\$5,970.10
Apr. 09.....	\$5,764.00
Contribution Average.....	\$5,441.77
2016 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,716.51



Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (6th Street) and Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

Is The Lord's Supper a Remembrance of the Resurrection?

It is common to hear some church members this time of year say something like, "We are not to observe 'Easter,' but we are to remember the resurrection every first day of the week through the Lord's Supper." The first part of this statement is true. We are not told by the Lord to observe "Easter" as a religious holiday. This is not to say that it is wrong for us to participate in cultural activities such as painting and hiding eggs, or to even in our own personal reflection focus on the resurrection of Christ, but it is to say that the Lord did not put any special spiritual significance on what is called "Easter" today. The second part of the statement above, though, is not exactly true. That is, in establishing the Lord's Supper, Jesus did not say anything about remembering His resurrection but to remember His sacrificial body (Luke 22:19-20).



When Paul corrected the Corinthians' abuse of the Lord's Supper, he said that "the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body ... do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Twice Paul emphasized remembrance. Remembrance of what? Christ's body and His blood as He is about to be crucified. *(continued below)*



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 . . .



Please continue to pray for our evangelistic mission trip to Penonome, Panama, July 1-9, 2017. All involved would really appreciate it. Thanks!

(continued from above) Furthermore, Paul said that in partaking of the Lord's supper, the participating members of the congregation "proclaim the Lord's death," not His burial nor resurrection (1 Corinthians 11:26). Paul's mention of "till He comes" was not part of the remembrance but the duration of how long the church is to "show the Lord's death" through the Lord's Supper. That is, as long as this world stands, members of the church of Christ are to partake of the Lord's Supper "upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). It almost seems as if some use the phrase "death, burial, and resurrection of Christ" as a cliché at best or a vain repetition at worse. That is, they cannot seem to mention just the "death of Christ" without also mentioning the "burial and resurrection." Whatever else we think about when partaking of the Lord's Supper and "examining" ourselves is between us and the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Jesus, however, instructs us to remember the sacrificial body and blood of the Lord when we partake of the Lord's Supper. ❤️ *Brian*



Brian and Hiram with Alan Highers. We thank brother Highers for reminding us of the differences between the church & denominationalism.

Save the Date
Nov. 12-15, 2017
Gospel Meeting
with Steve Higginbotham