



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 74 No. 17 April 27, 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
Don Iverson.....India
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

GO DOWN TO THE POTTER'S HOUSE

by Vince Daugherty

AN OBJECT LESSON (Jeremiah 18:1-11)

Israel was at a tipping point as a nation. They were running swiftly down a path of destruction away from the face of God. God's blessings were conditional on Israel. If they would remain faithful to Him, then he would be faithful and bless them. Through the prophets, God warned what would result in apostasy. The nation would be destroyed and taken captive. Vaillant efforts of God's messengers did not have the desired effect. Like a dumb animal drawn to astray, Israel went the way of evil and idolatry time and time again. In the days of Jeremiah, God instructed Jeremiah to visit the potter's house (Jer. 18:3). When Jeremiah observed the potter, he saw, "he was making something at the wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter." (Jer. 18:3,4).

In bringing Jeremiah to the potter's house, God's purpose was to give an object lesson to Jeremiah and Israel. "O house of Israel, can I do not with you as this potter?" "Look as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!" God's condition, "if the nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it." Jeremiah is charged with an exhortation for the people, "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good."

ISRAEL'S RESPONSE (Jeremiah 18:12-18)

There was clearly a right and a wrong response to Jeremiah's exhortation. Sadly, Israel is too far gone. The vessel had been baked and dried. "And they said, 'That is hopeless!'" There was no collapsing the lump on the wheel; there was only a stiff, brittle vessel. God gave divine commentary by way of a stinging metaphor to describe the depths of Israel's stupidity. "The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing. Will a man leave the snow water of Lebanon, Which comes from the rock of the field? Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters?"

Israel doubled down on their poor decisions and thought they could take it out on God's servant Jeremiah. They did not believe his pronouncements from God and rejected even the messenger himself. "Come let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."

JEREMIAH'S IMPRECATORY PRAYER (Jeremiah 18:19-23)

Israel obviously chose wrong but a challenging part of the narrative is Jeremiah's response to Israel's rejection. It is challenging because of the language Jeremiah employs against those who opposed him and God. Notice some of the language he employs: "deliver up their children to famine," pour out their blood By the force of the sword; Let their wives become widows And bereaved of their children. Let their men be put to death, their young men be slain by the sword in battle." "Provide no atonement for their iniquity," "let them be overthrown," "Deal thus with them in the time of Your anger." Jeremiah's language can be unsettling to our ears as he is God's mouthpiece. Some things to remember about the context. God is providing a way of escape from the calamity that was coming for them and Israel refused. Jeremiah's prayer, though harsh, was the reality of their own choosing, not Jeremiah's (or God's for that matter).

One may object to Jeremiah's prayer saying he does not display a very merciful spirit. Remember, Israel had flatly rejected the grace of God, so a change to Jeremiah's tone would not have produced a different outcome. Also, Jeremiah had done well by warning and exhorting Israel, and yet they had prepared evil for him. "They dug a pit for my life," "they have dug a pit to take me, and hidden snares for my feet." Israel was not innocent, they were enemies of God and Jeremiah. Why would Jeremiah pray for blessing on Israel? The only prayer appropriate for that situation was one of cursing.

LESSONS

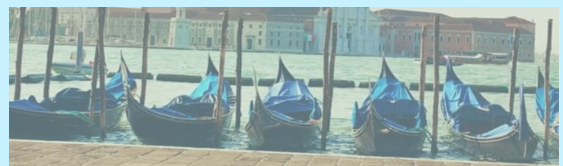
1. Trust the Heavenly Potter: God invites individuals to come into a relationship with Him; we are the clay, He is the potter. He created us in His own image. If we are humble and willing, we can be shaped and molded into whatever image He desires. But Scripture gives warning to those who would arrogantly speak against our Maker -- "Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of Him who made it, 'He did not make me' Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, 'He has no understanding'?" (Isaiah 29:16).

2. You Determine Your Hearts Softness (or Stiffness): An honest question may be, who is responsible for the hardening of Israel's hearts? Clearly, the answer is the Israelites themselves. They could have learned the lesson, heeded the warnings, and turned back to the right. However, Israel's own hardness of heart took them to a place of no return, no matter what message was preached. No one could look at God and accuse Him of being too harsh. He had envisioned Israel as His crown jewel to show off to the world. Yet, they had chosen to be hardened clay vessels. "The precious sons of Zion, Valuable as fine gold, How they are regarded as clay pots, The work of the hands of the potter!" (Lamentations 4:2).

3. Dried Dishonored Vessels Are Only Good for Object Lessons: While Jeremiah's imprecatory prayer may be hard to swallow, his assessment is correct. Israel was not to be blessed but cursed. There was nothing to be done to stiffnecked people. We would be remiss, though, to think that a dried dishonorable vessel is good for nothing. God told Jeremiah to go out and perform another object lesson in front of the elders of Israel. "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again'" (Jeremiah 19:11). Those who we can observe through Scripture or in our own lives that have gone beyond feeling and are unwilling to be softened by the Word of God are still able to teach us. Dried dishonored vessels become object lessons for us of how not to do it. They become a warning for our own heart examination. Is my heart soft and malleable in the hands of the Master Potter? Is my life one that is being shaped and molded more and more into the image of His dear Son, or has my heart been baked and dried? Am I the potter's vessel that is only good to be smashed for others to look upon and be astonished? "Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?" (Romans 9:21).

Senior Saints by John McShane

I found the following statement on Facebook recently, and it got me thinking. "We are not all in the same boat. We are in the same storm. Some have yachts, some have canoes, and some are drowning." There are many times that various boats are mentioned in the Holy Bible. Noah built and sailed a big one. Moses was sent adrift in a very small one. The apostles had fishing boats, and Jesus used one in various places. Paul sailed on them on his missionary journeys. It seems that all of these boats had a helmsman that safely got everyone to their destination. All of us are in the storm we call earth. All of us are in a boat that will take us to our final destination. The question is, who is the helmsman guiding our boat, and what will be our final destination? With God as the captain of our ship and Jesus as the helmsman, we surely can have Heaven as our final port. Who is guiding your boat? In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way...no one comes to the Father but through me."



~ YOUTH GROUP NEWS ~



We are starting soon!

There are sign-up sheets on your bulletin board for the different events for **Lads 2 Leaders 2021.**

Pray about your decision and talk with your parents!

Before May 5th, add your name to the event sheet(s) that you can participate in this year.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

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

Our Members:

Bob & Bea Pratt
 Chuck Wyatt
 Adeline Hine
 Bill & Carlene Long
 Cieara Edwards
 Kathy Nester
 Sharon M. Washington
 Ron & Judy Ford
 Nasheka Medley

PRAYER LIST

Brenda Mask
 Linda McShane
 Bernetta Green
 Bobby Simpson
 Brian Smith
 Margaret Coone
 Annette Phillip
 Debbie Bush
 Antoine & Marcella Swain
 Carol Edmonson
 Jim Edmonson
 Jim Turner
 Melody Baxter
 Geny Johnson
 George Davis
 Joyce Williams
 Stacey Paulin

(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. Ask to come visit!

UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Andre & Nasheka Medley are asking the prayers of the church to pray for Nasheka's pregnancy that she will have another healthy baby girl tentatively due August 16th. Also pray that she doesn't experience any fibroid pain in this pregnancy.

Debbie Bush still has lingering pneumonia and will more tests soon. She thanks everyone for the continued prayers and misses everyone, too.

Melody Baxter, Virginia Walker, & Jessica Palmer are home not feeling well.

OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES

to **Charlene Smith** on the death of her sister, Latoyia Leigh Scott, on Tuesday, April 26.

Thank you

There is a card & a note on the bulletin board from
Bob & Bea Pratt
Debbie Bush



SFA CHURCH OF CHRIST

VBS 2021

AN "IN-TENTS" FAITH

Saturday, June 5, 2021

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Remember to pre-register before May 16

In honor of **Casey & Josh**, we are having a bridal sprinkling until **May 2**. You can bring gifts and put them on the table in the foyer. Let's remember to lift them up in prayer as they begin this life together as a family.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

May

Designated Elder - Bobby Sheumaker

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Song Leader/Prayer Vince Daugherty
 Devo David Anderson
 Closing Prayer Terrance Dindy, Jr

Sunday, May 2, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Brian Kenyon
"Family Reception"
 Romans 15:5-7

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Brian Kenyon
"Dead People Don't Fear"
 Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:27-30

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both times) David Anderson
 Greeters Nona Williams
 Song/prayer before class Ian Enamorado
 Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
 A.M. Song Leader David Williams
 Scripture reading/Prayer Terrance Dindy, Jr.
 Lord's Table Lou Van Allen
 Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

6:00 P.M.

Greeters O. Smith/Thrower
 P.M. Song Leader David Williams
 Scripture reading/Prayer Alex Parramore
 Lord's Table Lou Van Allen
 Closing Prayer Kyle Bingle

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Song Leader/prayer Jonny Singh
 Devo Zach Jones
 Closing Prayer Paul 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, 2020.

Thank you for your cooperation. - Elders

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Apr. 11 \$7,370.00
 Apr. 18 \$5,868.00
 Apr. 25 \$7,092.00
 Contribution Average \$7,199.26

On a recent trip to Alabama, I noticed some beautiful trees covered in white blossoms. Everywhere I looked, I would see one of these beauties! Of course, I had to get a picture with one to show the Facebook world. That's when the truth was revealed. As I approached one of these trees, a horrid stench overcame me! It was awful! How could something SO beautiful stink so badly?

Then it occurred to me. This is how Satan works! He loves to make sin and false doctrine appear so appealing to us, but underneath it "stinks." Scripture tells us in Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." In Isaiah 5:25, Israel rejected the instruction of God and tells us their "root" became like a stench.

We must keep our eyes on Christ to avoid Satan's deceptive ways. He loves to make evil look beautiful and appealing as he did in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6). In the New Testament, the Pharisees were condemned for appearing to be whited sepulchers, beautiful on the outside, but inwardly they were full of uncleanness (Matthew 23:27). Therefore, let us stay alert to Satan's devices and look at things with the eye of God (1 Samuel 16:7), not allowing Satan to deceive us (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). As Christian women, we must always strive to be beautiful from the heart to be pleasing to God. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Proverbs 31:30.

Dates to remember

April

April 27 - FSOP Ladies' Class, 7:00 pm

April 30 - May 2 - WWCC, ages 13 and older

May

May 5 - Deadline to sign up for Lads to Leaders

May 8 - Parents Night Out at the Daugherty's, 4-8:00 pm

May 9 - *Mother's Day*
- Elders, Deacons, Preachers meeting, 4:00 pm

May 16 - Deadline to pre-register for VBS
- FSOP graduation after evening service

May 18 - Taco Tuesday at the Kemps, 6:00 pm

May 21 - Youth Group outdoor movie night, TBD

May 31 - **MEMORIAL DAY**

Challenging Words From Jesus

Not everyone goes to heaven
Matthew 7:21-23

Jesus is the only way
John 14:6

We must repent or perish
Luke 13:1-5

Failure to believe in Jesus is
damnable
John 8:21-24

We must love Jesus above everyone
Matthew 10:37-39

We must forsake all to follow Jesus
Luke 14:33

We will have tribulation in the world
John 16:33

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

Find us on social media



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue

Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

"BUT SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED TO YOU"

MATTHEW 6:33