

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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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
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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

A Mental Struggle

Hugo McCord

He who knows “*the end from the beginning*” (Isaiah 46:10) knew that man, created as free to make his own choices, would sin. “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8), but love could not ignore that which is the opposite of the One who is “*righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works*” (Psalm 145:17). Sin-offerings of animals, even burnt sacrifices, would not remove man’s guilt. What could be done?

One envisions a heavenly conference back in eternity producing the “*plan of the ages*” (prothesin ton aionon, Ephesians 3:11) in which not an animal but a human sacrifice was suggested, and God asked: “*Whom shall I send, and who shall go for us?*” (cf. Isaiah 6:8). The One afterward called “*Jesus*” volunteered, saying, “*Look! I come*” (cf. Psalm 40:7).

God made it clear that Jesus did not have to go to the earth and become a human sacrifice, and Jesus responded, “*I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart*” (cf. Psalm 40:8). That statement pleased the Father, and, down on the earth, Jesus said,

The Father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it again. No one takes it from me. I myself lay it down. I have authority both to lay it down and to take it again. This commandment I received from my Father (John 10:17-18).

As the time drew near for Jesus to lay down his life, he underwent a mental struggle! Was there any other way to save sinners than by suffering, than by being nailed to a cross? Long before day, during the night of Thursday, April 6. A.D. 30, Jesus in Gethsemane was in mental agony! He “*fell on his face*” (Matthew 26:39) and was praying. The night was cool (cf. John 18:18), yet Jesus’ sweat was like “*great drops of blood falling down on the ground*” (Luke 22:44). He prayed, “*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup [of suffering in death] pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will*” (Matthew 26:39).

Thus the greatest Preacher who ever lived solved every problem by being determined to do God’s will. So, I can do no less and be comfortable. David prayed, “*Teach me to do your will, for you are my God*” (Psalm 143:10). Jesus affirmed, “*I have not come down from heaven to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me*” (John 6:38).

A Vicious Cycle

Andy Robison

David Pharr makes an astute observation in his book, *Thy Kingdom Come*, on p. 148. “Ungodly living fosters unbelieving hearts. At the same time unbelieving hearts encourage ungodly living.” Evidence of the truth of this doubled edged statement is available on many fronts.

Take the first half first. “Ungodly living fosters unbelieving hearts.” Any observer of human conduct can quickly come to the conclusion that many people likely do not believe in God because they realize the consequences. If they believed, they would have to change their lifestyles. Somewhere down deep, they know that admittance of the existence of the Divine would also be admittance of the existence of a Judge to whom they would someday answer. They don’t want to change their habits; they don’t want any unseen God dictating their lifestyles, so they simply deny he exists.

These are but modern embodiments of the ancient principle set down in 2 Peter 3:3-5. Notice the passage: “Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water.”

Those who want to “walk according to their own lusts” are fond of dismissing Christianity and the attendant notion of the Second Coming of Christ for judgment. They echo, “Where is the promise of His coming?” They believe that since they have never seen major changes in the pattern of days and nights, that none will ever happen. “Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” Peter identifies their motivation interestingly. He says they “willfully forget” the evidence concerning creation and a flood of judgment in the history of man. Willful forgetting is inspiration’s way of saying that “ungodly living fosters unbelieving hearts.”

Now consider the second half of the statement. “Unbelieving hearts encourage ungodly living.” People who don’t believe in God really have no reason to live honorably. If there is no standard of right and wrong, and no penalty for wrong, why not do the wrong? Those who deny God fall into this trap in varying degrees. The logical extreme of an atheistic belief is “looking out for number one” without any heed to the needs, rights or concerns of others. There is, in short, no reason to behave. Paul, in arguing the importance of believing in the resurrection, even made mention of this fact. He stated that those who would not believe would essentially give their lives over to the hedonistic philosophy of “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Corinthians 15:32).

It is a vicious cycle. If someone does not believe in God, he is led into all sorts of harmful, sinful behavior. If he comes to like that behavior, he will likely persist in a denial of God. A change of belief pattern would be most inconvenient for him. The old statement rings true: If God does not exist, nothing matters; if God does exist, nothing else matters.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Jim Turner is home from the hospital, but still very weak. His doctor has advised him to not drive for quite some time. Also keep JoAnn Hoback, Taleah Anderson, Jacqueline Dopwell, Elizabeth Tubbs, Dorothy Trice, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, (Sam Bolding's sister), Bobby Cooper, (Virginia Walker's brother), who is very ill and under hospice care, Janet Romberger and Harold Rister.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Bill Burton, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Duane Nelson and Sharon Edler.

Others: Jackie Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner and Alyssa Buckner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

Upcoming Events

May 14th: Ladies Day at the Pinellas Park Church of Christ. Starts at 9:30 followed by lunch at 12:30.

May 21st: Men's breakfast at the North Lakeland Church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

May 22nd-26th: Gospel Meeting at the 10th St. Church of Christ. Hiram Kemp will be the speaker. See the flyer or the slide for more details.

Response

We rejoice with the angels in heaven that Julie Fontaine was baptized into Christ on Monday May 9th. Please keep Julie in our prayers and be a source of encouragement to her as a new sister in the Lord.

Thank You

A big and special thank you to all of our members here at South Florida Ave. for doing such a great job hosting the large crowd we had here for the F.S.O.P. graduation. Many even brought food, but did not stay and eat in order to leave room for the guests. Thank you again.

Visitors

Tania Portelles-Driggs, Debra Pavlovic Okolichany, Brian Strickland, Brooke Heck, Carol Palermo and Alexander, Chag & Sabrina Tagtow and family, Trudi & Carl Chambers, Scott & Deborah Mathis, Daniel & Katrina Stearsman and family, Cindy Hoffelder, Russell & Denise Anderson, Scott & Hannah Pfetscher, Kyle & Shayna Coe and Kyle Jr, Dana Abbott and Carter Hale.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

May

Frank Hamby **Table** Fred Strickland
Ken Walker **Assist** Bobby Simpson

Sunday, May 15, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer Kenny French

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Paul Romine
Sermon Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer John McShane

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Stacey Paulin
Sermon Brian Kenyon
Greeters The Fifes
Att. Cards Antonio & Paul
Closing Prayer David Deal
Open & Close Building Kenny French

Wed. May 18, 2016

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

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231

Sunday, May 22, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Tucker Sweeney
Prayer C.J. Grimes

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Ken Walker
Sermon Bob McAnally
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Sermon Brian Kenyon
Greeters The Longfellows
Att. Cards Paul and Ian
Closing Prayer Jimmy Sweeney
Open & Close Building Kenny French

Wed. May 25, 2016

Song Leader Bill Long
Opening Prayer Jeff Bingle
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Apr. 17 \$4,180.90
Apr. 24 \$5,569.00
May. 01 \$5,601.20
May. 08 \$4,910.50
Contribution Average \$5,083.10
2016 Weekly Budget \$4,422.60

Transgender Bathrooms? “Give Me A [Potty] Break!”

Even a guy like me, who only listens to the news when he is driving in the car and it happens to be on the radio or when he is visiting a place that has it on television, has been blown away by all this transgender bathroom discussion. The thrust of this article is not about identifying an alleged chemical imbalance in the brain that causes a person of one gender to dress and act like a person of another gender. It is not about God’s teaching against men dressing like women (see Deuteronomy 22:5 and 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, where at least part of the lesson in verse 14 is that men are not to appear as women in any given culture). It is not to “demonize” nor make “monsters” out of people of one gender who dress and act like people of another gender. It is not about policy that gives sexual predators and pedophiles the “green light” to prowl the bathroom of their choice. Rather, this article is about another glaring example of this world’s attempt to rid life of any objective standard by retraining society to think that there is no difference nor consequences in rejecting what the Bible teaches! How ridiculous can policy-makers be to think it is perfectly fine for guys to intermingle with girls in the bathroom or, even as some propose, in school locker rooms? Truly, this is a modern illustration of what Paul said about the Gentiles: “although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:21-22)! What can faithful Christians do in a cultural environment such as this. First, know what the *(continued below)*



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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

VBS
June 18

There will be a meeting following evening services Sunday, May 15, for those willing to help with VBS. Due to this summer’s schedule, it will be a Saturday only program.

The time is drawing near for our mission trip, to Nicaragua **June 25 thru July 3**. If you want to make a special contribution to this work, please see the elders.



SFA Graduates We will put together a bulletin announcing our graduates. Please get a picture to the office by May 15. Thanks!

(continued from above) Bible teaches concerning God, human nature, and sin. Our faith is built on our knowledge of God’s word (Romans 10:17). Second, continue to live as God instructs, not as the world does (Romans 12:1-2). Flush ungodly political correctness down the toilet ... of any appropriate bathroom! Third, not only be ready to answer those who ask why you are different from this world (1 Peter 3:15), but also take every opportunity to verbally teach others what the Bible says because it contains all the answers we need to please God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). Fourth, realize that “evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13). There is “no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). God’s people have had to live among the foolish from shortly after the beginning of time. Let us be courageous and stand up for God, “knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58)! ❤️ *Brian*