

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
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

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

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses!

Brian R. Kenyon

When we were young, many of us heard the refrain, “Excuses, excuses, excuses,” from those disappointed in us, whether a teacher, parent, older sibling, or other person of importance in our lives. After we honestly evaluated the situation, they were right — our excuses were lame! As we reflect upon the much more important work of the Lord, many of us are still making excuses as to why we cannot do what the Lord expects. If we honestly evaluate our excuses, we will find, as with the excuses in our younger days, they are still lame. Moses is a classic excuse maker. God told him at the burning bush, “Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:10). As we look at Moses’ excuses, we find that they are basically the same as ours. We can overcome them the same way Moses should have (and eventually did) — by trusting in the Lord!

“I Am Not Important”

Moses’ first excuse: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Ex. 3:11). In this excuse, Moses tried to convince God that he was not important enough to lead God’s people out of Egypt. After all, he was only a keeper of his father-in-law’s flock (Ex. 3:1). God answered Moses’ excuse, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain” (Ex. 3:12). God promised Moses that He would be with him and that he would have success. Moses just needed to believe it. Sometimes we do not think we are “important” enough to take on the tasks that God has assigned. However, we are important to God. Not only are we made in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27), but He has promised to be with His faithful children always (Mt. 28:20 cf. Rom. 8:31-39). We are important enough to do God’s will!

“I Don’t Know Enough About God”

Moses’ second excuse: “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” (Ex. 3:13). Remember, by this time Moses had been in the land of Midian forty years, as the result of fleeing there after Pharaoh was informed that Moses killed an Egyptian (Ex. 2:11-15). In this excuse, Moses supposes that he goes to his people Israel, and they ask him, in *(continued on page 2)*

essence, “By whose authority are you sent?” Moses is thus declaring that he does not know enough about God to be able to answer their question. However, God gives Moses all the answer that he needs to put this excuse to rest, “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Ex. 3:14). “I AM THAT I AM” is one of the greatest statements in all the Bible. It emphasizes the timelessness of God. It declares God as the self-existing one, without beginning and end. Jesus also applied this term to Himself (Jn. 8:58). After answering this excuse of Moses, God outlined the entire campaign against Egypt (Ex. 3:15-22). Sometimes we do not think we know enough about God to teach His will to others. However, as Moses would eventually learn, God is able to “back up” His own claims. Yes, we must make our life a life of learning about God (Rom. 10:17), but we do not have to be “professors” before teaching others the Gospel. The power is in the great “I AM THAT I AM,” not in us!

“Nobody Will Believe Me”

After God outlined His campaign against Egypt and what Moses could expect from Pharaoh, Moses comes up with another excuse: “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you’” (Ex. 4:1). Moses did not think he could convince anyone. God answers this excuse with a display of His power by changing Moses’ rod into a snake and back into a rod, by giving Moses a leprous hand and then healing it, and by promising him that if they will not believe these signs, He will change the water of the river into blood (Ex. 4:2-9). Sometimes we think people will not believe us, and sometimes they will not, but let us realize that God has the power to convince anyone who is honestly seeking truth (Jn. 7:17). The power is in the word of God, not us!

“I Am Not A Good Talker”


After God’s demonstration, “Moses said to the LORD, ‘O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue’” (Ex. 4:10). Moses did not think he was persuasive enough. God answered, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say” (Ex. 4:11-12). Sometimes we think we are not eloquent enough to teach someone the Gospel. Again, let us remember that the power is not in us, but in the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). We are responsible for teaching and encouraging. God will take care of the rest (1 Cor. 3:6).

“Others Are Better Equipped Than Me”

Moses’ final excuse, “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send” (Ex. 4:13). Even after all the power displayed and promises made by God, Moses wanted someone else to go! This time, “the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses” (Ex. 4:14a). Then, God gave Moses Aaron to be his mouthpiece (Ex. 4:14b-16). This incident teaches us that God’s patience runs thin when we continually make excuses as to why we cannot obey Him. Sometimes we think others are better equipped than us. While that may be true in one sense, in another sense, we are better equipped for our particular task than anyone else! We may be able to reach people that others, who may seem “more equipped,” may not reach.

Conclusion

All of us are important! Let us not make excuses as to why we cannot do God’s will. If we are not doing God’s will now, what possibly could be our excuse? Let us trust in the Lord and do His will. ♥ Brian



Follow Me

*I traveled down a lonely road, and no one seemed to care.
The burden on my weary back had bowed me to despair.
I oft complained to Jesus how folks were treating me,
And then I heard Him say so tenderly.*

*“My feet were also weary upon the Calvary road;
The cross became so heavy, I fell beneath the load.
Be faithful weary pilgrim, the morning I can see
Just lift your cross and follow close to Me.”*

- Ian F. Stanphill

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Please continue to pray for Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Kenny French, Bob McAnally, Margaret Coone, Sharon Mathis Washington and Ron Ford.

Relatives: Sandy West, Benny Martin, (Carla Moore's uncle, who has cancer) and John Begley.

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

Others: Joyce Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner, Connie Hyer, Johnny King and Jack Pinckert.

Upcoming Events

Saturday May 20th: Men's Breakfast at the North Lakeland Church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday May 28th: Graduation party for Lorelly Enamorado in the fellowship hall from 3:30 to 5:30. Come help us celebrate.

Sunday June 4th: Fellowship In Service following evening services. Please bring finger foods.

Save the Date of Saturday July 29th: V.B.S. here at South Florida Ave. More details will follow at a later date.

Graduation

If you or someone in your immediate family is graduating this year, please submit a picture to the office along with the name of the school and degree (if applicable). You can also e-mail this information to the church. We will have a special bulletin!

Response

Katrina Greene, daughter of Virginia Walker, responded to the invitation on Sunday Morning and would like to rededicate her life to the Lord! What a joyous occasion! Please pray for her on her new journey.

Visitors

Christy Wright, Patrick Skaggs, T'Jean Tomlinson, Pauline Gilmore, Hank Bolding, Toney Wilson and Bill & Dana Robertson.



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. Let's influence Lakeland!

Watch . . .



In Search of the Lord's Way

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

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

May

Frank Hamby **Table** Fred Strickland
Chaz Hine **Assist** Bobby Simpson

Sunday, May 21, 2017

9:30 A.M.
Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer Kenny French

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Paul Romine
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer John McShane

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Stacey Paulin
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal

Greeters The Fifes
Att. Cards Willcut boys
Open & Close Building C.J. Grimes

Wed. May 24, 2017

Song Leader Casey Paulin
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

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

Sunday, May 28, 2017

9:30 A.M.
Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer C.J. Grimes

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Ken Walker
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jimmy Sweeney

Greeters The Williams
Att. Cards Paul and Sebastian
Open & Close Building C.J. Grimes

Wed. May 31, 2017

Song Leader Stacey Paulin
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Closing Prayer Jimmy Sweeney

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Apr. 23	\$5,273.51
Apr. 30	\$5,226.35
May. 07	\$4,888.61
May. 14	\$5,484.25
Contribution Average	\$5,396.71
2017 Weekly Budget	\$4,716.51

Trivia Won't Win Heaven's Pursuit

Recently while visiting Disney World, I noticed a couple with a phone app playing a game of trivia, where one person held the phone so he could not see the screen, and the other person asked questions to get him to answer correctly the piece of trivia displayed on the phone. While I think that is a great way pass the time while waiting for the next ride, I also thought what good will that information do toward eternity. I thought how that time could be spent learning Bible trivia, then it dawned on me: yes, the Bible contains lots of facts and true accounts of interesting people or situations, but all of that was not written just for us to know and admire. This was written so we would put into practice God's will for us! It is great to know trivial facts about the Bible, especially for a Bible Bowl. However, it is much more important to incorporate those facts into our living for God. Notice a few reasons why the Scripture was written. First, Paul said that "whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). That is, what the Bible says happened long ago was to give us the patience and the comfort in order to have hope in our trials. Second, Paul said that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, *(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 . . .

 **GHANA MISSION TRIP**
BRIAN and **HIRAM** will be on an evangelistic mission trip to Ghana, Africa, with Bob Bauer and team May 29 - June 12. They will be involved in preaching and one-on-one Bible studies.

Continue praying for our YES II campaign to Penonome, Panama, July 1-9, 2017. Our young people and their chaperones will be passing out tracts, inviting people to the Gospel meeting, and conducting personal Bible studies.



 **Saturday, July 29th**

(continued from above) thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Only the Scripture can provide us with every bit of information we need for faith and practice. Third, John said that "truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). What was written specifically about Jesus and generally about everything else (which automatically includes Jesus) is meant to bring us to belief (Romans 10:17), which will also bring us to salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 16:30-34). God wants everyone to be saved, but the only way that can happen is to obey God based on knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4)! Are we saved? Have we obeyed God's plan of salvation? Let's make today, our day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)! ❤️ *Brian*