

# 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. 69 No.22 05-31-16

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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

## What Is God?

*Alec Kenney*

There have been many questions as to who God is, but it is very different to ask what God is. There are three aspects as to what God is that people wish to hear. The first of these aspects is one that is above the rest because without it the other aspects would not be possible. If you turn to 1 John 4:7-8, it says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." If God is love, then, it stands to reason that a Christian must love, for it is God we serve. John 3:16 says, "For God so Loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." You see, God is a God of love.

Not only is He love, but God is also a God of mercy. Romans 11:30-32 reads as, "For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all." We have received mercy in the form of a bloody cross that held the dying Savior. Hosea 2:23 says this, "Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, You are My people! And they shall say, You are my God!" Here we have a prediction of the mercy shown to us in the church as a result of the Christ's suffering. His suffering came from the mercy of God. Did we deserve this mercy? Of course not, God gave us mercy because He is love and He is merciful.

Along these same lines, we can see that God is faithful. First Corinthians 10:13 reads, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." God is faithful to a species that is notoriously unfaithful. Why is He so faithful? He is so faithful because God is love and He is mercy. He has been faithful to His Word; when He promised the Messiah, the Messiah came. His faithfulness will be the source of great sorrow and anguish. Matthew 13:49-50 tells us, "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Not all of God's faithfulness is something to be jubilant about. For those living in sin, His faithfulness is a nightmare of eternity. Take courage, though, because His promise of a better home for us in Christ will come to fruition, and we will be given a place in heaven.

# Jesus Forgiving on the Cross

*Paul R. Mobley*

Jesus said, while on the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. . .” (Luke 23:34). This passage seems to confuse some, and others interpret it to include more people than it should. So let us take a look at it.

**First**, one needs to understand that this event took place under the Old Law, and not under Christianity. The Christian Law came into effect forty days after Christ’s resurrection on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The rentng (or tearing down the middle) of the veil in the Temple (Luke 23:45; Matthew 27:51) is understood to mean doing away with the Old Law and replacing it with Christ Law, or Christianity. Therefore, any actions of Jesus on the cross are not governed by Christian Law, even though such acts were good.

**Secondly**, when Jesus said to one of the thieves beside him on a cross being crucified at the same time, that the thief would be with him that day in paradise (Luke 23:43), it does not mean that action is for any other person, or anytime since then. Today we are under the Law of Christ, or Christianity. Taking the thief to paradise took place under the Old Law.

**Third**, it is not stated that Jesus forgave “them.” Even though it may be speculation, it should be reasonable to believe that he would not ask God to forgive anyone unless he had first forgiven them. The stated action is that he asked God, his Father, to forgive them. That we know for certain.

**Fourth**, in Luke 23:34, “they” in part A and in Part B refer to the same persons. These are those who precipitated and were active in causing Jesus to be crucified, and it is these who make up the “they” and the “them.” Matthew Henry, in his commentary, Vol. 5, pages 666-667, suggests that these were the followers of the priests and scribes, who acted out of ignorance generated by these rulers who they were following. Thus it may be said that those who come by ignorance of God’s Word honestly are forgivable, while those who refuse to learn of God and his Word may not be as easily nor ever forgiven. The rulers referred to did not change continuing to refuse Jesus and his teachings. Church leaders, and rulers, today who alter God’s Word omit parts of God’s Word, or refuse his Word may find themselves in the same unforgiven state as these rulers under the Old Law, if they continue in those beliefs and practices, and teach those beliefs to members of the church where they rule.

**Fifth**, when were these forgiven? Immediately, or later? When did God forgive them? We have the answer in Acts 2. In verse 23b, speaking to Jews, Peter said, (of Jesus) “ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” So there were at least some present who heard Peter that had been a part of the group who crucified Christ.

**Sixth**, in Acts 2 Peter proceeded with his sermon, until in verse 37 these Jews asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” They had become convinced that they needed help, they needed to be forgiven and that they needed to change. They had heard the Word, Peter’s sermon, believed it and now Peter tells them what to do.

**Seventh**, Peter tells them in verse 38 what they asked, what they needed to do, indeed what they must do, saying, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” So it follows that “they” who had participated in crucifying Christ were not forgiven by God until they heard Peter’s sermon, and repented and were baptized.

**Eighth**, all together that day about three thousand were baptized (verse 41), among them some who had participated in the crucifixion of Christ. Ninth, and in verse 47b we see, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”—that is those who had met all the requirements.

We can draw some conclusions: (1) Jesus did not ask for all people to be forgiven. Rather, on the cross he was praying in particular for “they” or those who had crucified him. John 17 is Jesus’ prayer for his followers, Christians. (2) God did not immediately answer the prayer during the time that Jesus was on the cross, or in the grave. (3) Rather, God waited some forty days, until the day of Pentecost when Peter preached to them, and they had obeyed the requirements that the comforter, the Holy Spirit, had delivered to the apostles from Christ. People are forgiven today when they obey God’s Word in like manner.

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Jacquelin Dopwell is home from the hospital after having a blood clot in her lung. Joyce Burbage was admitted to L.R.M.C. after a fall. Also keep Evelyn Wyatt, Jim Turner, JoAnn Hoback, Elizabeth Tubbs, Dorothy Trice, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

**Relatives:** Wayne Hendrix, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Bobby Cooper, Earl Shanes, Janet Romberger, Pamela Cox 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, Ann Wood, and Alyssa Buckner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

## Upcoming Events

**June 4th:** Everyone is invited to join us to help celebrate Kyle Bingle's graduation. You can drop in anytime between 2-4 p.m. here in the fellowship hall.

**June 5th:** Fellowship In Service after evening services. Please bring finger foods.

**June 11th:** Ladies Day at the Carolina Ave. Church of Christ in Avon Park starting at 8:00 a.m.

## Thank You

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Thank you for your prayers, calls and cards during my recent trial of faith. Thanks for all your love, inspiration and encouragement.

In Christian love, Jim & Wanda Turner and family

Dear S.F.A. church family, thank you so much for welcoming me into your family during my 4 years at Florida Southern. Because of your love and encouragement I was able to grow as a person and a Christian. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to get to know you all and I look forward to seeing you all again when I visit.

In Christian love, Heather Burns

## Congratulations

Cole James Kennedy was born last Sunday, 5-29 to Jamie & Jessica Kennedy. The proud grandparents are Craig & Tammie Mills and great grandma is Darlene Thompson.

## Visitors

Tania Portelles-Driggs, Peter Saunders, Rick Laing, Victor Travis and J.C. & Stacy Glidewell.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### June

Bobby Sheumaker ..... **Table** ..... C.J. Grimes  
 Kyle Williams ..... **Assist** ..... Tucker Sweeney

### Sunday, June 5, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Stacey Paulin  
**Prayer**..... Ken Walker

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Antonio Martin

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... David Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters** ..... Longfellows  
**Att. Cards**..... Paul and Ian  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Jeff Bingle  
**Open & Close Building**..... David Anderson

Wed. June 8, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer** ..... John McShane  
**Closing Prayer** ..... David Anderson

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

### Sunday, June 12, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Prayer**..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... John McShane  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... David Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Fred Strickland  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters** ..... The Frenchs  
**Att. Cards**..... Paul & Quadarius  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson  
**Open & Close Building**..... David Anderson

Wed. June 15, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kenny French  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Paul Romine

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

May 08.....	\$4,910.50
May 15.....	\$5,253.00
May 22.....	\$4,306.00
May 29.....	\$4,818.50
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....	<b>\$5,043.47</b>
<b>2016 Weekly Budget</b> .....	<b>\$4,422.60</b>

# Why Make Life More Difficult?

My wife and I have a “grandcat” (belonging to one of our grown, on-her-own children, but due to that child’s working in the military, is living in our house) who likes to climb in my lap while I am working on the computer in the early hours of the morning. However, instead of just jumping in my lap (like a dog would do), this cat will go the “back way” by climbing through furniture, behind the computer monitor, in between stacks of books and papers, occasionally knocking a few things on the floor, and even endangering herself, especially when the objects she causes to crash to the floor startle her. As she did this the other day, it reminded me how we sometimes make life, which is already challenging enough, much more difficult than necessary. In an effort to be unique from everybody else, some people want to go the “back way,” for no other reason than because it is the “back way.” In so doing, they often



make life more difficult for themselves and for others. Yes, every person is unique and should not be a “cookie cutter” of his or her peers nor “conform to the world” (Romans 12:2), but taking on outlandish, outward differences just to stand out from everyone else is not wise, especially when it involves the difficult task of having to keep up with an “image” portrayed by the outward appearance. God told Samuel about choosing David, a scrawny shepherd boy, as king, “For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). The one sure way to stand out from the crowd in a positive, God- (continued below)



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



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.

(continued from above) -glorifying way is to take on the characteristics of Christ. For example, those who have the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10) stand out from the crowd. Though that uniqueness brings opposition by those hostile to God (Matthew 5:10-12), that difficulty is very short lived compared to the eternity with God after a life of faithfulness, as Jesus said, “great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12). The less we purposefully walk through the clutter of life just to “be different,” the more focused our life will be for God .... and the easier it will be in the long run! May our uniqueness be more from inward character than outward appearance! ❤️ Brian

**VBS** Theme: **Biblical Love**  
Lessons: God’s Love for Us  
Our Love for God  
Our Love for One Another  
Saturday, **June 18**

## Welcome Hiram Kemp and Family!

We thank God for allowing Hiram to begin working with us on June 1, 2016. We look forward to years of service with him and his family. We are also thankful for the close to forty years that Bob McNally has been serving this church.