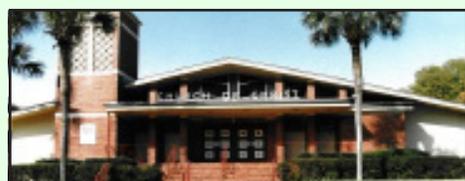


“Be All You Can Be” . . . But Still Be You!

This is a great time of year: friends and family are graduating from high schools and colleges, school is out (or almost out) for the summer, and, thanks be to God, life is good! There is so much potential for us to do great things in our relationships, continued education, building career skills, and/or further developing God-given talents, whether in sports, music, or intellectual prowess. Paul put it like this: “whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23). In our pursuits, however, we must make sure that we stay focused on God in our own personal character and that we do things honestly before all. Paul encouraged Christians to be “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Corinthians 8:21). Sometimes we are tempted to change who we really are into somebody we are not in order to gain some kind of perceived advantage in a relationship, an educational pursuit, or a career. However, we must not love this present world so much that we, like Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), forsake the way of God just to “fit in” with the crowd or to make it look like we are far superior to our peers. Concerning his preaching, Paul wrote, “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). When we make ourselves out to be more than we are, we cannot be pleasing God! Let us be happy with who we are in Christ, while at the same time pursuing to be all we can! ❤️ Brian



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

VBS June 22-26

Chad Tagtow will be teaching our teenage classes and leading the VBS songs! Don't miss it!



- Lap 1: **Train for Success** —“Put on God’s Armor” (Eph. 6:10-19)
Adult class teacher: Robert Williams (6th Street)
- Lap 2: **Find Your Stride** —“Help Others” (Luke 10:25-37)
Adult class teacher: Eric Dawkins (6th Street)
- Lap 3: **Win a Medal** —“Seek Good Friends” (1 Samuel 18-20)
Adult class teacher: Eric Dawkins (6th Street)
- Lap 4: **Set a Record** —“Always Do Your Best” (Matthew 25:14-19)
Adult class teacher: Bob Bauer (Orange Street)
- Lap 5: **Endure to the Finish** —“Be Like Jesus” (Luke 2:40-52)
Adult class teacher: Mike Elledge (Palm Harbor)

Sunday, June 8 We will have a Lads to Leaders “half day,” beginning at 3:00 p.m. We will sign up for events and work on the year ‘round activities. We will study Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians!
Saturday, June 21 Our monthly youth devotional and activity will be hosted by the Kenyons.

Summer Quarter Youth Classes

Beginning Sunday, June 1, the following classes and teachers are scheduled. Thanks for your help teaching!

- Pre-school** Jeanelle Thrower & Melissa Craft
- 3rd-5th Grade** Jenna Hendrix (Sunday & Wednesday)
- 6th-12th Grade** David Williams (Sunday)
Stacey Paulin (Wednesday)

If you have any questions or comments, see Brian

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. 67 No. 23 6-10-14

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Virginia Walker

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30a.m.
Worship.....10:30a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Randy Judd.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald.....Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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THE BASICS OF BAPTISM

Rodney Nulph

Baptism is by far one of the most controversial subjects in the religious world. In fact, not long ago a denominational person made the statement to this author that he could not understand why I place so much emphasis on baptism. The answer is simple: The reason I place so much emphasis on baptism is because God Almighty has placed great emphasis on the subject. Baptism is a line that God has drawn “in the sand.” And **anyone** desiring to please God today must cross that line! There are some preliminary matters that are essential in understanding the subject of baptism.

What is baptism? The verb “baptize” in the New Testament literally means “to put or go under water” (Mounce). Bible baptism is not sprinkling or pouring! Baptism is nothing less than a burial in water (cf. Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4). Baptism is an act of obedience that God has placed between the sinner and salvation!

Why should one be baptized? First, one should be baptized because the Bible commands it! Jesus so lovingly said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16; cf. Matthew 28:18-20). Which command(s) can one fail to do and still please God? Obviously no commands can be left undone (cf. James 2:10; 4:17)! The New Testament repeatedly commands baptism (cf. Acts 2:38; 10:33; 48; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21, et al). One should be baptized because the Bible commands it! Also, one should be baptized because forgiveness demands it! Forgiveness of sin only comes about when one submits to baptism! Peter made this point crystal clear to the Jews on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:37-39) and Ananias affirmed this fact to Saul of Tarsus as well (cf. Acts 22:16). Interestingly still is the fact of what Peter said in his first epistle, “The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21, emp added). How much clearer could Peter have been? One should be baptized because forgiveness demands it!

Should baptism really be that controversial of a subject? Why does mankind try to alter God’s plan? Should our attitude not be if God said it then I will do it? Have you submitted to God and His plan? Have you been immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, please let us help you fulfill your obligation to God, so one day you can live eternally with Him! “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16)!

CHURCH PROBLEMS

Andy Robson

“It is a shame the church has problems.” This saying is echoed throughout the brotherhood of the Lord’s church. The pressing thought is that God’s cleansed people should so put sin behind them that they overcome difficulties before they happen. Members think it. Non-members trumpet it -- often as an excuse for disobedience. It is, indeed, a shame that the church has problems. A shame at least equal, though, is the discouraged surprise many feel when contemplating the fact.

Church difficulties should never be defended, but perhaps they can be viewed in a little different light. While the design of the Lord’s church is perfect beyond doubt, the inclusion of fallible humans opens the door for sinful potential. Christians will stumble (1 John 1:7-9). Sin affects people, and not just oneself: “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself” (Romans 14:7). (Spiritually speaking, the references to a “victimless crime” are even more absurd than in the physical world.) Put those two concepts together with the command of Christians to continually assemble together (Hebrews 10:25), and one has an inevitable, logical conclusion: Christians will sin, and thereby cause pain to other Christians. It is a shame, but it should not be surprising.

The Lord was not surprised by it. In his omniscience, he even provided a means of dealing with offenses between individuals (Matthew 18:15-18). Ah. And, it is therein that the Lord separated his people from all other organizations of the world.

While we must admit problems in the church, we shall not admit that this makes the church just like human institutions. The church has its problems, but, unlike human organizations, they have a divinely imposed means of properly dealing with them. If followed, the way provides for reconciliation and peace.

But, if it is a big word. Christians often sin in not following the steps to reconciliation of a brother. Nevertheless, one is inclined to wonder how many problems have stayed under control, and not escalated to verbal feuds or even physical violence because of the restraining principles of New Testament teaching. How many times has one been offended and held his tongue, his fist or both, because he remembered the glorious teachings of turning the other cheek, and treating others the way one would want to be treated (Matthew 5:39; 7:12)? How many times have godly elders worked for reconciliation among fragmented parties in congregations? This author’s contention is that the times would be countless. Think, then, of what would have occurred had not Christ’s principles been in place. Why would elders have cared? Why would people not retaliate with the old “eye for an eye” vengeance? There would be nothing to restrain.

Further, it must be conceded that manmade businesses, societies, clubs and the like have instituted similar policies of effectively dealing with grievances. Still, here are some more contentions of the author: That those policies are offshoots in some way of Christian principles and that those policies work so much better when the employees or members apply Christian principles in their lives. In either case, the glory goes back to God. When he established his church, he did so with the idea of salvation, and with the consequence of making people better citizens and comrades on earth -- even toward friends and associates outside the church. The point is: God taught his people how to deal with problems.

Please note this disclaimer against misunderstanding: Brethren should work diligently to prevent problems in the church. That ounce is always better than the cure’s pound. When problems arise, however, brethren should have a couple of reactions: (1) Work according to Christ’s way to solve the problem, and (2) Don’t get too down on the fallibility of the human beings in the church. (For one thing, the accuser is also a fallible person.) Problems in Christ’s church will simply be. What separates Christians from the rest of the world in this regard is not a hands-in-the-air, give-up attitude, but a diligent dedication to pursue resolution according to God’s revealed Word. That is one facet that helps make the church greater than any other body on earth.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Wanda Turner is sick at home. Bernetta Green, Jacquelin Dopwell, Sam Bolding, Duane Nelson, Bill Burton, JoAnn Hoback, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Margaret Coone & Sharon Washington.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Danny Stephens & Lewis Tillis.

Shut In Members: Ann Howard, Virginia Plumlee & Louise Starks.

Others: Vera Jackson, Mariza Johnson, Marilyn Eick, Frank Wood, Christina Fuessner, Bonnie Hendricks & Kathy Peel.

Upcoming Events

June 7th: - Ladies Seminar at the Carolina Ave. Church of Christ in Avon Park. The topic will be "Am I my sister's keeper." For more information, a flyer is posted on the bulletin board.

June 21st: - The Men's Breakfast will be held at Orange Street in Auburndale at 8:00 am.

June 21st: - Monthly devotion & activity will be hosted by Brian & Jagie Kenyon.

June 22nd-26th: - Our Vacation Bible School here at South Florida Avenue. All children and adults are invited to come. There will be classes for all ages.

Visitors

Adam Black, Alexa Barrett & Scarlett, Phillip Johnson, Linda Pennington.

Thank You Card

Thank you all for the prayers on behalf of my daughter, Allison. Her surgery went well. Please continue to keep her in your prayers as she recovers.

*Sister in Christ
Lystra Ortiz*

Hither, Thither and Yon

Brenda Mask and Darlene Thompson will be visiting relatives in Tennessee from June 3rd to June 18th. They also plan to attend the Diana Sing. Please pray for their safety.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

June

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** Bobby Sheumaker
Jimmy Sweeney..... **Assist**..... David Williams

Sunday, June 8, 2014

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Antonio Martin
Prayer..... Phil Fife

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jason Hendrix
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Casey Paulin
Closing Prayer John McShane

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Chuck Wyatt
Closing Prayer David Williams
Greeters The Bingle Family
Att. Cards..... Ian Enamorado & Sebastian Rapley
Open & Close Building..... Tim Croson

Wed. June 11, 2014

Song Leader Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Closing Prayer Antonio Martin

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

June 15, 2014

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Stacey Paulin
Prayer..... Charles Paulin

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jason Hendrix
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Paul Romine
Closing Prayer Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Frank Hamby
Closing Prayer Josh Estridge
Greeters The Williams Family
Att. Cards..... Sebastian Rapley & Quadarius Askew
Open & Close Building..... Tim Croson

Wed. June 18, 2014

Song Leader Ken Walker
Opening Prayer Tyler Anderson
Closing Prayer Phil Fife

~ HOW WE ARE GIVING ~

May 11..... \$4,010.36
May 18 \$4,219.01
May 25 \$4,122.00
Jun 01, \$4,867.95
Contribution Average..... \$4,458.05
2014 Weekly Budget..... \$4,256.38

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This Week's Message

"Bonehead Merkle"

1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page

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