



# South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,  
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 77 No. 24 June 13, 2023

## ELDERS

David Anderson  
Brian Kenyon  
Bobby Sheumaker

## DEACONS

Tyler Anderson  
Jason Hendrix  
Rick Kenyon  
Stacey Paulin

## MINISTER

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

### OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

### EMAIL

[SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

## 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.

## WEB PAGE

[SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)

## Find us on

YouTube & Facebook

## HOME OF

*Florida School of Preaching*  
since 1969

**Missionary - Huron, SD**  
*Casey & Emily Paulin*

## MISSION FIELDS

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

## Did Paul Sin in Acts 21?

Vince Daugherty

Growing up, I remember celebrating Christmas. I did not think much about it, other than enjoying receiving presents. As I got older and learned more about Scripture. I had become fairly convinced that Christ was not born on December 25 and that many of the elements like the tree, lights, etc. had their origin in pagan festivals and false religion. When I questioned my parents, they said we celebrate the holiday as a secular holiday (giving gifts, time with family) but tend to avoid the religious elements some want to pair with it. Mostly that consisted of not being able to sing “Christmas” songs that had reference to religious themes. Later on, I thought, maybe it would be best if Christians did not practice Christmas at all due to the fact of misunderstandings people might have about the church or Scripture. Most recently in discussing the matter with a fellow preacher, he said, what if an individual or family wants to celebrate the entry of the Christ into the world, did not announce or bind it on anyone, read the passages surrounding the birth narrative, and dedicated December 25 to remembering that day? Is there anything inherently wrong with doing those things as a family? I answered no. He said, does that make them any more righteous with God? I said no. He said, “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind” (Rom. 14:5). Before reading the rest of this article, it would be best to attentively read through the text of Acts 21:15-40 several times.

When Paul arrived at Jerusalem and related his missionary efforts, the text says they “greeted him” and “glorified the Lord” over his work (Acts 21:19, 20). It seems from the information given that James and the elders at Jerusalem saw no wrongdoing on Paul’s part. They then shift the subject to Paul’s reputation. It is not clear as to whether Jewish Christians, or non-Christian Jews (possibly both) had an issue that they perceived Paul as having abandoned his culture, and possibly the Mosaic law. It is difficult not knowing Paul’s verbal response to the elders’ line of questioning about Paul’s reputation. People claimed Paul taught, “all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor walk according to the customs” (Acts 21:21). Did he? It certainly seems so from what we have in the Book of Acts, especially Acts 15 and Paul’s letter to the Galatians. However, we do not have any words Paul spoke on this occasion but only the actions he took.

Because it would be known that Paul was in Jerusalem, James and the elders requested of him, “We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law” (Acts 21:23-24). Again, I wish we could have Paul’s words on this matter. Was it unwise or worse for these men to take the vow? Was it unwise or worse for Paul to

pay for their expenses or to go along in general with the elders' wishes? We are left with what Paul did.

Paul had a choice in the matter, James even said they were not binding these ordinances upon Gentiles (Acts 21:25), but what about Paul's decision? To participate in the matter was either one of three things: a biblical prohibition, a biblical requirement, or a biblical of option. I do not see anyone arguing Paul had to go with the four men. After that, we are left with whether it was an option or a prohibited action. Paul knew that the Law of Moses was no longer in effect, so one cannot soften the blow that Paul sinned in a place of ignorance. Paul had already written about the end of the binding of the Law of Moses in the Books of Galatians and Colossians, and he argued strongly against it in Acts 15.

To say Paul sinned is a high bar to set. Paul was human and even apostles are not above the possibility of sin, so I am not defending him on the ability to sin. If Paul did sin that would mean James, the elders at Jerusalem, and the four men who participated in the action did as well. Again, all those men did have the ability to sin and were not perfect. However, it seems hard to charge them or Paul with sin when it is recorded in Scripture without an explicit condemnation of the action. Lastly, if Paul did sin why did he, led by the Spirit, seem to defend his actions before those in authority (Matt. 10:17-19; Acts 24:18). Later when Paul was attempting to defend himself before the mob of the Jewish counsel, Luke recorded, "the following night the Lord stood by him and said, 'Be of good cheer, Paul; for you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome'" (Acts 23:11). Seemingly, the Lord is saying to Paul, you have done well thus far, and there is still more to go.

By eliminating the idea that Paul had to participate in the actions, and eliminating the idea that Paul engaged in a prohibited action, one is left with the idea that Paul engaged in an action that was a matter of option. Often, Christians tend to be conservative in actions about which they are unsure. Of course, if we cannot engage in some action by faith we ought not to do it (Rom. 14:23). However, individuals typically leave it there and fail to study, pray, and research to come to a conclusion on the matter. Is something a matter of option, prohibition, or required action? Once our minds can be settled, we can know for sure where that Christian liberty extends. Remember Paul said he "became all things to all people to gain some" (I Cor. 9:22). To know the limits of our liberty in Christ may help us reach out to others in the best way possible.

About Paul's actions in Acts 21, Paul looked at the situation of how he was perceived and tried to show his Jewish brethren and countrymen that he had not abandoned them, and he participated in the actions as a matter of option to endeavor himself to their goodwill. Paul did not believe he had to be purified in some matter before God, but Paul seems to have done it to have a better influence on those suspicious of his engagement with Gentiles. Shaving one's head is nothing, the temple was nothing, and Paul had not taken a vow on this occasion. Even those who took the vow, as long as they were not binding it on others, were under no condemnation.

We may have a bias, reading from a contemporary perspective. What about Jews who lived in the unique time of the first century and saw the time of the passing of the Mosaic law and the beginning law of Christ? From their perspective, the Law was not contrary to Christ. He kept it perfectly. Jews who lived by faith could be justified under the Old Law. The just shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4, also Rom. 1:16, Gal. 3:12) was a true statement for those under the law of Moses looking forward to salvation which would come through the future Christ. Those living after Christ on the cross must look back by faith to the previous actions of Christ. Jews who lived through the transition of both had been keeping the law by faith to the best of their ability, trusting in faith to God's plan of salvation. After learning of the promises fulfilled through Christ, they would continue in the faith. However, many would still be ignorant of all their liberties in Christ, yet by faith trusting in the salvation to which they had turned. So, therefore, there would be "myriads of Jews who believed, and they were all zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20).

## How to Decide

When we are unsure whether we should do something, ask ourselves the following questions:

**1. Is what I am about to do inherently sinful?** "Inherently sinful" refers to something that's always sinful (like fornication, Gal. 5:19-21). If so, don't do it! But if not ...

**2. Does what I am about to do violate my conscience?** If so, don't do it (Rom. 14:23)! But if not ...

**3. Will what I am about to do hurt my good Christian influence?** If so, don't do it (Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Cor. 8:1-13). May we always glorify God in our thoughts and behavior! ♥ *Brian*

## PRAYER LIST

**Current:** Declan Potvin is having complications from eye surgery, Wayne Shearer will be starting chemotherapy soon. Marissa Estridge will have knee surgery to repair her ACL and MCL on July 13th. Jim Turner has a uti and will be having a pacemaker inserted June 27.

Ingrid Stewart is traveling

**Continual** Melissa Craft (health); Debbie Bush (struggles); Brian Smith (heart health); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Geny Johnson (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron & Judy Ford (health); Bobby Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Jim Turner (health); Margaret Coone (health); Kathy Nester (health); Melody Baxter (health)

**Shut-ins:** Joyce Burbage, Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French

Extended family and Friend are Emailed Weekly

**Amanda Faneuf is collecting tissue paper rolls, paper towel rolls and cardboard boxes to be used at camp this summer. Please see her with any questions about this.**

*Welcome! Helen Perrin has placed membership with us here at SFA! Let's make her feel loved and welcome here among us!*

Jeff Stewart responded to the invitation last Sunday and requests prayer for strength and for forgiveness of sin in his life. Let's continue to keep him in our prayers and encourage him as well!

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16



Dont forget your Recipes! The Hendrix girls are still collecting recipes for a Lads to Leaders Project! Please bring a copy of your favorite recipe(s) to give

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

**June** Designated Elder - Brian Kenyon

### Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Announcements.....David Anderson  
Song Leader/prayer.....Landon Willcut  
Devotional .....Will Vann  
Prayer .....Bobby Sheumaker

### Sunday, June 18, 2023

**10:30 A.M.**

Sermon.....Vince Daugherty  
"To Serve or Be Served" (Mk. 10:45)

**6:00 P.M.**

Sermon.....Vince Daugherty  
"Threats From Within" (Neh. 5)

### Those to Serve

**10:30 A.M.**

Song/Prayer before class.....Kyle Bingle  
Song Leader (**both services**)....Tucker Sweeney  
Announcements(**both**) .....Tyler Anderson  
Scripture reading/Prayer.....Joseph Faulk  
Lord's Table (**both**).....Josh Estridge  
Closing Prayer.....Wesley Brunson  
Open/Close bldg (**both**).....Jason Hendrix  
Greeters.....Dave and Nikki Williams  
Attendance cards (**both**).....Declan/Peyton  
Sound Booth (**both**).....Paul Sweeney  
**6:00 P.M.**

P.M. Song Leader .....Tucker Sweeney  
Scripture reading/Prayer .....Josh Potvin  
Closing Prayer .....Mike VanAllen  
Greeters PM.....Ralph and Pat Rogers

### Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Announcements.....Brian Kenyon  
Song Leader/prayer.....Andre Medley  
Devotional .....Vince Daugherty  
Prayer .....David Anderson

## Upcoming Events 2023

### June

17 Men's breakfast- Haines City  
25 Fellowship In Service  
26 thru July 2 - Faneuf Week at CFBC

### July

8 Cookout and Games at SFA  
8 Family/Friends Day at North Lakeland  
29 Orange St VBS 9:00 am-?

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

May 28.....\$4,707.00  
June 4.....\$9,168.00  
June 11.....\$6,758.00  
Contribution Average.....\$7,255.99  
Weekly budget ..... \$7,410.00

Jesus called them  
one  
by  
one.



WWCC K-5 CAMP  
Entering Kindergarten- Finishing 5th Grade  
July 13-15, 2023

\*Register by June 25th to be guaranteed a T-Shirt\*  
Register @ <https://shorturl.at/wAEYO>

If you have any questions please contact  
Chad (863.412.0022) or Sabrina Tagtow (863.268.5811)



PROVERBS

WEEKi WACHEE CHRISTIAN CAMP  
Orange Street Week

JULY 16-22, 2023  
Ages 10 and up



\*Register by July 1st to be guaranteed a T-Shirt\*  
Register @ <https://shorturl.at/kxBGU>

If you have any questions please contact  
Kyle or Nina Smith (904.310.2831)

### WHO IS IN CONTROL?

Oxford online dictionary defines control as “the power to influence or direct people’s behavior or the course of events.”

Most people have a hard time letting go and allowing God to have control of their lives. A few lines from the song, "Control," by Janet Jackson, gives a glimpse of why people like to be in complete control of their lives. “I’ll call my own shots ... Got my own mind ... I want to make my own decisions ... When it has to do with my life, I wanna be in control.”

God didn’t create humans as robots; therefore, we can make our own choices in life. However, we must consider the consequences of the choices we make. As Christians we know that we have been created for a specific a purpose— Revelation 4:11b, “For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” and Colossians 1:16, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”

Who is in control of your life? Do you allow God’s word to control your life? Psalm 119:10-12 and 3 John 1:11, “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”

#### Youth Section

Vince Daugherty

#### Lessons from Second Timothy "Pouring into Others"

I remember my grandfather having a koi pond where he lived in West Virginia. He worked hard to make it just right. In the pool it had a fountain and three pools that the water poured into. In Second Timothy 2:2. Paul said, "And the things that you have heard from me among faithful men commit to others also." Notice the sequence of pouring into others. The fountain is God's word. It is poured into vessels of faithful men, who in turn pour into others. It makes you think. Who is pouring into me? And who am I pouring into?

## COOK OUT!

BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND JOIN US FOR FUN, FELLOWSHIP AND FOOD!

WE WILL HAVE A COOKOUT AND WATER ACTIVITIES FOR THE KIDS!

SATURDAY, JULY 8 HERE AT SFA!

[www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)

Email us: [SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



### South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

*"Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may your love and your truth always protect me."*

*Psalm 40:11*



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.