



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 73 No. 25 June 24, 2020

ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
John McShane
Stacey Paulin
Jimmy Sweeney

MINISTER

Hiram Kemp

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

SECRETARY

Dee Parramore

OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

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.

EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

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Florida School of Preaching
since 1969

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.

How to Shine Light in a Dark World

Hiram Kemp

The world we live in has always been dark. Since the fall of humanity in Genesis 3, sin has been in the lives of people and destroying those who submit to sin rather than God. Though we may look at our current times as intensely dark and sinful, the things being done today should come as no surprise to the student of scripture (2 Tim. 3:13). Jesus told His disciples that they were to be different. He wants us to shine our lights in this world so God our Father will receive the glory (Matt. 5:16). The idea of shining our light is normally taken to simply mean Christians should be an example. Most certainly Christians should be examples but in what ways? How can we practically let those around us know that this world is not our home? I believe there are practical ways that we can let our light shine which will catch the attention of those around us (Phil. 2:14-16). Near the end of 1 Thessalonians, Paul gives us several commands that we should take to heart and adopt. When we examine 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22, I think we get a clear picture of how we can shine our light in a world that desperately needs it.

Always Rejoice (1 Thess. 5:16)

Paul tells the Thessalonians to rejoice evermore (1 Thess. 5:16, KJV) or to rejoice always (ESV). This does not mean that Christians never experience sadness. We do, but our overall disposition should be one of constant joy (Rom. 12:15). We can have an abiding joy which is more permanent than momentary happiness because we know that God is in control of the world. We rejoice "in the Lord" at all times (Phil. 4:4). When we consider God reigning in heaven, we can have joy even when many others think the sky is falling. In a world overrun with bad news, those of us who have the good news should demonstrate it by not being downcast or sullen but instead by rejoicing continually (2 Cor. 6:10). Many people in our world seek joy through substance abuse, perfect circumstances, or material possessions. We should be paving the way to show others that true and lasting joy is tied to our relationship to God not to things of the world. Paul had previously praised the Thessalonians for being an example to all of those around them because of their conversion (1 Thess. 1:8-10). They would continue to be an example if they demonstrated persistent rejoicing in a world of persistent negativity and pessimism. We should sing with joy (James 5:13). And most importantly, we should share the good news of forgiveness with joy in our hearts (Eph. 1:7). Jesus told us that we could be of good cheer because He overcame the world (Jn.16:33). If our joy is full, it will spill over into every area of our lives. Our friends, neighbors, and relatives will take notice (1 Jn. 1:4). We will be able to point them to Jesus, who is the True Light, when they see the light in us (Jn. 1:4).

Pray Incessantly (1Thess. 5:17)

Paul's command to pray without ceasing is easy to quote and hard to practice. Our light will shine bright in this dark world if we actually take the Holy Spirit's words seriously and pray constantly. When we see crisis in our world, we should be those who fall on our knees in prayer before we do anything else. Instead of posting on social media about all that is wrong, we should be praying to the One who can make it right. Rather than pouting about how terrible things in the world have become, we should be petitioning God to allow us to continue to spread the word freely which can change hearts (2 Thess. 3:1). The Colossians were told to be steadfast in prayer (Col. 4:2). The Romans were admonished to be constant in prayer (Rom. 12:12). The darker things get the more we have to pray about. Our prayers should be accompanied by action as we have the opportunity to put our faith into action. Yet, we should always remember that prayer is in itself an action. When we pray, we involve the God of the universe who can do the most about our situation. People should hear Christians say, "I'm praying for you." When people express fear and anxiety about the events in the world, we should be saying "I'm praying and trusting the Lord." If we are just as faithless and overwhelmed as unbelievers, we will never draw them close to our God. Prayer must not be regulated to a last resort. Prayer is our first line of defense as we boldly approach the throne of grace and find the help that we need (Heb. 4:16).

Be Thankful (1Thess. 5:18)

One thing that sets Christians apart from the world is our attitude of thankfulness. We are told to "give thanks always and for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). Paul told the Thessalonians that it was the will of God for them in Christ Jesus to give thanks (1 Thess. 5:18). In a world of gripes and ungrateful people,

we can shine our light if we fail to voice our complaints. The New Testament describes the worldly person as ungrateful (2 Tim. 3:2) and unthankful (Rom. 1:21). It is not that we do not see things that enrage us or wish things were different, but we know things could always be worse. Also, we appreciate that God can use anything to His ultimate good (Rom. 8:28). Practice gratitude. Do not just feel thankful inside, but express it to God and others. It will be impactful. Gratitude shows that we know we are undeserving of God's blessings, and we want to thank Him for them. Count your many blessings and name them one by one. It may help someone else count theirs, too.

Love Good & Refrain From Evil (1Thess. 5:19-22)

The last few verses in this section deal with our relationship to the truth of God's revelation. We should not quench the spirit or put out His work (1 Thess. 5:19). We should not despise prophecy (1 Thess. 5:20). We need to test everything and hold onto what is good (1 Thess. 5:21). Lastly, we must abstain from evil in every avenue it appears (1 Thess. 5:22). One could summarize Paul's thoughts here by saying we should love the good and refrain from the evil (3 John 11). Paul wanted the Thessalonians to treat the Word of God properly and reject everything that was opposed to it. Much of what is meditated on today is contrary to the Word of God. The nightly news can keep us informed, but it will not help us to be conformed to the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:17-18). If we love the things that God loves and reject the things He hates, people will know that we are different. Shining our light in this dark world is not about being an example in a general way. There are concrete and specific ways that we can announce to the world that our citizenship is in heaven. Study 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22. Go and do likewise.

PARENT Youth Group **FREE**
by Vince Daugherty

If you had three whole days without parental supervision, what would you do? Play video games? Eat all the ice cream in the freezer? Watch cartoons all day? Jesus had three days in which He did not have His parents watching Him. Do you know what He was doing? Sitting in the temple listening to the scholars and asking questions (Luke 2:46). And when everyone heard Him, they were amazed. If your parents did not make you, would you go to church, take notes, and ask the preacher questions? I think Jesus, even as a boy would have. Would you?

Senior Saints

by John McShane

- We all face situations that try our patience on a daily basis. Today we have the covid-19 that seems to have no end and has stopped us from living life as we did just a few short months ago.
- Or you're stuck on hold with customer service, or the WiFi is painfully slow. When times are hard, it is even more difficult to persevere with a good attitude. Sometimes that "Keep Calm and Carry On" poster isn't enough to get your mind right, and you need to turn to a more reputable source: the Bible. Keep in mind that God is in control. His Word in the The Good Book has a lot to offer on the subject of patience.
- Ecclesiastes 7:8 reads "**Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit**".
- Also 1st Corinthians 13:4 reads: "**Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up**".

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Our Members:

PRAYER LIST

Ginny Hamby; Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt; Brian Smith; Brenda Mask; Phil Fife; Linda McShane; Margaret Norman; Bernetta Green; Ray Nashick; Carlene Long; Bobby Simpson; Cierra Edwards; Ellen Shearer; Bob Pratt; Ron & Judy Ford; Geny Johnson; Sharon Washington; Stacey Paulin; Annette Phillip; Margaret Coone; Neil Entwistle; Jim Turner; Antoine & Marcella Swain

Others: **George French** (Kenny & Reba's son, pancreatic cancer); **Roselyn Roberts** (friend of Darlene Thompson); **Thelma Rachford** (Dottie Fife's sister); **Maria Wardell** (Darlene Thompson's granddaughter, pneumonia & problems with liver and kidneys); **Alicia Zamot** (Jagie's aunt); **Keith Cozort** (former member); **Chip Bolding**; **Tony Seibert**; **Neil Entwistle Sr.**; **Tanya Irizarry**; **Trevor & Sandy Hutchins**; **Derick Jordan**; student of **Jimmy Sweeney** (brain tumor); **Keijuan Callaway** (Sharon Washington's son); **Mary Ankroum** (knee surgery); **Bruce Coleman**; **Patricia Hewitt** (chemo); **Phil Sweeney** (shingles, friend of Brenda Mask); **Vontreal Mitchell-Copeland** (Ruby Lewis' nephew, cancer); **Dana Robertson** (Sharon Egolf's daughter); **Jenny Laws** (Nikki Williams' cousin, cancer).

RESPONSES

Vince Daugherty requested prayers to be a better father.

UPDATES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Jim Turner is back in Tampa VA hospital with UTI, kidney stones, and pneumonia in the bronchial tubes.

Cheryl Barker is in the hospital for diverticulitis and possible heart problems. She's in the cardiac unit and requests prayers.

Bernetta Green is in LRMC awaiting final test results to determine hip surgery date.

PRAYER LIST UPDATES

Please provide the elders, Hiram, or the office with updates of those on our prayer lists.

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Faith West Carol Eason Joyce Burbage
Cheryl Barker Ellen Shearer
Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt



Tucker Sweeney
on passing his EMT exam
as **VALEDICTORIAN**

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

June

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Sunday, June 28, 2020

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Vince Daugherty
"Call the Next Witness"

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Vince Daugherty
"Godly Purpose" (Gen. 1:26-28)

Live stream will continue until further notice.

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both services) Rick Kenyon
Announcements David Anderson
A.M. Song Leader Andre Medley
Scripture reading/Prayer Rick Kenyon
Lord's Table Phil Fife
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song Leader Stacey Paulin
Scripture reading/Prayer Rick Kenyon
Lord's Table Phil Fife
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

Song Leader Ian Enamorado
Prayer Alex Parramore
Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson

ASSEMBLING UPDATE

The State of Florida is now in Phase 2 of re-opening.

If you are not already attending and would like to, please notify the office. We still encourage those who do not feel well and those who consider themselves high-risk to stay at home.

We will continue live-streaming the services on YouTube as we have since March 22. In view of more people attending, we will post a "Those to Serve" list above. If you would like to serve in these areas, please let the office know.

- Elders -

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

May 31	.....	\$7,956.00
Jun 7	.....	\$7,396.00
Jun 14	.....	\$5,979.00
Jun 21	.....	\$8,651.00
Contribution Average	.....	\$7,071.29



My Love Isn't Fragile



I was recently watching Frozen II with my children when a line jumped out at me. Two characters, Anna and Christoph, are in a romantic relationship but find themselves on different pages throughout the movie, leading to hurt feelings and confusion. At one point Anna apologizes to Christoph and he says "It's ok. My love isn't fragile." How often do I let my own love be fragile? "My husband forgot to take out the trash." "He didn't get me what I wanted for Valentine's Day." "He doesn't buy me flowers like Samantha's husband does." Over time, these small complaints can lead to resentment, anger, and even divorce. 1 Peter 4:8 says "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins." God calls us to love each other, just as He has loved us. I once had a professor tell me, "Marriage isn't 50/50. Marriage is 100/100." The love I show my spouse should not come with strings attached. Ephesians 5 speaks of God's love for us, and how marriage ought to be a reflection of that love. God's love is anything but fragile, and we should strive to follow His example.



Things Angels Do in Scripture

Strengthen Jesus after temptation
(Matthew 4:11)

Strengthen Jesus in Gethsemane
(Luke 22:43)

Deliver messages to God's people
(Luke 1)

Destroy God's enemies
(2 Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23)

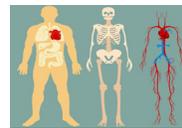
Will return with Jesus
(Matthew 25:31)

Carry the righteous to Abraham's bosom
(Luke 16:22)

Serve Christians
(Hebrews 1:14)

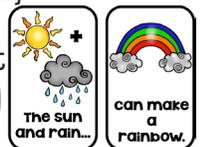
Proof That God Exists

Design in the universe
[Psa. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:19-20]



Design in the human body
[Psa. 139:13-14; Prov. 20:12]

Law of Cause and Effect
(Hebrews 3:4)



Universal Morality
(Matthew 7:12)

The Human Conscience
(Gen. 1:26-27)



Our ability to appreciate beauty
(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

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