



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.
Lakeland, FL 33803

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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.....6:30 p.m.

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“Who Ever Goes to War at His Own Expense?”

Brian R. Kenyon

The question making up the title of this article comes from a section in First Corinthians where Paul was showing that just because Christians have a right to do something, like eat meat used in pagan sacrifices (1 Corinthians 8:1-6), does not mean they have to exercise that right. Christians can forego their rights, especially if it promotes unity (1 Corinthians 8:7-13 cf. Ephesians 4:3). The particular (and personal) issue Paul used to illustrate this was his right to be supported by the church. Though he chose not to exercise that right with some churches, the God-given right was still his. Christians today may give up certain rights. However, because one Christian gives up a certain right does not mean we should judge other Christians who choose to exercise that right.

Paul's Liberties and Rights

Although his call to apostleship was unlike the other apostles, Paul was still an apostle and had certain liberties. This fact was asserted by rhetorical questions, “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 9:1-2). These first two questions introduced the fact that Paul had not only foregone the general rights all Christians have, but also his special rights as an apostle. The Corinthians themselves were proof of the authenticity of Paul’s apostleship (cf. Acts 18:1-11; 2 Corinthians 3:2). Based upon Paul’s having to make a “defense” (1 Corinthians 9:3), some in Corinth apparently challenged Paul’s apostleship based upon the liberties he forsook. For example, some might say, “Real apostles are supported by the church, but you are not.” However, Paul made clear, again by rhetorical questions, he had the same rights as other apostles, “Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?” (1 Corinthians 9:4-6). Paul and Barnabas were not the only ones who had a right to refrain from manual labor and be supported by the church! Because Paul (along with Barnabas) chose to support himself (cf. Acts 18:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-8), and not exercise his right to be supported by the church, did not mean he was not an apostle. “Greek culture despised physical labor, yet Paul, who had the rank of teacher, worked with his own hands to generate support. No wonder that the clash of cultural backgrounds caused the people in Corinth to raise questions concerning Paul’s conduct” (Kistemaker, *First Corinthians*, 298). We must not be quick to judge people based on the rights they choose to forego!

Workers Have a Right to Receive Support

Paul again used rhetorical questions to state a general principle, “Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?” (1 Corinthians 9:7). The soldier, the farmer, and the shepherd are all supported by their occupation, whether in wages or in produce. This principle was not of human invention but of God’s law. “Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’ Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope” (1 Corinthians 9:8-10). The Law of Moses supported this point (cf. Deuteronomy 25:4). God did not give this law for oxen only, but for all workers, including apostles and even elders (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Both the one who plows and the one who threshes work with the expectation of partaking in the fruits of their labors!

This principle is also true for those whose labor is spiritual in nature. “If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:11-12). Since Paul labored among the Corinthians in spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 3:6 cf. Luke 8:11), he had a right to be supported with “material [carnal, KJV] things” (cf. Luke 10:7). The fact that other workers (of less importance) exercised this same right indicated that Paul had an even greater right to receive support. However, Paul did not exercise this right, not because he was not an apostle, but because it might hinder the Gospel. Those who preach the Gospel should be supported by those to whom they minister, “Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:13-14). The principle involved is no different from the Levitical priests who were supported by the people to whom they ministered (cf. Numbers 18:8-32; Deuteronomy 18:1-2). This was God’s will then, and it is God’s will now (cf. Galatians 6:6). Let us respect God’s will when it comes to supporting preachers and those who labor in the Gospel.

Paul Refused to Exercise This Right in Corinth

But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. ¹⁶For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:15-18)

Paul was not defending his right to be supported by the church so they would have sympathy toward him and support him, as some might had thought from the preceding verses. Rather, Paul felt so strongly about his practice of not receiving support from the church at Corinth that he would rather die than to change. His “boasting [glorying, KJV]” was to preach the Gospel without asking the church for support. Paul felt compelled to preach (cf. Jeremiah 20:9; Amos 3:8). Paul’s commission was “laid upon” him by God (cf. Acts 9:15; 26:15-18). “Woe is me” does not so much refer to God punishing him if he did not preach, but that for Paul to be disobedient to the trust given him, and to carry the memory of that faithlessness forever, would be the greatest misery imaginable (Hillyer, NIDNTT, 3:1054). Paul was responsible to God and must, therefore, discharge the commission given to him by God. Paul was compelled by God to preach and, therefore, must fulfill his stewardship, whether or not he accepted support. Like any faithful steward, he had no choice but to fulfill it (cf. Luke 17:10; Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:1, 10; Titus 1:1).

Paul’s “reward” was that he may preach the Gospel “without charge.” His pay was to serve without pay! Although Paul had a right to receive financial support from the Corinthians, he did not exercise that right. Charles Hodge summarized the principle, “A physician may attend the sick from the highest motives, though he receives a remuneration for his services. But when he attends the poor gratuitously, though the motives be no higher, the evidence of their purity is placed beyond question.”

PRAYER LIST

Current: Fran Gabaldon is in LRH with a collapsed lung and pneumonia. Jim Turner is back in Tampa General. Janis Waldon will be having an MRI on Monday 7-22. Please keep all these in prayer.

Continual: Jim Turner (cancer) Sharon Mathis Washington (Health & family); Stacey Wilson (health); Debbie Bush (struggles); Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health).

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin, Helen Perrin, bettye bolding, Nellie Anderson, Cheryl Barker

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

[Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.](#)

Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes

Time to sign up if you want to participate in this great program this year! We also need adults to sign up to mentor and help in various areas! We can't do this without your support! Sign up in the notebook by the doorway into the auditorium.

See Becky Sheumaker with any questions!



There will be an important Bible class teachers meeting on Sunday, July 28, at 5:00 pm. All who are willing to teach for the fall quarter are requested to be there. We would benefit greatly from your input.

Fellowship Meal to Welcome The Ford Family

Sunday, July 28 following the morning service
Bring food for your family and to share with visitors!

Team 3 will be in charge of the kitchen and clean up.



Join Us for Bible Classes!

Cradle Roll (behind tech booth) Upper Elementary (Room 17)

Sundays: Rene B (Bible basics)

Wednesdays: Nikki (Bible basics)

Sundays: Marion B (EHT)

Wednesdays: Jenna H (EHT)

2-3 Year-Old (Room 18)

Sundays: Nasheka M (EHT)

Wednesdays: Nasheka M (EHT)

Teenage (Room 19)

Sundays: Terrance D JR. (EHT)

Wednesdays: Allen G (EHT)

Lower Elementary (Room 7)

Sundays: Stacey, Michelle P (EHT)

Wednesdays: Cierra E (EHT)

Adult (Auditorium)

Sundays: SFA men (Divided Kingdom)

Wednesday: Brian (Revelation)

Scheduled to Serve in July

Designated Elder	David Anderson
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Wednesday, July 24, 2024

Announcements	Stacey Paulin
Song Leader / Prayer	Kyle Fanuef
Devotional / Invitation	Josh Potvin
Closing Prayer	Matt Willcutt

Sunday, July 28, 2024

10:30 am Sermon	Steven Ford
"Commitment" (Mark 10:17-31)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Steven Ford
"At Look At Psalm 63"	

Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	Brenda/Darlene
Song/Pray before class	Stacey Paulin
Announcements (both)	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader (both)	Brian Kenyon
Prayer / Bible reading	Josh Estridge
Lord's Table (both)	Brian Williams
Closing Prayer	Jeff Stewart
Open/Close Building	Brian Kenyon
Attendance Cards	Sawyer
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix

Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Bingle's
Announcements	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader	Brian Kenyon
Prayer / Bible reading	Paul Sweeney
Closing Prayer	David Anderson

Wednesday, July 31, 2024

Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Landon Willcutt
Devotional / Invitation	Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer	Bobby Sheumaker

How We Are Giving

July 7	\$7,469.15
July 14	\$6,440.25
July 21	\$5,040.00
Contribution Average	\$6764.90
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

Women of the Word

Rene' Bingle

Priorities

It's funny how money can be a blessing or a curse,
Do I give to the Lord, or buy that new purse?

My time is so limited, when it comes to giving God my best
Because my calendar is full of entertainment and appointments and rest.

I've done my part, my kids are all raised,
But young ones still need you, to be mentored and praised.

Instead of "What's the least I can do, and still get my reward?"

Let's try thinking "How much can I do, from this day forward!"

Our time and our talents, we'll give account for one day,
When God looks at yours, what will He say?

Don't sit back and expect others to do your part
Let today be the day you make a new start.

No matter your age, your status or even your degree,
The church needs your talents, your gifts and your company.

Whatever stage of life you are in,
Remember the One who died for your sin.

He deserves our very best, not the least we can do,
He gave His all, can He say the same about you?

Hello

my name is
Jesus

Join us as we learn about the NAME OF JESUS
the Nazarene the Savior the Almighty

Join us at the Orange Street church of Christ for VBS
August 3rd from 9-noon lunch will be provided
Classes for newborns-99+

Psalm 139:17-24

"How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

If I should count them,

they would be more in number than the sand;

When I awake, I am still with You.

Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!

Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

For they speak against You wickedly;

Your enemies take Your name in vain.

Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

I hate them with perfect hatred;

I count them my enemies.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

And see if there is any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting."

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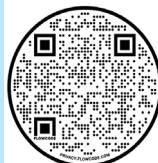
**South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

" Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation;
continuing instant in prayer;"

Romans 12:12



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