



The South Florida
Avenue
church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 74 No. 30 July 27, 2021

ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
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

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WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

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Florida School of Preaching
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Dub Hill.....Russia
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Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa
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Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

Gnosticism

Vince Daugherty

Gnosticism is a term not found in Scripture but can sometimes come up in the study of certain epistles in our New Testament. The first knowledge we had of Gnosticism was only known through orthodox Christian groups who would speak against the Gnostics as a heresy of Christianity. While it's origin is debated by scholars, we do know some tenets of its disciples. The term itself comes from the Greek word gnosis which is the Greek word that means knowledge. For the Gnostics, this was a special knowledge of the divine. It was separate and apart from Jewish or Christian knowledge. The goal for the gnostics was to receive this special divine knowledge and it was valued above the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Gnostics considered the principle element of salvation to be direct knowledge of the supreme divinity in the form of mystical or esoteric insight. Gnosticism was never a standardized system so belief and practice varied according to geographic locations. Some beliefs and practices were common. Gnostics viewed the material world as completely evil and the spiritual world as completely good. This belief system created an intense dualism that manifested in one of two ways of practice. 1) All material is evil therefore one must deny himself of any material pleasures. 2) The material world is corrupt and will be destroyed so it does not matter how I use the material world including my body. It can be explained in opposite ends of the spectrum either extreme asceticism or hedonism. Many of the "Church Fathers" of the 1st through 3rd century condemned the group as heretical and its disciples have gone into obscurity.

Problems With Gnosticism

There were many issues that sprang from gnostic belief and practice. I want to address two at this time.

1) Gnostics believed that Jesus never came in the flesh. They believed that the flesh (or material world) was evil (and the spiritual world was good) so Jesus could not have actually come in the flesh, but He must have been a spirit being who only appeared to come in the flesh. Could John be writing against gnostic belief in I John 4:2,3 in which he says, "By this you will know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God...". John is also the writer of the Gospel bearing his name in which he begins with talking about God as come in the flesh (John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory..."). 2) Gnostics believed that salvation was tied to a direct secret knowledge of the divine. Gnostics' misunderstanding of Jesus caused many problems. Gnostics were not universal in their beliefs about Jesus but many saw Jesus as the embodiment of the supreme being who was to bring "gnosis" to the earth. We have examined Scriptures in that God did take the form of a man and walked on this earth, and we know that Jesus' teachings brought knowledge, but that was not the full purpose of His coming. Jesus coming in the flesh brought about salvation through His death, burial, and resurrection. Essential to salvation is Jesus' actions of coming in the flesh and gaining victory over sin and death. It is in one's response of faith to Jesus that one may receive salvation.

Gnosticism in the Church

I do hope you are still reading to this point, but you may be starting to ask the question, so what? Gnosticism had its day in the 1st through 3rd Century and I live in the 21st Century. Beware to think that issues from humanity's past stay in humanity's past. Solomon said there is, "nothing new under the sun." (Ecc. 1:9)

I do not believe that Christian's today are in trouble of adopting classical Gnosticism but I can see issues that we do need to be aware of.

1) Christianity is not merely an intellectual pursuit. In II Timothy 3, Paul tells Timothy in the context that false teachers will come in to corrupt the naive and unstable. He says about knowledge, they are, "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Jesus rebuked the religious elite of His day saying, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me." (John 4:39). Do not misunderstand me, Christianity is a taught and learned religion. Faith is not a blind leap into the dark but a walk that is guided by knowledge. However, Christianity is not a mere pursuit of mental knowledge. Knowledge is a means to an end. That end is conforming our lives to live more like Christ. When knowledge becomes the pursuit in and of itself, that pursuit becomes selfish. Christians can behave like Gnostics when one's practice is reduced to only study of Scripture and not the practice of the knowledge gained. What good is it to have Scriptural giants in a pulpit and sitting in pews that can quote half the Bible, parse out the Greek and Hebrew and yet cannot manifest love to his family, friends, and neighbors. What good is that man's religion? James would say, how else can one show his faith but by his works (James 2:14-18). If the accumulation of knowledge from study, bible classes, and sermons does not translate to how we relate to others it is no better than the Gnostic who selfishly pursues knowledge solely for his own benefit.

2) No Christ = No Love; Know Christ = Know Love. There is an amazing connection John makes in one's understanding of Christ and the love we have for one another. Notice what John says in his second epistle, "And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another." (v. 5). Then he follows this idea to love another and keep Christ's commandments with, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (v. 7). What was so important about Jesus coming in the flesh connecting with loving one another. Paul said about Jesus, "who being in the form of God, did not consider

it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:6,7). Christ coming in the flesh is the only way in which humanity's problem with sin and death could be addressed. A spirit being simply could not address those problems. Christ in his love for humanity, "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8). In love Christ came in the flesh and demonstrated His great love by going to the cross for humanity's sin. This is why in the beginning of the context, Paul says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (v. 5). Christ's example helps us to know how to live with others in mind. "For God SO loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16 emphasis mine). In His final hours with His disciples, Jesus is not imparting some grand new knowledge, but one that is foundational to the character of God. He said, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; as I have loved you also love one another." (John 13:34). Jesus demonstrated it fully in His life, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13). The Gnostics' failure to acknowledge Jesus as come in the flesh robbed its disciples of having love for their fellow man. Therefore the Gnostics aims and pursuits were only focused on self. Christian, examine yourself not by what you profess, but how you practice your faith. Is my practice a self-centered pursuit of knowledge or is it a self-sacrificing pursuit of loving others? "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (I John 4:7-11).

Senior Saints by John McShane

While sitting at a stop sign one day this week, this thought came into my head. How many times has a mental stop sign affected my life? Some examples of mental stop signs include fear of failure, fear to try something new, negative feedback from others, and fear of ridicule from my peer group. How many times was I told "that will never fly," and I decide to quit before really trying? As you think back over your life, how many mental stop signs did you encounter that could have made a big difference in your life if you had ignored that mental stop sign? Now ask yourself, what mental stop signs affected my Christian walk in life? A lot of the same that are mentioned above. We could probably add some others like fear of public speaking, fear of lack of knowledge, fear of not doing the job you have been offered, and fear of what others will think. We need to put these mental stop signs in the rearview mirror of life and step out on faith. Just keep in mind that faith without works is dead. God has provided us with faith, and we have to put our feet on it and move on.

Youth Group

Saturday, July 31, 2021 at 3:00 pm
Home of the Klark & Karissa

**We will have a devo then
work on a service project.**

**We will be assembling fruit baskets
and platters for the local fire & police
departments.**

**We are scheduled to be at the fire station
then police station
at 5:00 pm**

**Please bring your Bibles
and the supplies
you signed up for.**



SFA FAMILY MATTERS

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

Our Members:

Bob Pratt - health
 Jim & Carol Edmonson - health
 Nasheka Medley - pregnancy
 Bernetta Green - health
 Fred Strickland - health
 Melody Baxter - bus accident
 Debbie Bush - health
 Margaret Coone
 Sharon M. Washington - health
 Antoine & Marcella Swain - health
 Flo Duffy - eye problems
 Vanessa Palmer - health

PRAYER LIST

John & Linda McShane
 Ron & Judy Ford - health
 Darlene Thompson - family
 Jim Turner - health
 Bobby Simpson - health
 Brian Smith - heart
 Kathy Nester - health
 Joyce Williams
 Annette Phillip - health
 George Davis - eye problems
 Jeff Bingle - Covid
 Tanner Estridge - health

(Please update the office of any changes)

The **EXTENDED FAMILY** and **FRIENDS** prayer requests are emailed every week and posted on the bulletin board

PRAY FOR OUR SHUT-INS

Faith West Joyce Burbage
 Carol Eason Ellen Shearer

Please call before visiting as some locations are locked down again.

UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Annette Philip requests prayers for her health. She is having difficulty walking, too.

Jeff Bingle & Terrance Dindy, Jr. have tested positive for Covid.

Vanessa Palmer is still in the hospital and will undergo treatment.

Ron Ford was in LRMC with blood pressure problems. He will have tests this week for other issues.

Tanner Estridge has an appointment with a specialist in Orlando for the recurrent fevers.

From the Elders -

The SFA congregation is blessed by God to be growing. With this growth comes more need for workers and organization. We have asked Rick Kenyon if he would be interested in serving as a deacon, and he is. Please study again the qualifications for a deacon in 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13, and please give the elders your input.

Youth Group Reminder

Kahoot challenges will be every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. The first challenge is July 29, 2021

The Kemps' "New Adventures" Going Away Party

August 14th from 11:00am-1:00pm

Please RSVP to the email or the list on the bulletin board if you and your family plan to attend. It will be at the church building. The church is providing all food, and an RSVP will help ensure enough food for everyone.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

July

Designated Elder - Bobby Sheumaker

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Song Leader/prayer Vince Daugherty

Devo Brian Kenyon

Closing Prayer David Deal

Sunday, August 1, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp

"What Jesus Prayed for His People"

John 17:15-26

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp

"Lessons from the First Page of the Bible"

Genesis 1:1-31

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both) David Anderson

Greeter Waldon

Song/prayer before class Tucker Sweeney

Announcements Jimmy Sweeney

A.M. Song Leader Jason Hendrix

Scripture reading/Prayer Alex Parramore

Lord's Table John McShane

Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

Sound booth A. Parramore/S. Kenyon

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Shearer

P.M. Song Leader Jason Hendrix

Scripture reading/Prayer Wayne Shearer

Lord's Table John McShane

Closing Prayer Mike Van Allen

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Song Leader/Prayer Vince Daugherty

Devo David Williams

Closing Prayer Wadi Khoury

Upcoming Events

July

30 - Sing at Orange St.

31 - Youth group devo

August

1 - Lads2Leaders

1 - Fellowship In-service

5 - Youth group Kahoot

7 - Senior Saints mtg.

17 - FSOP ladies' class

21 - Teachers' workshop

22 - Teachers' meeting

24 - ladies' night out

28 - Youth group devo

September

4 - Youth group fun

12 - Joey Treat

18 - Youth Seminar

October

2 - Door Knocking

2 - Ladies' Day

Trunk or Treat

(Date TBD)

November

14-17 Fall gospel mtg

19 - Youth group

thankful meal

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

July 11 \$6,693.01

July 18 \$5,596.00

July 25 \$6,676.25

Contribution Average \$ 7,062.50

Remember!

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." 1 Peter 5:8,9

When you are tempted to lash out amongst yourselves, remember your true enemy.
2 Corinthians 2:10-11

When your work seems to be in vain, remember your true enemy. Mark 4:15

When life is overwhelming, and it seems like it's you against the whole world, remember your true enemy. Psalm 43:5

When the pleasures of this world are enticing your heart, remember your true enemy. Ephesians 6:11

When you look in the mirror and you are tempted to define yourself by your past, remember your true enemy. 1 John 5:18-19

Remember:

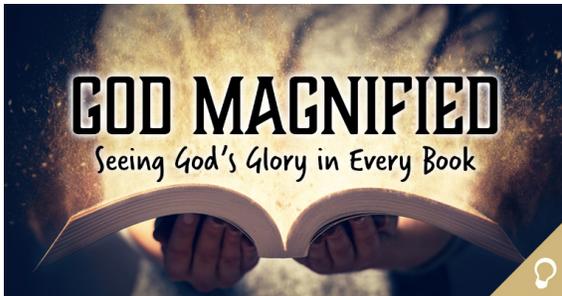
We are united (Colossians 3:13-14)

We work for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

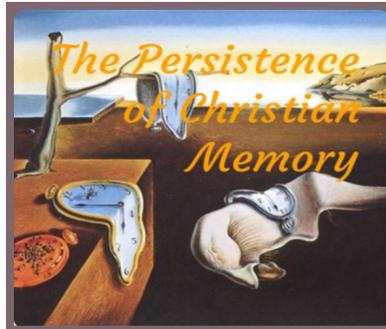
We are never alone (Isaiah 41:10; Hebrews 13:5)

We have an eternal home if we are found faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13)

We are redeemed (1 Corinthians 6:11)



Hosted by
Hiram Kemp
(The Light Network)



Hosted by
Vince Daugherty



Hosted by
Dee Parramore
Brittani Kemp
Stephanie Kenyon

- Podcasts hosted by members of SFA -

Links are available on our website under the SERMONS tab.
You can also listen on our YouTube channel.

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



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Return Service Requested

"GOD IS OUR REFUGE
AND STRENGTH,
A VERY PRESENT
HELP IN TROUBLE."

PSALM 46:1