



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 73 No. 33 August 18, 2020

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
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.

Christians' Response to Government

Submitting to Civil Authorities

Hiram Kemp

The Bible tells us when Jesus was on earth, He did the things that pleased His Father (Jn. 6:29). Jesus did not come to earth to do His own will but instead to do the will of His Father who sent Him into the world (Jn. 6:38). Paul goes as far as to say that Jesus is subject to the Father in heaven (1 Cor. 15:27-28). Jesus is divine, equal to Father, possesses all authority, and yet the Bible tells us that He submits to the Father (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 10:30). Though we may not understand all of the intricacies of the Godhead and the relationship between its members, we can appreciate that Jesus is willing to submit in some way to God as His Father.

In our society submission is often looked down upon, but the Christian must remember that it is a part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus surrendered some of His divine advantages while on earth so He could fulfill the role of mediator and redeemer (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus' willing sacrifice and submission led to His eventual exaltation, and the same will be true for us. Submission is an essential part of the servant life that Christians are called to live. Christians are to submit to each other in the fear of God (Eph. 5:21). Wives are to submit to their husbands as they would to the Lord himself (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). Servants are to be submissive to their masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18). Christians are also to be submissive to governing authorities. In a previous article, I discussed the need to pray for those in power as Paul pleads for us to do in 1 Timothy 2:1-4. However, the Bible says more about our relationship to those in power. Paul and others in the New Testament speak of the need to submit to those in power.

Before we examine the specific passages that speak of our need to submit, it is important for us to remember that Christians in the first century did not always enjoy the favor of their leaders. Christians were seen as being a part of the "sect that was spoken against everywhere" (Acts 28:22). Historians tell us that Emperor Nero began the persecution of Christians in Rome and that he was likely responsible for the death of both Peter and Paul as they were martyred during his reign. Still, these inspired penmen wrote to Christians and commanded them to be in subjection to their civil leaders, the very leaders that would eventually kill them for their faith (cf. Rev. 2:10). Though we live in a different time, the command to submit to civil leaders still stands. Let us notice what the New Testament says about our responsibility to civil leaders in this respect.

Proper View of Authorities

Paul's words in Romans 13:1-7 may be the strongest and clearest words in the New Testament on our relationship to the governing authorities. He has just finished telling Christians not to take vengeance into our own hands but instead, leave it to God (Rom. 12:19-21). Here he tells us that God has certain individuals in place on earth to punish the evildoers. Paul tells us a few important things that we should keep in mind when it comes to how we respond to those in positions of power. Every individual is to submit to their leaders because God possesses all power. He is the one who put them in power (Rom. 13:1; cf. Ps. 62:11). While humans vote and do what they can on the earth, Paul reminds us that there is no one in power that God is unaware of. God is the one who is really in control. If we fail to submit to those in power, then we are rebelling against God who put them there (Rom. 13:2).

1 Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (2003), pg. 34.

This does not mean that God approves of everything that every leader does. This does not even mean that every leader has God's blessing and approval. However, government, as an institution, is God's doing, and to rebel against it is to rebel against the God who gave it. When we are hesitant about submitting to government, we should ask ourselves, do we want to be found fighting against God (cf. Acts 5:38-39)? Paul tells us twice in Romans 13:4 that leaders are God's servants or ministers. The word translated minister (diakonos) in Romans 13:4 is the same word used elsewhere to speak of faithful ministers of the gospel (2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Thess. 3:2). Christians should be submitting to those in power not only because they can punish us, which they can, but also for "conscience sake" (Rom. 13:5). When Paul brings up the conscience, he is essentially saying our obedience should flow from the idea that we know this is the right thing to do (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31).

In a similar passage in 1 Peter 2:13, Peter tells us to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1 Pet. 2:13). Those of us with the freedom to vote and express our opinion should keep in mind that our obedience and subjection is driven by our desire to please the Lord whether or not we favor the person in office. It is God's will that we live in conformity with the laws of the land so we do not soil

our influence with outsiders (1 Pet. 2:11-12, 15-16). Those in civil leaderships are not only worthy of our submission, but they are also worthy of our honor (1 Pet. 2:17)!

Practical Application

Submitting to civil authorities is what Christians are to do because we want to please God. In a future article, I will discuss what the Bible says about disobeying rulers when their laws contradict God's Word (cf. Acts 5:29). However, where the laws of man do not contradict or conflict with the law of God, we are to submit and obey. We should be doing this in small areas: driving the speed limit, wearing a seatbelt, and paying our taxes (Rom. 13:7-8). Likewise, in other areas that may make us more uncomfortable, we need to obey as well. We need to keep in mind that if we disobey civil authorities, we are not only bad examples, but we are on bad terms with God. To rebel against the civil authorities is to disrespect and disobey God, and God will not take this lightly. Instead of using our energy in rebellion, we are to submit and be ready for every good work in the Lord's cause (Titus 3:1).

Submission does not mean we agree or approve with the decision our civil authorities make. Submission means that we know God rules in the kingdoms of men, and He will hold them accountable for how they use their power. He will also hold us accountable for how we responded to His word (Jn. 19:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:10). If we only obey God's word when it is easy or convenient for us, then we are not truly obeying God but instead, we are guilty of doing our own will. If the laws do not violate the laws of God, we should submit and do so because God commands us to do so. We should also keep in mind that we follow a Savior who was willing to submit to the Father's will even when it hurt (Mt. 26:39). As we follow Him, sometimes our submission will be uncomfortable, but it will always be worth it.

Help Needed

The Daughertys are moving from North Lakeland and need your help!

If you are available on Friday, August 21, please see Vince or Tiffany for details.



TEACHERS and HELPERS

If you are scheduled to teach or be a teacher's assistant next quarter (beginning September 6, 2020), please make plans to attend the Teacher Workshop on August 30th at 4:00 pm in the library. There will be a tutorial on the online app that is used during class.

Youth Group by Vince Daugherty

Have you ever heard someone say you should not call someone stupid?

The Lord says not so fast. *"Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid."*
Proverbs 12:1

Have you ever received instruction from a parent or a teacher? The one who receives it is good and wise.

Have you ever not listened to instruction or correction? The Bible says that is being stupid. Therefore, be wise and not stupid!

Senior Saints

by John McShane

"Once a man was asked, 'What do you gain by regularly praying to God?' The man replied, 'Nothing, but let me tell you what I lost: anger, ego, greed, depression, insecurity and fear of death.'

Sometimes the answer to our prayers is not gaining but losing which ultimately is gain. Perhaps if we would pray with the idea that God can help us in this regard, we will experience a much happier life. We need to remember that we can pray for ourselves to become closer to God and enjoy the fruits of our prayers. Prayer is mentioned many times in the Word of God.

"Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."

Exodus 33:13

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

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

Our Members:

Frank Hamby
 Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt
 Margaret Norman
 Bill & Carlene Long
 Cierra Edwards
 Bruce Longfellow
 Sharon M. Washington
 Kathy Nester

PRAYER LIST

Brenda Mask
 Linda McShane
 Bernetta Green
 Bobby Simpson
 Ellen Shearer
 Jim Turner
 Annette Phillip
 Antoine & Marcella Swain
 Ron & Judy Ford
 Brian Smith
 Ray Nashick
 Bob Pratt
 Geny Johnson
 Margaret Coone
 George Davis

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

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

Extended family:

George French (Kenny & Reba's son)
 Trevor & Sandy Hutchins (Becky Sheumaker's sister & brother-in-law)
 Thelma Rachford (Dottie Fife's sister)
 Maria Wardell (Darlene Thompson's granddaughter)
 Alicia Zamot (Jagie Kenyon's aunt)
 Chip Bolding (bettye bolding's son)
 Keijuan Callaway (Sharon Washington's son)
 Vontreal Mitchell-Copeland (Ruby Lewis' nephew)
 Gene Johnson (Mark Johnson's father)
 Gina (Kathy Nester's daughter)
 Beverly Kinsey (Debbie Bush's sister-in-law)
 Tim Albright (Glenda Beebe's cousin)



Friends:

Roselyn Roberts (friend of Darlene Thompson)
 Elizabeth (Tubbs) Dean (former member)
 Cooper Terry (friend of Jeff Bingle)
 Carter Hancock (friend of Sophia Smith & Jessica Anderson)
 Tina Thomas (friend of Sharon Washington)
 Carl Chambers
 Rosie Patterson (Medulla member)
 Marcia Allen (Ingrid Stewart's friend in Jamaica)
 Steve Higginbotham (minister at Karns congregation in Knoxville, TN)



UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Kathy Nester fell on her other arm. She is scheduled to see the doctor this week
 Annette Phillip is now home from the hospital. She is in need of Ensure Plus.
 Steve Higginbotham, minister at Karns church of Christ in Knoxville, TN has been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES

To Staci Smith on the passing of her friend's husband, Brandon, on August 16 from the Virus.

To Sharon M. Washington on the passing of her cousin, Diane Ashley.

5th Sunday Collection

August 30th is the 5th Sunday collection for the Building Fund. If you would like to give additional funds, there are designated envelopes in the foyer. Please place it in the collection plate. You can also mail or bring your contribution to the office. Be sure to designate the contribution as part of the Building Fund.

It will be collected by the elders.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

August

Designated Elder - Bobby Sheumaker

Wednesday, August 19, 2020

Song Leader Ian Enamorado
 Prayer Tucker Sweeney
 Devo Josh Potvin
 Closing Prayer Allen Grimes

Sunday, August 23, 2020

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"The Life of a Living Sacrifice"
 Romans 12:9-14

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Mark Teske
"The Praiseworthy Thessalonians"
 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both services) Charles Paulin
 Song before class/Prayer Rick Kenyon
 Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
 A.M. Song Leader Vince Daugherty
 Scripture reading/Prayer Josh Potvin
 Lord's Table Jeff Stewart
 Closing Prayer..... David Anderson

6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song Leader Vince Daugherty
 Scripture reading/Prayer David Williams
 Lord's Table Jeff Stewart
 Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

Song Leader/prayer Brian Kenyon
 Devo Josh Potvin
 Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

ASSEMBLING UPDATE

We still encourage those who do not feel well and those who consider themselves high-risk to stay at home.

As of July 2, the city of Lakeland has issued a face mask mandate. Masks must be worn upon entering the building.

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 ~

Aug 2 \$9,322.00
 Aug 9 \$8,414.00
 Aug 16 \$6,768.00
 Contribution Average \$7,132.22

Years ago I watched a child wielding a toy sword. He was hurling this oversized plastic weapon while his tiny feet stumbled and awkwardly spun him into courageous battle against the bad guy trying to take over the world. Between his grunts and growls, he reassured me that he'll win because he's "the good hero!" Even when "punched to the ground" by the villain, he got up and swung that weapon with a determination that made me step back. He was absolutely certain that his sword would lead him to victory.

I didn't see his villain as clearly as he did or hear the sinister threats being hurled at my young warrior. I only saw (and giggled) at his imagination. Then I marveled at the truth of Jesus' words in Mark 10:13-14.

This tiny warrior had no qualms about going into battle when the sword was in his hand. I have a sword, too (Hebrews 4:12). As I stumble, awkwardly spin around, and get punched to the ground in my battles, I must remember to ask myself: what do I clearly see?

Is it the "bad guy" or the victory in using the Lord's sword?
Is it the reassurance that the war is won despite my battles?
Is it the perfect salvation of being a soldier of Christ?



The Purpose of New Testament Singing

An outlet for happiness

James 5:13

Teach & admonish each other

Colossians 3:16

Make melody to the Lord

Ephesians 5:19

Glorify God for His mercy

Romans 15:9

Response to persecution

Acts 16:25

Reciting our Eternal Victory

Revelation 15:1-4

The Names of Jesus in Revelation

The Faithful Witness

(Revelation 1:5)

The Alpha & Omega

(Revelation 1:8)

One like the Son of Man

(Revelation 1:13)

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

(Revelation 5:5)

The Lamb Who was Slain

(Revelation 5:6)

King of Kings & Lord of Lords

(Revelation 19:16)

The Bright and Morning Star

(Revelation 22:16)

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

Find us on social media



**"FOR THE LORD GIVES WISDOM;
FROM HIS MOUTH
COME KNOWLEDGE
AND UNDERSTANDING."**

PROVERBS 2:6

**South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Return Service Requested