

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Jeff Bingle
Stacey Paulin
Jimmy Sweeney
Chuck Wyatt

MINISTER

Hiram Kemp
(386) 405-5372

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Brian Kenyon
(863) 944-8565

SECRETARY

Michelle Paulin

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.

HOME OF

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.

EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

WEB PAGE

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

What Do Hurricanes Teach Us?

By Brian R. Kenyon

As this article is being written, Hurricane Irma seems to be heading its way to Florida. At this time, it is too early to tell exactly how it will impact our State. The storm may affect us minimally by being nothing more than an all day rain with a little wind, or it may level a path from east to west or south to north with our area right in the middle. To make matters even more somber, Houston has just started cleaning up from the destructive floods from Hurricane Harvey. As with any natural event, hurricanes teach us at least three valuable lessons.

We Do Not Know Everything About God And The World

In Job 38:1, “the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said ...” In the context of Job, it was very fitting for the Lord to answer him from a storm. Exactly what kind of storm the “whirlwind” describes is uncertain. It could have been a tornado, thunderstorm, or a specially designed storm. However, one thing is clear: Job did not know everything he thought he knew about God and this world. The Book of Job opens with God allowing Satan to take away Job’s material possessions (including his children, Job 1:12-22). Then this prosperous patriarch’s health was ruthlessly taken away (Job 2:6-10). We know that God allowed this not because He was punishing Job, but to the contrary, because He was proving to Satan that Job was righteous (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3), and that he did not “fear God for nothing” (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5).

Job and his three friends, however, were not privileged to the knowledge we have from Chapters 1-2. Thus, the main portion of the Book of Job concerns the principle human characters trying to figure out Job’s situation. In their minds, sin is what always caused pain and suffering. Since Job has suffered so much, he must have committed grievous sin. Job, however, knew that he had not sinned to the degree that he deserved the kind of suffering he was enduring. We know that our sin is not the cause of all our suffering (Lk. 13:1-5; Jn. 9:1-3), but Job and his friends were philosophically entrenched with that idea. Throughout the middle portion of the book, Job tried to justify himself at God’s expense, even to the point of seemingly accusing God (Job 19:6-13). Job’s three friends tried to justify God at Job’s expense, even to the point of naming the sins Job must have committed (Job 22:5-9). Each side thought it knew God and the workings of this world, but each came to the realization that it did not know God nor this world like they thought.

The “whirlwind” was a very appropriate place from which the Lord spoke. Storms, especially tornadoes, are among the most unpredictable of nature. Through this “whirlwind” the Lord asked Job a series of questions, each of which showed that Job did not quite know everything he thought he knew. Likewise, with the hurricanes that plague us from time to time, they show us that we do not know everything we think we know. We are extremely blessed to have the technology whereby we can know that a hurricane is coming and thus prepare for it. However, even with this technology, we do not know everything we think we know. In 2004, Hurricane Charley turned unexpectedly and caught many unprepared. Who knows what Hurricane Irma will do (and may have already done by the time this is read)? Only the Lord knows! Storms teach us that we do not know everything we may think we know.

God is All Powerful

In the first Gospel, we read of this incident in the life of Jesus:

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. ²⁴And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. ²⁵Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” ²⁶But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” (Mt. 8:23-27)

As powerful as a storm is, God is more powerful. Those of us who “rode out” hurricanes in the past, especially those three in a row of 2004, know first hand the power of the wind and rain often associated with these storms. We could see and feel the power, and we were totally powerless to do anything about it except run for cover and trust in the Lord! We do not know the exact intensity of the storm Jesus and His disciples encountered on the Sea of Galilee, but we do know that Jesus had power over it.

Two truths come to mind from this incident. First, we must never fail to trust in the Lord, even in the severest of storms. Jesus’ response, “O you of little faith” was a response that He only directed to His disciples (other occurrences are in Mt. 6:30; 14:31; 16:8; Lk. 12:28). It is a mild rebuke for those who should know better. Of all people who should not be “fearful,” it should be the Lord’s disciples (cf. Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5). How sad it is when we fail to trust in the Lord! Second, God is powerful. Not only is the power of God known through the storm, as in the case of Job, His power is known from this incident by the Lord’s ability to calm the raging storm. Imagine if in the midst of a hurricane — branches flying everywhere, roofs peeling off, rain horizontally slicing the sky — the Lord spoke, and all the fury instantaneously turned to calm. That would be some power! Our reaction would be like those on the boat with Jesus, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” Although God’s will today does not include miraculously calming storms (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-13), the Biblical record is true, and it lets us know that God is all-powerful.

Trust in The Lord

Irma may spare us her furry, or by the time this is read, our material possessions may be devastated. However, since we do not know everything we may think we know about God and this world, and since we know that God is all-powerful, let us trust in Him to see us through. There are at least three relevant aspects of this trust. First, trust that God will not allow us more than we can handle (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). As James wrote, we can and must “count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (Jas. 1:2-4). Second, trust God’s inspired word that “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). No matter how bad a situation may seem, good can come out of it. Let us use trials as stepping stones to greater faith rather than stumbling blocks to apostasy! Third, trust that hurricanes, even at their worse, allow us to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16). Let us help people mend their lives after the storms of life have devastated. When we help, let us not just meet the physical needs, but let us look toward eternity and point to Jesus, who is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16).

**Pray for those affected
by the hurricanes!**

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Ginny Hamby will be starting a new series of chemotherapy treatment. Vince Daugherty was back with us and is slowly improving. Also please keep Jim Turner, Margaret Coone, Sharon Washington, Carol Eason and Josephine Bowman in prayer.

Relatives: Richard Sheffield, Ginny Hamby's brother, had open heart surgery last week. Please keep him in prayer.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler and Duane Nelson.

Others: Joyce Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner, Jack Pinckert, and Corey Perry.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday Sept. 6th: Ladies class will resume every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.

Saturday Sept. 9th: Ladies Brunch at the North Jackson Ave. Church of Christ in Bartow at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Sept. 10th: Ladies planning meeting to discuss the Ladies Day in October will be after the evening services.

Tues. Sept. 12th: Elders/Deacons meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday Sept 16th: Men's Breakfast at the Hilltop Church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday Sept. 19th: F.S.O.P. Ladie's class at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday Sept. 24th: Lads to Leaders kick off meeting. More details as the time gets closer.

Sept. 29th - Oct. 1st: Rush at Freed Hardeman University for middle school and high school students.

Saturday October 7th: South FL. Avenue's Ladies Day!

Pantry

Our pantry is low and needs to be restocked! Individual packaged items are good. Also canned meats, fruits and roman noodles and plastic silverware are needed. Canned vegetables are already covered.

Visitors

Joel Grissom, Jane Jessee, Chris Courtright, Hyshauni McNeil, Bridget Cook, Pauline Gilmore, and Dora Viner.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

September

Charles Paulin **Table** C.J. Grimes
Tucker Sweeney **Assist** Bobby Sheumaker

Sunday, Sept. 10, 2017

9:30 A.M.
Song at Bible Class Tucker Sweeney
Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Stacey Paulin.
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer David Williams
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Jimmy Sweeney
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson
Greeters The Kenyons
Att. Cards Paul & Sebastian
Open & Close Building Jimmy Sweeney

Wed. Sept. 13, 2017

Song Leader Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer C.J. Grimes
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005

Sunday, Sept. 17, 2017

9:30 A.M.
Song at Bible Class Frank Hamby
Prayer Kyle Bingle

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Stacey Paulin
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Matt Willcut
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jim Edmonson

Greeters The Frenchs
Att. Cards Antonio and Paul
Open & Close Building Jimmy Sweeney

Wed. Sept 20, 2017

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Tucker Sweeney
Closing Prayer Fred Strickland

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Aug 13.....	\$5,116.75
Aug 20.....	\$4,954.00
Aug 27.....	\$5,034.25
Sept 03.....	\$5,383.00
Contribution Average	\$5,333.49
2017 Weekly Budget	\$4,716.51



Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (6th Street) and Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

Planet Earth: God's "Testing Ground"

Many theists, while debating atheists and agnostics on the problem of evil, have correctly observed that one reason God allows natural disasters is that He made the world as a testing ground for humanity to choose God and live. The created world points us to God. First, we can know that this world must have been caused by an all-powerful, uncaused cause. Paul confirmed: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:19-20). Paul preached to the Athenians that God's creation "has determined their [mankind's] preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26-27). Second, nature shows that we are not in control (cf. Job 38-41). As much as Job wanted to meet God in person to prove his righteous character and his undeserved suffering, when God finally spoke to him through the "whirlwind," and asked him numerous questions about the creation of this world and the nature of its creatures, Job could say nothing further and dropped his oath of innocence (Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6). Third, while it is true that all natural calamities are not deliberately sent by God as punishment, we do know from Scripture that some calamities were sent to motivate God's people to repent. Amos 4:6-11 serves to illustrate *(continued below)*



South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST
 1807 South Florida Avenue
 Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

Remember, kids,
 go straight to
 Bible classes
 instead of the
 auditorium first.



(continued from above) this point. Amos spoke of God sending drought, crop disease, and locusts, and three times acknowledged, "Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD" (Amos 4:6, 9, 11). No matter the natural calamity, let us not quit God nor blame Him for any misery, but rather let us acknowledge His power, be confident in His will, and use the occasion to evaluate our faith and keep ourselves right with Him! ❤️ *Brian*

*Engraving
 Heavenly
 Truths*
The Church & The Home Working Together

Coming Soon to South Florida Avenue
 Beginning with the winter quarter, we will have a new Bible school curriculum. For those interested, our first training workshop will be Oct. 15 from 2:00-5:00 pm. See Hiram if you want to help.



**Due to the hurricane, call the office
 Saturday to see if we will still meet Sunday**

6th Street's 24th Annual Labor Day Lectureship was well represented by South Florida Avenue, including Hiram Kemp, who preached with Thomas Wise, Allen Cross, and Kevin Patterson. Plan to attend next year