

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
The Messenger is published weekly by the South Florida Ave. Church of Christ meeting at 1807 South Florida Ave - Lakeland, FL 33803 Vol. 69 No.37 09-13-16

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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.....7:00 p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

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.

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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

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

The Ephesian Experiment

Hiram Kemp

Of all the classes I have taken throughout school, I suppose science classes were my least favorite. Science was never interesting to me, and so I did not look forward to those classes. However, there are tools and techniques that I have learned from science that have helped me in other avenues of life. I enjoyed conducting science experiments. It was there that the sleeves were rolled up and the facts were discovered as tests were performed. We all perform experiments from time to time. To experiment simply means to test or examine something in hopes of arriving at the truth. When members of the church of Christ espouse that the Bible teaches Christians are only made one way and are all a part of one church, the religious world scoffs at this idea. Some reject this idea of pre-denominational Christianity from bias or ignorance of what the Scriptures teach. I believe it is possible to look at the conversions to Christ that took place in Ephesus along with the book of Ephesians and come to some sure conclusions. When one completes the Ephesian Experiment it will be clear what the Bible teaches about becoming a Christian and the church of which one becomes a member in order to be saved.

The Gospel in Ephesus

The Book of Acts details the spread of the gospel throughout the first century world as outlined by Jesus in the commission given to His apostles (Acts 1:8). We learn of the establishment of congregations and the conversion stories of some who responded to the gospel message in the right way (Acts 2;27-38, 41; 8:35-40). When Paul came to the City of Ephesus he found certain individuals who were ignorant concerning the Holy Spirit and His role in the believer's life. The men whom Paul encountered had not even heard of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-2). From this Paul concluded there must have been something wrong with their baptism (Acts 19:3). The baptism of the New Covenant given by the authority of Christ was into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:18-20). To be unaware of the Holy Spirit while claiming to be baptized correctly highlights some misunderstanding. Paul eventually learns that the twelve men he was talking to had only been knowledgeable about the baptism of John (Acts 19:3). Paul instructs them concerning the termination of John's baptism and the baptism of the Christian age which is necessary for all (Acts 19:4-5).

From this we learn that baptism is important for identifying a genuine disciple of Christ. Though these men were religious, they were mistaken and needed to be corrected (Prov. 18:17). It is possible to be baptized for the wrong reason or in the wrong way, in which case one would need to be baptized properly and for the right reason. The baptism that is authoritative today is the baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38,22:16; Rm. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27). *(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1) Paul helps these men come to the proper understanding concerning what it means to be saved and to be a Christian, and we need to make the same effort today with those who are mistaken concerning the conversion process.

The Book of Ephesians

As you read through the book of Ephesians, it becomes clear that Paul is putting a lot of emphasis on the church (Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-25, 27, 29, 32). If someone wants to know about the church you become a member of once you are properly baptized, the Book of Ephesians would be a good place to look.

In the first chapter of Ephesians, Paul references the exalted nature of Christ and says that God put Him as head over all things including the church which is his body (Eph. 1:20-23). Jesus had previously promised to build a church (Mt. 16:18). The apostles affirm that He did purchase the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Then Paul refers to the church as the body of Christ, the same one we are baptized into when we obey the gospel (1 Cor. 12:13). So one can clearly see the church is the body.

How many bodies does Christ have? In the same book, Paul refers to the body again and says that there is only one (Eph. 4:4). When people hear that there is only one church, sometimes they think this is an arrogant statement concocted by a group of people who want to elevate themselves. The fact is when someone says there is only one church, this is correct because this is exactly what the Bible says. Paul goes on to describe the one baptism, one Lord, and one Father (Eph. 4:5-6). No one who believes the Bible would argue that there is more than one Lord or more than one God the Father, yet some overlook the clear cut passages that teach the singular nature of the church.

Lastly, Paul talks about Jesus as being the Savior of the Body (Eph. 5:23). Jesus is only coming back to save one church, the church which is His body. To teach that Jesus is only coming back for the church of Christ in a world overwhelmed with denominations is not arrogant but is accurate. Paul as he writes the book of Ephesians knows nothing of the various denominations of our day. Paul mentions nothing of God gathering all of the faithful in all of the churches. Paul simply states that Jesus is the head of the one body, which is the church, that He will come back and save (Eph. 5:25-27). It is not possible to take the book of Ephesians along with the other New Testament letters and get the ideas of Christianity promoted so widely today.

Conclusion

The Ephesian Experiment sheds a lot of light on acceptable Christianity. We learn from those converted in Ephesus in the Book of Acts that people must be taught the right thing and respond in the right way to be saved. Someone who was baptized into a denomination years ago and then learns the truth cannot transfer his or her baptism. The person who learns of the truth must be baptized properly for the right reason: there is only one baptism (Eph. 4:5). When a person obeys the gospel he or she becomes a member of the body of Christ over which Jesus rules as the head (Acts 2:47). The church is singular in nature and in the church dwell all of those who will be saved. Someone might respond, "What about all of the good people in all the denominations around the world?" The fact remains that the Bible does not teach denominationalism and it would be wise for us to help those good people that we love come to understand the truth in a loving way (Jn. 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:5). We should adopt the method of Paul as he came into Ephesus two thousand years ago and asked questions about the things people had believed (Acts 19:2). The Ephesian Experiment uncovers the truth in such a way that it cannot be misunderstood by those seeking to be saved by God's grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

Save the Date: October 16-19, 2016

Gospel Meeting

with **Stephen Rogers**



Sunday:

Bible Class: Grasping the Nature of Christianity

A.M. Sermon: Knowing God

P.M. Sermon: Exalting Jesus

Monday: Helping People Realize They Can
And Must Choose to Obey God

Tuesday: Getting the Outline Properly Put
Together

Wednesday: Clarifying the Plan of
Salvation

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Jim Turner is home from the hospital, but still needs our prayers. Please call before you visit with him. Becky Sheumaker was still home with bronchitis. Also keep Ginny Hamby, Jacquelin Dopwell, JoAnn Hobbback, Elizabeth Tubbs, Faith West, Carla Moore, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Bonnie Byrd, (Virginia Walker's sister), Preston Craft (Melissa Craft's brother) and Harold Rister.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Janet Crosby, Duane Nelson and Sharon Edler.

Others: Jackie Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner and Alyssa Buckner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

Upcoming Events

September 18th: Baby shower and potluck dinner after the morning worship service for Josh and Marissa Estridge.

October 7th-9th: Family Festival at the Weeki Wachee Christian Camp.

November 5th: Ladies Day at the Kissimmee Church of Christ at 9:00 a.m.

Sympathy

Bonnie Patterson, the grandmother of Bonnie and Tammie Mills passed away this last week. Please keep this family in your prayers.

Dianne Judd, a friend of Bill and Carlene Long, passed away on August 31st. Please keep this family in your prayers also.

Response

Jacquelin Dopwell requested our prayers as she continues with further cancer treatment. She is still in a lot of pain. Please remember her and her family at this time.

Placed Membership

Donna Dones requested to place membership with our congregation. Let us please welcome her into our Christian family.

Visitors

Matt & Shannon Wilcutt and boys, Barry & June Richardson, Leigh Ann Garland, Amanda Patterson, Kevin & Crystal Grass and Luna, Ann Harper and Victor Travis and Lexi.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

September

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

Sunday, September 18, 2016

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 Paul Romine
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Bob McAnally

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters The French's
Att. Cards..... Sebastian & Quadarius
Closing Prayer John McShane
Open & Close Building..... Phil Fife

Wed. September 21, 2016

Song Leader Frank Hamby
Opening Prayer John McShane
Closing Prayer Kenny French

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231

Sunday, September 25, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Stacey Paulin
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

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

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Kyle Williams
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters..... David & Tonya Anderson
Att. Cards..... Quadarius & Paul
Closing Prayer..... Jeff Bingle
Open & Close Building..... Phil Fife

Wed. September 28, 2016

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer David Williams
Closing Prayer Phil Fife

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Aug. 21.....\$4,394.02
Aug. 28\$4,535.83
Sept. 04.....\$5,659.00
Sept. 11.....\$4,264.32
Contribution Average.....\$4,942.56
2016 Weekly Budget.....\$4,422.60

TO WHAT ARE WE DEVOTED?

This time of year seems to bring out a renewal of devotion in us. Not too long ago, school started, and many have set lofty goals and are actively engaged in accomplishing them. Football season has started and many are extremely devoted to their team. These kinds of devotions are not wrong to a certain point, but can certainly get out of hand quickly if we are not careful. The main potential problem with these kinds of devotions is that they can take us away from where our constant focus must be, Jesus! “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2). The early church gives us a great example of where our devotion should be. The Bible says that “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). The term “continued steadfastly” carries the idea of devotion and goes with all four of the items listed in Acts 2:42. First, they were devoted to the “apostles’ doctrine.” Devotion has to start with the word of God. There is no way to know the saving plan of God without His word, the Bible. It alone is the only source of God-inspired information that will perfectly instruct us and make us the kind of people God wants (2 Timothy 3:16-17). *(continued below)*



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

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

A little girl asked: “Mommy, why do they have to show women in bras and panties on commercials and on posters? Don’t they know that little boys might see those?”

GOOD QUESTIONS! THE ANSWER IS FOUND IN FIRST JOHN 2:15-17. LET’S NOT BE DECEIVED NOR DESENSITIZED TO THE SNARES SATANS SETS FOR OUR SOULS!



Hiram Kemp and Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (minister of the 6th Street church of Christ) have begun a 15 minute radio program, “**The Way of Truth**,” which airs Monday evenings from 5:00-5:30 on WWAB, AM 1330.

(continued from above) Second, they were devoted to “fellowship,” which is joint participation. God called us to this kind of relationship (1 Corinthians 1:9). True fellowship can only be based on the word of God (1 John 1:3-7; 2 John 9-10). Third, they were devoted to worship. The term “the breaking of bread” literally reads, based on the original language, “the breaking of the bread” and refers to taking the Lord’s Supper in contrast to a regular meal as seen in Acts 2:46. The Lord’s Supper was taken every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Fourth, they were devoted to “prayers.” God wants us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17 cf. Luke 18:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-5). As a result of the devotion the early church had to these four items, the congregation grew daily (Acts 2:47). If we will devote ourselves to these four things, we also will grow spiritually! To what are we devoted? ❤️ *Brian*