

# 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.40 10-01-16

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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

## South Florida Avenue Church of Christ

Invites You To Our

# Fall Gospel Meeting



*October 16-19, 2016*

with **Stephen Rogers**

### Sunday Services, Oct. 16

**9:30 am** — *Grasping the Nature of Christianity*

**10:30 am** — *Knowing God*

**11:50** — **Lunch provided (visitors welcome!)**

**6:00 pm** — *Exalting Jesus*

### Mon.—Wed., Oct. 17-19, Services Begin at 7:00 pm

**Mon.** — *Helping People Realize*

*They Can and Must Chose to Obey God*

**Tue.** — *Getting the Outline Properly Put Together*

**Wed.** — *Clarifying the Plan of Salvation*

**Let's Invite Our Family, Friends, and Neighbors! All Are Welcome!**

# THE PROBLEM WITH “RETRIBUTION THEOLOGY”

Brian R. Kenyon

One of the key themes in the Book of Job is human suffering. Job and his three friends (along with many people today) adhered to a philosophy known as “retribution theology,” which says that all human suffering is in direct proportion to sin. That is, if a person like Job is suffering immensely, he must have grievously sinned. Job’s struggle was that he knew he had not sinned to the point of deserving what he suffered, while the three friends, certain they knew God, pressed Job to confess and repent of the sin they figured he had to be hiding, else he would not be suffering. However, the whole premise of “retribution theology” is wrong. For one thing, wicked people sometimes prosper (Job 21:7-14), which destroys the whole philosophy. On a deeper level, “retribution theology” also falls short because of what it does to human attitudes toward fellow man and God.<sup>1</sup>

## PROBLEMS WITH FELLOW MAN

Consider the attitudes “retribution theology” breed toward fellow human beings. First, the philosophy becomes a reason to reject hurting people. Job’s wife, friends, and kinfolk began to reject Job at the time he most needed them because they believed his suffering was the direct result of sin. Even Jesus’ disciples asked concerning a blind man, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” to which the Lord responded, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him” (Jn. 9:2-3). Those holding to “retribution theology” prejudge sufferers as being sinners deserving of their circumstances.

Second, “retribution theology” forces people into a “works” mentality. That is, if a person believes that doing good wins “health and wealth,” then that person will do good in order to be “healthy and wealthy.” That was one of Satan’s arguments, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” (Job 1:9-10). Even Zophar, one of Job’s friends, applied the “health and wealth” works mentality to Job (11:13-19). We must not allow doing good to be an exercise in selfishness!

Third, “retribution theology” does not promote individual accountability. On the surface, it may appear so (i.e., “If you sin, God will pay you back for it. So don’t sin.”), but actually there is no real accountability because everyone does not get paid back in this life (cf. Job 21:7-13). Paul told Timothy, “Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later” (1 Tim. 5:24). Only at Judgment Day can exact accountability be rendered (cf. Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10). If true accountability were through “retribution theology,” then God would be forced to judge people immediately after every good or evil deed.

## PROBLEMS WITH GOD

Consider the attitudes “retribution theology” breed toward God. First, the philosophy turns God into an arbitrary gift-dispenser. How much good must one do before he is good enough to be blessed in this world? How much bad must one do before he loses that blessing? God is forced into having to make such judgments for all the world to see! Also, suppose one suffers bad things, but disagrees, like Job did? One will end up accusing God. Lesser people than Job would have cursed God long ago, which is what Satan wants! How many have rejected God because they believed this lie, and when tragedy happened to them, they could not figure out why? This causes us to be judges of God!

Second, “retribution theology” limits God’s person and power. It binds God to a process that is impossible in any practical sense. That is, God is no longer free to operate in human events as He sees fit (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). How many of us would be among the living if God immediately punished us for sin? Thank God for His mercy!

## CONCLUSION

God’s wrath was kindled at the three friends because they claimed to speak for God, but when such a claim is made, people better be sure their facts and principles are correct! In the end, although Job said and/or asked some drastic things about God, God commended him to Eliphaz, “for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has” (Job 42:7-8). May we always maintain Scriptural attitudes toward God and reach out to our fellow man, even in the midst of external circumstances that involve immense suffering.

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<sup>1</sup>This material is adapted from Mark L. Littleton, “Where Job’s ‘Comforters’ Went Wrong,” *Sitting with Job: Selected Studies on the Book of Job*, Roy B. Zuck, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 257-260.

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Jacquelin Dopwell will have an MRI Oct. 5th. Jason Hendrix is sick with bronchitis. Also keep Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Faith West, Carla Moore, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

**Relatives:** Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Preston Craft, and Harold Rister.

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

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

## Upcoming Events

**October 2nd:** In-Service Fellowship after the evening worship service. Please bring finger foods.

**October 2nd-30th:** Hilltop Church of Christ Fall Faith Series. See bulletin board for information.

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

**October 29th:** North Jackson Ave. in Bartow 89th Homecoming. The theme is "Living Faithful in a Troubled World. See bulletin board for more information.

**November 4-5 th:** 4th Annual Central Fla. Men's Retreat at Eagle Lake church of Christ. Check Bulletin board.

## Sympathy

Bonnie Byrd, sister of Virginia Walker, passed away September 23rd. A private service will be held at the National Cemetary in Bushnell. A Memorial is planned for a later date.

## Congratulations

To Kyle and Alexa Williams on the birth of baby girl Leia, born Sept. 27th. She weighed 10 lbs, 10 oz, & is 20 in. long. Grandparents are Dave & Nikki Williams, and Great Grandmother is Pam Share.

## Thank You Note

Dear church family, Josh and I feel so loved and so blessed to be a part of such an amazing church family. Thank you so much for showering us & Maddox last Sunday. We cannot wait to be parents & raise her in this church family.

In Christian love, Josh and Marissa

## Visitors

Rudolph & Rose Brooks, Roderick & Hazel Davis, Terry & Betty McCormick, William Grom, Richard and Connie Meadows. Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Wilcutt, Mr. & Mrs. Stout

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### October

Frank Hamby ..... **Table** ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
Stacey Paulin..... **Assist** ..... Josh Estridge

### Sunday, October 2, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Frank Hamby  
**Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Williams  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters** ..... The French's  
**Att. Cards**..... Ian & Quadarius  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin  
**Open & Close Building**..... Jimmy Sweeney

### Wed. October 5, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Anderson  
**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, October 9, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Stacey Paulin  
**Prayer**..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kenny french  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... C.J. Grimes

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters**..... David & Nikki Williams  
**Att. Cards**..... Paul & Sebastian  
**Closing Prayer**..... Jeff Bingle  
**Open & Close Building**..... Jimmy Sweeney

### Wed. October 12, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Ken Walker  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Williams  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Paul Romine

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

**Sept. 04**.....\$5,659.00  
**Sept. 11** .....\$4,264.32  
**Sept. 18**.....\$4,056.00  
**Sept. 25**.....\$4,594.67  
**Contribution Average**.....\$4,910.91  
**2016 Weekly Budget**.....\$4,422.60

# Two Unique Verses in Psalm 119

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in our Bible. It contains 176 verses. In 174 of those verses, the psalmist refers to God's word with at least one of the following terms: law, word, judgments (rules, ESV), statutes, testimony, commandments, decrees, precepts, or word (as in promise, ESV). With 98.8% of the verses containing references to the word or God, with what are the other two verses concerned? First, Psalm 119:84 states, "How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?" This verse is in the midst of a section where the psalmist acknowledges his being persecuted (Psalm 119:81-88). Although he wonders how long God will allow his suffering, he is determined not to give up, but rather trust in the Lord! Faithful children of God must realize that some people will hate and persecute them (John 15:18-20). However, like the psalmist, they must be determined to stay focused on God's word—"I forsook not thy precepts" (Psalm 119:87). Second, Psalm 119:90 states, "Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides." This occurs in a section that begins by showing that God's word is "forever ... settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89) and ends with the realization that the created order has its limits but not "Your commandment" (Psalm 119:96), with another reference to persecution in between (Psalm 119:92-95). The faithful child of God is here encouraged that God is in control. He is reliable and can be trusted! His word sustains His people, though creation has an end to its usefulness in this world. Not even persecution can keep one from being faithful—just trust in the Lord! ❤️ *Brian*



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

## 12 Reasons Christians Don't Attend Sporting Events

**(1)** The coach never came to visit; **(2)** Every time I went, they asked for money; **(3)** The people sitting in my row didn't seem very friendly; **(4)** The seats were very hard; **(5)** The referee made a decision I didn't agree with; **(6)** I was sitting with hypocrites—they only came to see what others were wearing; **(7)** Some games went into overtime and I was late getting home; **(8)** The band played some songs I never heard before; **(9)** The games are scheduled on my only day to sleep in and run errands; **(10)** My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up; **(11)** Since I read a book on sports, I think that I know more than the coaches anyway; **(12)** I don't want to take my children because I want them to choose for themselves what sport they like best.

**Sound Familiar?**

*Adapted from Striving Together*  
*Publications (www.ministry127.com)*



We rejoice with the angels that **William Grom** was baptized into Christ, on Monday, Sept. 26, 2016. Special thanks to our sisters in Christ (Brenda, Elizabeth, and Melody), who had a significant part in bringing this soul to Jesus, and the sound teaching of the Gospel, both publicly and privately, by Hiram and others. To God be the glory and praise!



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