



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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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.

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The Need for “Would Pews”

Brian R. Kenyon

“If there’s a will, there’s a way” is still a popular expression in certain contexts. While there is obviously a limit to the saying, as there is in all proverbs, secular or inspired (cf. Pr. 15:1; 18:22; 22:6), it is still generally true, especially in spiritual applications. One of the main reasons I became a song leader, Bible class teacher, and preacher is because of willingness. I was willing, and there was a *lack of willingness* among many men in the congregations with whom I identified as a babe in Christ. They were not willing to overcome anxiety and/or train themselves in any area of service to the Lord. They may have had all kinds of excuses to sooth their consciences, but God will hold all of us accountable, for “to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Lk. 12:48 cf. 2 Cor. 5:10). We need more people in the pews to be willing to serve God even if it means overcoming anxiety and stepping out of our “comfort zone.”

“Would-ness” Is Key

Consider three passages that show the importance of “would-ness” (i.e., willingness). Pay special attention to the words “wants” and “desires.”

If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. (Jn. 7:17)

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. (Mk. 8:35)

... [W]hoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:26-28)

In these passages, the word translated “wants” and “desires” is from *thello* (θέλω), which means to wish, desire, want. The word occurs over sixty times in the New Testament. The KJV is a bit misleading in its translation, “If any man will do his will” (Jn. 7:17), as if it were the future tense of “do.” The verse has everything to do with willingness: “If anyone is willing to do God’s will, he or she will be able to know it!” In the Mark 8:35 paradox, the one who desires above all else to save his physical life will lose it, but the one desires to lose his physical life in Christ, will save it. Why? Because we will do what we are willing to do! Sometimes, as in Matthew 20:26-28, we may be willing to please God, but we do not know how, so He teaches “whoever desires to become great ... whoever desires to be first [preeminent] among you ...”

It is clear that God wills for all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). For each of us to be what God desires, our thinking must be transformed into alignment with God’s will (Rom. 12:2).

Apollos' Example of "Would-ness"

Apollos serves as a great example of how we can be the "would pews" God desires in the local church of Christ to whom we belong. Apollos was a great preacher. In many ways, what Saul of Tarsus was to Judaism, Apollos was to preaching. We would be hard pressed to find one better! Apollos was an important figure in the early church, evidenced by the elaborate introduction of him in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). He was a friend and valued co-worker of Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5-9; 16:12; Titus 3:13). He had a tremendous impact on the early church (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10-13). Apollos possessed four qualities we must be willing to attain and cultivate in order to glorify God through the local church.

Be Prepared. Apollos was "born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures ... instructed in the way of the Lord; and ... spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord" (Acts 18:24-25). Apollos' preparation involved two important aspects. First, he allowed the Lord to use his background to mold him. Alexandria was one of the premier centers of learning in the ancient world. Even though we may not have the educational background as others, we must still allow the Lord to use us, no matter our education level or background. The apostles were fishermen. Paul was a trained religious leader. Timothy was an inexperienced young man. However, all of them had one thing in common: they were willing to let the Lord have His way in their lives! Second, Apollos knew the Scriptures and how to communicate them (Acts 18:24-28). "Eloquent" shows that Apollos was skilled in speech. "Mighty in the scriptures" and "instructed in the way of the Lord" show deep knowledge in the Scriptures. As a result, Apollos was enthusiastic, "showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 18:28). Are we willing to prepare?

Be Teachable. While Apollos was a powerful preacher, there was one major flaw in his teaching: "he knew only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25). When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). The key to Apollos' being teachable was his humility (cf. Pr. 29:23). It seems the more eloquent and powerful the preacher, the less likely he is to accept correction. I have known some through the years who were very gifted speakers and presenters of God's word, but seem offended and arrogantly dismissed those who attempted to correct them (cf. Pr. 15:32). Not so with Apollos! He was teachable! If we are to be "would" people in the pews, we must be humble and accept, live, and teach the truth, even if corrected by God's faithful people (cf. Mt. 5:6; 2 Pet. 3:18).

Be A Team Member. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Three realizations/applications are necessary to be a faithful member of God's team. First, we must realize no one on God's team is a "big shot." Paul and Apollos were not to be placed on a pedestal by the carnal Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:1-4). Instead, these two were lowly servants of God (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5; 4:1). Second, we must realize God's team must fully rely on Him. It is "God who gives the increase"! God is the one who directs our steps (Jer. 10:23). Like clay to the potter, we must pliantly conform to the Lord's molding (Jer. 18:1-10 cf. Mt. 28:18; Rom. 12:1-2). Third, we must realize God's faithful team members are united with each other. Paul acknowledged, "he who plants and he who waters are one" (1 Cor. 3:8a). We are on the same team! The local church is not to be an organization where each member works "solo." For greater influence and strength, we must work together (cf. Eccl. 4:9-12). Yet, Paul also taught, "each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8b). Thus, being on the same team does not rule out individual responsibility. Although each individual is of equal importance to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13-27), each will be judged individually (cf. Mt. 25:14-30; 2 Cor. 5:10). Are we willing to be teammates with each other?

Be Reliable. Apollos is seen throughout the rest of the New Testament being a reliable worker in the Lord (1 Cor. 4:6; Titus 3:13). To be reliable, we must be willing to spend time with others, as did Apollos in Ephesus and Corinth, so we will know how to help and encourage them in the Lord (cf. 1 Thes. 5:11, 14-15). We must also take our commitments to others seriously. The Corinthians asked for Apollos to return, but "he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time" (1 Cor. 16:12). Church members must work where they are willing (cf. Jn. 9:4; Jas. 2:14-26), not necessarily where others want them to work. All of us must be willing to do what Jesus instructs (Lk. 6:46)!

Are we a congregation of "would pews"? Let us each be willing to do what God wants and we will be!

PRAYER LIST

Current Rachel Zapata is sick at home. Brenda Mask is home from the hospital and all her tests went well. Melissa Craft is still in need of prayers.

Continual: Wayne Shearer (heath); Declan Potvin (eye); Debbie Bush (struggles); Brian Smith (heart health); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Geny Johnson (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron & Judy Ford (health); Bobby Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Jim Turner (health); Margaret Coone (health); Kathy Nester (hospital); Melody Baxter (health), Melissa Craft (health) Charles Paulin (health)

Shut-ins: Joyce Burbage, Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French

RESPONSES

Nancy Mitchell (Bill & Carlene Long's daughter)
Sharon Mathis Washington and Brook Preist
all asked for prayers from the congregation for strength and continued faithfulness.



The SFA Crew (minus one, plus one) in attendance at the Gospel meeting with Wade Webster hosted by the Central church of Christ in Clearwater. Not pictured is David, and finding his way in the picture is Jim.

Join Us for Bible Classes!

Cradle Roll (behind tech booth) Upper Elementary (Room 17)

Sundays: Nikki (Bible basics) Sundays: Kathy (EHT)
Wednesdays: Jagie (Bible basics) Wednesdays: Marion (EHT)

2-3 Year-Old (Room 18)

Sundays: Marissa (EHT) Sundays: David A. (EHT)
Wednesdays: Becky (EHT) Wednesdays: Vince (Romans)

Lower Elementary (Room 7)

Sundays: Anna Clair (EHT) Sundays: SFA men (Prophecies of Christ)
Wednesdays: Olivia (EHT) Wednesday: Brian (Revelation)

First Principles Class (Fellowship Room, any aged adults)

Wednesdays: Rick

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

October

Designated Elder.....Bobby Sheumaker

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Announcements.....Rick Kenyon
Song Leader/prayer.....Brian Kenyon
Devotional.....Jeff Stewart
Prayer.....Wadi Khoury

Sunday, October 8, 2023

10:30 A.M.
Sermon.....Vince Daugherty
Hades or Hell (Luke 16:19-31)

6:00 P.M.
Sermon.....Casey Paulin
Unified Through Our View of the Law
Matthew 9:35-38

Those to Serve

10:30 A.M.

Song/Prayer before class.....Frank Hamby
:Song Leader (both services).....David Williams
Announcements(both)...Stacey Paulin
Scripture reading/Prayer.....Terrance Dindy
Lord's Table (both).....Andre Medley
Closing PrayerJeff Stewart
Open/Close bldg (both).....David Deal
Greeters.....Daugherty
Attendance cards (both).....Sawyer/Declan
Sound Booth (both).....DerekWilliams

6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song Leader David Williams
Scripture reading/Prayer.....Kyle Bingle
Closing Prayer.....Joseph Faulk
Greeters PM.....McCarters

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Announcements.....David Williams
Song Leader/prayer.....Frank Hamby
Devotional.....Kyle Faneuf
Prayer.....Stacey Paulin

Upcoming Events 2023

October

8-11 Gospel Mtg at Eagle Lake church of Christ
8 Elders/Deacons/Preacher meeting
20-22 Laura St church of Christ Gospel Mtg
21 Men's breakfast Orange St church of Christ
29 Trunk or Treat will be strategically located on the concrete portion of the south parking lot after evening services.

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Sep 17	.....	\$5,934.50
Sep 24	.....	\$5,444.50
Oct 1	.....	\$7,471.50
Contribution Average	.....	\$7004.32
Weekly budget	.....	\$7,410.00

Youth Section

Christian Apologetics

Imagine you were a Christian, believing Jesus is the only way to heaven, then all of a sudden you were given a vision from heaven in which the Islamic prophet Muhammad gave you a message from Allah. That would be an amazing story and one that no Christian would expect because he or she has no faith in the words of Muhamad. That is exactly what happened to Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul (named Saul) was staunchly against Christianity and had become a ringleader throwing Christians in jail or worse. He had obtained letters to find more Christians in Damascus, but that is when his whole life changed. He was stopped dead in his tracks by a vision from Jesus (Acts 9). After seeing the vision he believed and was obedient to God. Instead of going to Damascus to persecute Christians Paul "immediately preached Christ... that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). How do you account for the change in Paul's life? How does someone make such a drastic change in directions? Paul really believed He saw the resurrected Lord. With no expectation of seeing a man he thought was dead and gone, Paul did a complete 180 and became one of the greatest apologists for the sake of Christ. His testimony is so powerful, his conversion account is told three times in the Book of Acts. His story is one we ought to know and share with others; and maybe ask them the question, why do you think Paul's life changed so radically? -VD



Congratulations

To Ty & Heidi Rhymes on the birth of their son: Drake Lane Rhymes born on September 19, weighing 8 lbs 9 oz and 22 inches long. All are doing great! Grandparents Jeff and Rene Bingle and Uncle Kyle are already obsessed with him!

Women of the Word

All Good Things Must Come to an End

At the end of a wonderful vacation or perhaps after spending the holidays with family, we might hear some people say, "All good things must come to an end!" This is partly true, not ALL good things must come to an end. As Christians, our relationship with Christ Jesus is a good/great thing, and it doesn't have to end! It can continue for eternity, but it's up to us.

Our lives here on earth will come to an end one day and we will transition into eternity. However, we can spend eternity in heaven with our Lord if we live faithfully until death. Revelation 2:10b "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Jesus has promised to prepare a place for us so that we can spend eternity with Him. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). This is a place where all good things will continue forever. "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1).

-- Ingrid Stewart



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South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

"He will not let your foot slip --
He who watches over you will
not slumber."

Psalm 121:3



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.