



SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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ELDERS

David Anderson
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
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Rick Kenyon
Stacey Paulin

MINISTER

Joshua Cantrell

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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.

WEB PAGE

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Florida School of Preaching
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Huron, SD Mission Work

Casey & Emily Paulin

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.

I Have Sinned Luke 15:18

Joshua Cantrell

As we examine the text in Luke 15, it's certainly understood why many see the prodigal's life as a tragedy. His life in the far country could be categorized as an action movie. His low point in the pigpen is full of drama. His return and acceptance by his father are truly amazing. The elder brother's refusal to enter and rejoice with his father is a tragedy.

We can all identify with this young man because his story is our story. Not simply as individuals who have sinned, but his story connects with the story of humanity. Adam was the son of God (Luke. 3:38), and God gave his son everything. He placed him in a prepared place and gave him provisions, companionship, and freedom. Yet, Adam sinned and went to the far country. In the parable of Luke 15, the younger son did the same thing.

Home is a great word to consider in the boy's life. He started at home, but he left his home. He went to the far country and for a time had another home. He got up out of the pit and returned home. What led him to go back? What caused him to "come to himself"? When we meet him, his story is already in progress. He is pining away in a pigpen, considering sharing a meal with those animals. He is tired and weary. He has nowhere to go and no one to help him. It is in this place and condition that the boy made one of the most remarkable statements any human can make. He came to himself and said, "I have sinned."

In the pit, he made the statement to himself. His mind was made up, but the problem was not solved. For it was not until he got out of the pit and went home that he was reunited with his father. Our focus is not on the boy leaving home. Neither is our focus on the boy returning home. Our focus is on the statement the boy made between those two places. The first is the statement, "I have sinned."

Admission

If we desire to have a relationship with God, and if we desire to go to heaven, we must admit our sin. Those who fail to do so or refuse to do so will live miserable lives and will one day live eternally in hell. There is no other way for humanity to live successful, happy, and productive lives than to admit sin and have forgiveness in the blood of Jesus.

The second statement is "taking responsibility for our actions." The first part, "I have sinned," should lead naturally to the second, taking responsibility for our actions. It should be noted that everyone who says, "I have sinned," is not willing to take responsibility for his actions. Pharaoh said he sinned, but he did not take responsibility for his actions (Exo. 9:27; 10:16). Balaam acknowledged he had sinned but did not take responsibility for his actions (1 Sam. 15:24, 30; 26:21). Judas also professed his sin, but instead of taking responsibility, he hung himself (Mat. 27:4).

We know that none of these individuals took responsibility for his own sin because none of them changed his life and attitude towards his sin. Taking responsibility involves making change because of the sin, not simply acknowledging the sin.

We all must take responsibility because God has made us free and with freedom comes obligation. We cannot enjoy the freedom to choose our actions and reject the consequences of those choices. Many men enjoy and even relish the freedom to choose their own way, but when the consequences of those choices come to bear upon them, they cry and lament that God is unfair.

Israel charged God of being unfair, but Jehovah defended his way, declaring and demonstrating that the way of the LORD is equal. Railing or accusing God of being unfair does not change or remove our responsibility for our actions. The way of the Lord is equal (Eze. 18:25).

God created man in his image. Therefore, we have the ability to choose our actions. We alone, of all God's creation, can think, reason, reflect, ponder, consider, weight matters, and then choose. We can with this same ability reconsider our decisions and change our actions. The young man in Luke 15 did both. He made decisions, he suffered the consequences of those decisions, and then he reconsidered his position and made new decisions. His new decisions resulted in a new outcome in his life.

This is what makes the account in Luke 15 such a wonderful and encouraging example. The younger son in the parable did not simply say, "I have sinned." He took responsibility for his actions. He got up out of the pig's pen and went home to his father. Let us all learn from his example. Let us all acknowledge our sin and take responsibility for our actions. This would be the most powerful transforming statement any of us could ever make. Since the young man in Luke 15 took responsibility for his sin, for the purposes of the remainder of this article, acknowledging sin will be synonymous with taking responsibility for our actions.

I Have Sinned **When He Said I Have Sinned,** **He Was Being Honest**

In this parable, the younger son's actions are

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Perception vs. Reality, pt. 2

At the end of Joseph's life he made the children of Israel make a promise. "Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.'" (Genesis 50:25). Joseph had lived in Egypt for many years and been blessed greatly by God, but it was not his home. He knew that God had made a promise back to his great grandfather Abraham, they would inherit the Promised Land in Canaan. Even though Joseph had brought his family down to Egypt to escape a famine, it was not their home. Joseph made plans for his body even after his life on earth was over. That is a lesson for us as well. While life on earth seems really real, the real reality is where we will make our eternal home. We know from Scripture that Jesus has prepared a place for God's children in heaven. When we make plans for our lives, make sure we factor not only this life, but our eternal home as well.

chronicled, and they are all attributable to him. Pay close attention to the personal pronouns. The younger son said, "Give me the portion" (Luke 15:21). Luke 15:13 records his actions. The younger son gathered all together and took his journey. He went to the far country where he wasted his substance on riotous living. He joined himself to a citizen in the far country. He was sent to the fields, and he fed swine. He desired to fill his belly with the husks the swine ate.

He came to himself and noted he perished with hunger. In this state, with all his actions having led him to this place, he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (Luke 15:18). The statement is great because it is honest. There was no one else responsible for his actions. There was no one else who had made these choices. There was no one else who asked, left, wasted, joined, desired, and hungered. It is the most honest statement anyone can ever make.

Every person who has sinned must be honest enough to admit it. Those who try to blame others for their decisions are nothing if they are dishonest. We must acknowledge our sins and be honest with ourselves and with God. Only then will we change and receive God's forgiveness.

SENIOR SAINTS

by John McShane

This week we will take a look at "honor thy father and mother." It is commanded in both the Old and New Testaments. In Exodus 20:12, we read, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." In the New Testament, we read almost the same thing. Ephesians 6:2-3 has "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." How do we honor our parents? To start, we need to live our lives in such a way that reflects what our parents taught us as we were growing up. Many of the values that we have today were learned at home in our younger years. We also honor them when we are there when they need us. In days of old before such things as Social Security, retirement pay, and other government handouts, the family members took care of each other. We honor our parents by being sure that all their basic needs are met. Set an example for your children now about how you would like to be treated when you and they are older. Stay connected with your parents. Let them know what is going on in your life and the lives of their grandchildren. The family is what this country was built on, and we honor our parents by keeping it that way.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

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

Our Members:

Bob Pratt - health
 Carol Edmonson - health
 Bernetta Green - health
 Brian Smith - heart
 Bobby Simpson - health
 Margaret Coone
 Annett Phillip - health
 Vanessa Palmer - health
 Stacey Paulin - health
 Brenda Mask - health
 Darlene Thompson - health
 Jeanelle Thrower - home recovering
 Stacey Wilson - knee replacement

Recent requests:

Neyome Brunson - strength

(Please update the office of any changes)

PRAYER LIST

John & Linda McShane
 Ron & Judy Ford - health
 Jim Turner - health, tests
 Fred & Kathy Strickland - health
 Debbie Bush - health
 Sharon M. Washington - health
 Antoine & Marcella Swain - health
 Flo Duffy - eye problems & hives
 Janie Wise - health
 Neil Entwistle - heart attack
 Melody Baxter - rehab for leg
 Katrina Greene - knee replacement
 Toney Wilson - root canal

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

Designated Elder - Brian Kenyon

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Announcements Jimmy Sweeney
 Song Leader/Prayer Jonny Singh
 Devo Vince Daugherty
 Closing Prayer David Deal

Sunday, December 5, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Joshua Cantrell
 "The Altars of Abraham"
 Genesis 22:1-5

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Joshua Cantrell
 "Authentic Christianity, pt. 4"
 2 Timothy 3:16-17

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both) Brian Kenyon
 Greeter O. Smith/Nona Williams
 Song/prayer before class Jonny Singh
 Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
 A.M. Song Leader Jason Hendrix
 Scripture reading/Prayer Tyler Anderson
 Lord's Table Josh Estridge
 Closing Prayer Rick Kenyon

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Stewart
 P.M. Song Leader Jason Hendrix
 Scripture reading/Prayer Josh Potvin
 Lord's Table Josh Estridge
 Closing Prayer Paul Sweeney

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
 Song Leader/prayer Stacey Paulin
 Devo Terrance Dindy, Jr
 Closing Prayer Phil Fife

Upcoming Events

December

1 - Quarterly challenge
 5 - Service project, water
 11 - Youth group
 caroling & party, 2p
 12 - Elders meeting, 4p
 L2L workday
 14 - Monthly men's
 breakfast, 8:30
 Senior Saints
 Christmas party, 10a

December

18 - Wreaths Across
 America
 25 - Christmas
 31 - Annual bonfire

January

2 - fellowship in-service
 9 - Elders meeting
 17-20 - FSOP lectureship

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov 14	\$6,542.00
Nov 21	\$6,280.00
Nov 28	\$6,440.00
Contribution Average	\$6,909.98

The EXTENDED FAMILY and FRIENDS prayer requests are emailed every week and posted on the bulletin board

Pray for our Shut-ins

Joyce Burbage Carol Eason Ellen Shearer

Responses

Neyome Brunson asks for prayers to strengthen her in dealing with the issues of life and for her ailing mother in Sri Lanka.

The elders and deacons are requesting that each family complete the survey for the Building Project by **December 5**. They are on the foyer table and was emailed to you.

All men of the congregation and any friends that you may want to bring with you are invited to the first monthly breakfast at Fred's Southern Kitchen on Tuesday, December 14 at 8:30 am. It will be a great time to fellowship!

new



Senior Saints Christmas Party

December 14, 2021

10:00 am

Fellowship Hall



thank you

There is a thank you card from
Jeanelle Thrower
 on the bulletin board

Jimmy Sweeney announced his resignation as deacon effective Sunday, Nov. 28. We appreciate his faithful service over several years, especially in the area of building and grounds.

When I think of a rock, I picture a huge solid, heavy mass. A rock is larger than a pebble or stone. It is solid and very hard to break. It is heavy and hard to move or be lifted. The earth is made up of different types of rocks. The foundation for all buildings relies on a solid foundation made from materials that come from rocks. Rocks are an important part of life on earth.

As Christians our foundation is built on a rock, Jesus Christ. He is compared to a rock in several passages which signifies strength, steadiness, and dependability. Here are a few passages: "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress" (Psalm 18:2); "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock" (Psalm 28:1); "Be thou my strong rock. For thou art my rock and my fortress." (Psalm 31:2-3)

Any time you see the word rock or a rock, remember that our Redemption is Only in Christ the King. The Lord is our redeemer – (Psalm 19:14); The Lord redeemeth – (Psalm 34:22, Titus 2:14); The Lord forgiveth all our iniquities – (Psalm 103:2-4); Redemption is in Christ (Romans 3:23-25, Galatians 4:3-5, Hebrews 9:12, 15, 1 Peter 1:18-19)

Remember this verse from the song, 'Redeemed' – I'm redeemed by love divine. Glory, glory Christ is mine. All to Him I now resign. I have been redeemed.

"Spiritual Questions with Scriptural Answers."

We now have a new Q&A page on our website. You are invited to submit spiritually related questions to have scripturally answered. A new question & answer will be posted weekly then archived for later study.

Thank you for visiting

Darnell & Jane Kirkland
Aaron and Sara Robinson
Shirley Loudermilk
Dawn Sutton
Albert Bess
Myles Luster



STUDY WITH US

Ladies' Bible Study

Tuesday, December 14, 2021 7:00pm

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE BEATITUDES Part 4

Matthew 5:8,9

Teacher: Shenia Brownlow-Dindy

All ladies are invited to join us in the FSOP classroom at
1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33803 or on Facebook.
Live stream through the Facebook Group: FSOP Ladies Class.

If you have questions please contact the Florida School of Preaching at (863) 683-4043.

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



GRACE, MERCY, AND
PEACE WILL BE WITH US,
FROM GOD THE FATHER
AND FROM JESUS CHRIST
THE FATHER'S SON, IN
TRUTH AND LOVE.

2 John 1:3



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Return Service Requested