

# Scratching Off to a Good Start

Most of us remember the fable about the tortoise and the hare. One of the great "morals of the story" is that it matters little how a person starts the race, but how he or she finishes is what really counts. There is an important spiritual lesson of the same principle. Some "scratch off" to a good start in their Christianity, but, like the hare, think they can take their time and/or purposely side track themselves, feeling confident they can make up for lost time later in life, only to find that it is too late to win the race. Paul wrote, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (1 Cor. 9:24-25, NKJ). In Christianity, everyone who finishes the race, wins first place; those who don't, lose! To be "temperate" means to exercise self-control, and this is one of the keys to victory. Unlike the hare, we must not allow every little whim to side-track us! Rather, we must stay focused on the goal of Jesus Christ and live His will (Heb. 12:1-2). Let us finish with enthusiasm what we started by living our entire Christian lives that we may obtain the prize. If we do find ourselves side-tracked, God is still good, and He will strengthen us to continue, if we will turn to Him.



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

Non Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
 Lakeland, FL  
 Permit No. 254



Return Service Requested

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

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday, December 8** --- Our monthly L2L meeting will begin after lunch, or around 12:30 p.m. See general schedule to the right for the day's plan. It is flexible. Thanks for your patience as it develops.

**Saturday, December 21** --- Our monthly youth devotional will be combined with the annual holiday get-together at the Sweeney's. Stay tuned for more announcements on time, etc.

### SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR L2L



**Feb. 21-23, 2014** Forrest Park church of Christ in Valdosta will host YES Weekend 2014. The theme is "Unmasked."

Young or old, if you haven't "broken the ice" to get involved with the congregation, take advantage of the upcoming opportunities. By deepening our fellowship, we create an environment of which people want to be a part, which increases our Christian influence, which helps us reach more souls for Christ. We teach by words and actions!



11:30-ish	Lunch--all are welcome (bring a dish to share)
after lunch until 2:00	"Bible bowl challenge;" Good Samaritan projects; mentor guided individual projects
2:00-2:45	song leading/songs of praise; speech
2:45-3:15	brain break free-time (hopefully outdoors)
3:15-4:00	Bible reading; know the books; individual projects
4:00-4:30	snack (see Flo if you can help furnish snacks)
4:30-5:30	puppet practice; art work; individual projects
5:30-5:40	clean up fellowship room
5:45	Berean Bunch in auditorium

# 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. 66 No.50 12-10 -13

## ELDERS

David Anderson  
Kenny French  
Bobby Sheumaker

## DEACONS

Jeff Bingle  
Jimmy Sweeney  
Chuck Wyatt

## MINISTER

Robert McAnally  
(863) 682-3600

## ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Brian Kenyon  
(863) 944-8565

## SECRETARY

Virginia Walker

## OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

## SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30a.m.  
Worship.....10:30a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00p.m.

## WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00a.m.  
Bible Study.....7:00p.m.

## HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

## MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia  
Don Iverson.....India  
Randy Judd.....Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald.....Scotland  
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.  
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands  
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

## EMAIL

[SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

## WEB PAGES

[www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com](http://www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com)  
[www.sfacc.net](http://www.sfacc.net)

## Light and Darkness

*Joey Barrett*

**L**ight and darkness: knowing the context of these words when reading is the key to understanding. More specifically, understanding these words on a biblical basis is needed. Once one finds the individual meanings, the next task is to find where they are used in Scripture, and then finally, to apply their lessons to our everyday lives.

The absence of light is the common definition of darkness. Biblically, this word refers to evil or absence of truth. It is important that this meaning is established so that a proper interpretation of the verses can be established. The worldly view perceives light as that which is visible; the Bible on the other hand has a different view. The Bible lists light as the truth, which is good, and it also refers to Jesus as the light.

Those who stray from the truth into darkness will hate those of us who are in the light (truth). "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20). Every aspect about us contributes to who we are and how we live. Whether it is in word or in deed, what we say and do relates to which master we serve. We know from reading Matthew 6:24 that we cannot serve two masters. In addition, we observe that our thoughts and actions directly relate to whether we are in the light or in the dark. "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness" (Luke 11:34).

Despite being hated, we are still called to love those who hate us. Fulfilling this commandment proves that we are truly in light, thus acting in the same manner as Jesus Himself. "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Being taken advantage of is a price we must continually pay. Do not be stricken or saddened by this, but be relieved, for there is a reward for so doing. When that day comes, we should leap in joy, for our reward will be great in heaven (see Luke 6:23).

# Why Should Christians Be Soul Winners?

*Mark N. Posey*

**D**id you know that 97% of the world has heard of Coca-Cola? Did you know that 72% of the world has seen a can of Coca-Cola? Did you know that 51% of the world has tasted a can of Coca-Cola? Coke has only been around for some 100 years, not too bad! In knowing that, compare it to the fact that only some 20% of the world's population has heard the Gospel message! We need to get our attention back on that which is eternal and focus on the lost. Christians should be Soul Winners!

## **The Command from Above (Matthew 28:18-20)**

Since Jesus has all authority, we are commanded to go, make disciples of all nations, baptize them and teach them to obey. This commission is given in light of the authority of Jesus; it is an authoritative command, not a suggestion. It is the same idea as an officer reminding a private of his rank before he gives the orders. Because He has this authority, He can send whomever He wills to do whatever He pleases. One problem for many churches and Christians today is that the Great Commission has become the Great Omission (cf. John 14:15)!

## **The Cry from Beneath (Luke 16:27-28)**

Remember the rich man who died and woke up in hell, begging for someone to go and tell his brothers? "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house (for I have five brethren), that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." There is the cry from beneath. If you and I could hear the cries of people in a lost eternity right now, we would realize how important and how urgent it is to get the Gospel out (2 Corinthians 5:11, 20).

## **The Call from Without (Acts 16:9-10)**

The Macedonian man wanted help. So, Paul went to bring Macedonia the Gospel! The greatest help we can bring anyone is the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ! It is good for us to bring other help along with the Gospel, but without the Gospel, what real help have you given them (2 Timothy 2:2)?

## **The Constraint from Within (2 Corinthians 5:14)**

Paul felt compelled by the love of Christ. If someone asked, "Why are you doing it all? Why all the pain and all the trials?" Paul would answer, "I have to. I have received the love of Christ. I have the love of Christ in my heart in the sense that I love Jesus. I have the love of Christ in my heart for all the people Jesus loves. I am compelled by the love of Christ!" The apostles labored much, but all their labor sprang from the impulse of the love of Jesus Christ. Just as Jacob toiled for Rachel solely out of love to her, so do true saints serve the Lord Jesus under the omnipotent constraint of love (Romans 9:3; 10:1).

Paul Harvey said, "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium." Brethren, this must change! Preachers – preach on evangelism! Elders – lead in evangelism! Deacons – practice evangelism! Christians – be evangelists! May the day come when Colossians 1:23 is repeated in our day.

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Joyce Burbage is at Highlands Lake Center for rehab, Rm. #317B. Duane Nelson is at Oakbridge for rehab. Sam Bolding, Ann Howard, Jacquelin Dopwell, Margaret Coone & Sharon Washington.

**Relatives:** Carl Thompson is in the VA hospital and is not doing well. Danny Stephens, Dorothy Trice, Lewis Tillis, Darnell Kirkland & Annie Beth Coone.

**Shut In Members:** Artis Bassett, Mary Shoemake.

**Others:** Lystra Ortiz requested prayers for her daughter Allison who is sick. Jeannetta Joiner, Ann Caldwell, Michael Ray, Christina Fuessner, Steve Roberts, Joan Smith Bonnie Hendricks, Kathy Peel, & Danny Edmonds.

## Upcoming Events

**Dec. 7th:** - The "Ladies Brunch" will be here at S. Fla. Ave. at 9:00 am. Please RSVP by Dec. 4th. at 682-4702

**Dec. 8th:** - Lads to Leaders will meet at 12:30 PM.

**Dec. 21st:** - Men's Breakfast at Hilltop in W.H. at 8:00 am.

**Dec. 21st:** - Youth Devotional at the Sweeney's home.

**Note:** Please remember to check the bulletin board for other events coming up.

## Visitors

Mrs. Nellie Anderson, Lystra Ortiz, Nigel St. Bernard, Janice Greaver, Avril Questel, Beverly Pascall, Nathan Pascall, John & Linda Hendrix, Mr. & Mrs. Dave Mohundro & daughters, Dalia & Nora. Barbara Farmer, Kathy Garland.

## Ronald McDonald House

If you can donate items to the McDonald House, there is a list of the items needed in the foyer. Deadline is Dec. 15th.

## Thank You Note

*Thank you Christian family for the prayers, cards and calls during my brother's health problems. Your caring and concern was very comforting, and I'm so thankful for you.*

*In Christian Love,  
Sharon Egolf*

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### December

Fred Rapley ..... **Table** ..... Frank Hamby  
Bobby Simpson..... **Assist**..... Bob Pratt

**Sunday, December 8, 2013**  
9:30 A.M.

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

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Fred Strickland  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... C. J. Grimes  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Kenny French

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Dave Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Jim Turner  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Bob Pratt  
**Greeters** ..... Phil & Dottie Fife  
**Att. Cards**..... Quadarius Askew & Paul Sweeney  
**Open & Close Building**..... Robert Cooper

**Wed. December 11, 2013**

**Song Leader** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kenny French  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Dave Williams

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Jason Hendrix, so he can get a replacement - 537-0857*

**December 15, 2013**  
9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Jim Turner  
**Prayer**..... Antonio Martin

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Fred Strickland  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Jeremy Padilla  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Josh Estridge

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Dave Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Greeters** ..... The Bingle Family  
**Att. Cards**..... Paul Sweeney & Ian Enamorado  
**Open & Close Building**..... Robert Cooper

**Wed. December 18, 2013**

**Song Leader** ..... Stephen Hunley  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Frank Hamby  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Fred Rapley

## ~ HOW WE ARE GIVING ~

Nov. 10 ..... \$3,649.46  
Nov. 17 ..... \$3,705.36  
Nov. 24 ..... \$3,633.75  
Dec. 01 ..... \$4,189.67  
**Contribution Average** ..... \$4,123.64  
**2013 Weekly Budget** ..... \$4,255.13  
**Our Budget Deficit** ..... (\$6,282.04)

## HEAR OUR RADIO SPOTS

This Week's Message

**"The Basics"**

1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com

