

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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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
since 1969

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

Andraé Smith Graduating FSOP December 10, 2017



Brother Smith is originally from Huntington Station, Long Island, New York. While in New York he worked for Comtech Electronics in Melville as a computer tech, while attending Katherine Gibbs, a computer networking trade school from which he received an associates degree. He also worked as a stock broker trainee and then as a loan officer. He came to Florida in 2003, working as a security guard and then in telemarketing. He came in contact with members of the church of Christ and was baptized by James Lee in 2008. After much Bible study, he baptized his future wife, Shani Stefanyk, in January 2016, and married her on August 5, 2016. After graduation, brother Smith plans on preaching full-time. At the time of this printing, he was interviewing with congregations and was soon to make a decision.

Paul's Placement in the Ministry

Brian R. Kenyon

One of the greatest aspects about which Paul marveled in his own life was the fact that he, "chief" of all sinners, received forgiveness and ministry through Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:15-16). In the paragraph that contains these verses, Paul briefly departed from his warning about false teachers (1 Tim. 10b-11), and exclaimed thankfulness to God for what He had done for him.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, ¹³although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. ¹⁶However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. (1 Tim. 1:12-16)

(continued on page 2)

Jesus Transforms

The words “has enabled ... counted ... putting” (1 Tim. 1:12) point to a specific time when this reality for Paul occurred. The specific time goes back to the appearance of Jesus to Paul while on the Damascus Road (cf. Acts 9:15-16; 22:14; 26:16-18), and his subsequent conversion in Damascus (cf. Acts 9:6; 22:10, 16; 26:19). Paul mentioned three specific truths for which he was thankful. First, Jesus Christ gave him strength (1 Tim. 1:12a). The word translated “enabled [strengthened, NAS; given ... strength]” means to strengthen, make strong. The word describes Abraham, who was “strengthened in faith” (Rom. 4:20) and the Christian who is to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10). Paul acknowledged, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). This enabling of the Lord sustained Paul, even toward the end of his life when he wrote from his final imprisonment, “At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me ... But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear” (2 Tim. 4:16-17). Do we draw strength from the Lord?

Second, Paul was thankful that Jesus Christ “counted ... [him] faithful.” The term “faithful” can mean believing, but also carries the idea of being trustworthy and reliable. Faithfulness can describe God, as in the case of Sarah, who “received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised” (Heb. 11:11). Even Jesus, who was God in human flesh (Jn. 1:1-3, 14), was said to be “faithful to Him [the Father] who appointed Him [the Son]” (Heb. 3:2). Faithfulness can also describe people. Paul described Timothy as “my beloved and faithful son in the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:17). In First Timothy 1:12, Paul was extremely thankful that Jesus was the One who counted him faithful! This echoes Paul’s statement earlier about “the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim. 1:11). Jesus knew Paul to be trustworthy and reliable with the Gospel. Can the Lord say that about us? Are we reliable to Him?

Third, Paul was thankful that “Jesus Christ” put him “into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12c). The word translated “putting” generally means to place or put, but can also carry the sense of making someone something; appointing, or assigning one a place (Lk. 12:46). Paul used an exact form of this word when he wrote that God “has committed [entrusting, ESV] to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19). God’s placing Paul into “the ministry” takes us back to Paul’s experience on the Damascus Road and his subsequent conversion in Damascus (Acts 9:1-18). Paul was blinded by a manifestation of the Lord. During that encounter, Paul asked two great questions, “Who are You, Lord?” (Acts 9:5), and “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6a). Paul, of course, was told, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do” (Acts 9:6b). Along the way, the Lord told Ananias in a vision to seek Saul of Tarsus and teach him (Acts 9:10-12). In response to Ananias’ concerns about Saul’s reputation, the Lord said, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:15-16). God had a plan! God’s placing Paul into “the ministry” also emphasizes that Paul was not a “self-appointed” apostle who was in a position to arrogantly brag. It is also interesting to note that Paul spoke of his appointment to “ministry [service, ASV]” rather than to “apostleship.” Yes, Paul was an apostle, just as legitimate as the rest (Gal. 1:10–2:14), but here he emphasized the service aspect of his work. Are a servant of the Most High God?

All Christians have been transformed by the will of God and the blood of Jesus Christ. Although our conversion and ministry are obviously not like Paul’s in every way, we should still be thankful for the transformation of life God effected through our obedience to the Gospel. This new status for Paul was all the more remarkable when considering who he was before conversion.

Jesus Targets

Jesus is able to reach even the vilest of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13). Paul was a “blasphemer” not only by speaking against Christ and His church, but also by forcing others to do the same (cf. Acts 26:11). Paul as a persecutor is well documented in Acts (8:3; 9:1-2; 22:4-5; 26:9-11 cf. Gal. 1:13), and serves as the reason why many in the early church were hesitant in receiving him as a brother in Christ (cf. Acts 9:13-14, 26). “An insolent man [injurious, KJV; a violent aggressor, NAS]” refers to one who is violent, with the idea of being boldly disrespectful and impudent (Bauer 832). Paul not only opposed Christianity, but he did so violently! However, Paul’s former life was targeted with the “super-abundant” grace that was poured upon him which resulted in his present standing before God! Paul “obtained mercy”! This is not teaching some form of unconditional election, *(continued on page 4)*

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Kenny French had surgery for a pacemaker on Monday. The surgery went well. Wanda Bruno had colon surgery, and is now on a ventilator for a blood clot in her lung. No visitors at this time. Glenda Beebe is now home from the hospital and doing much better. Joyce Burbage is at Florida Presbyterian Home, and would like visits from the ladies of the congregation. Also remember Evelyn Wyatt, Genny Johnson, Ginny Hamby, Brenda Mask, Jim Turner and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler.

Others: Geri Howell is at Oakbridge Assisted Living after having a stroke, Lynn Stevens (cousin of Daniel Stearsman) has stage four cancer, H.D. Simmons (preacher in Portland, Tx) is having serious cardio-pulmonary issues, Joy Baker, (Michelle Paulin's cousin), Duane Nelson, Joyce Stearsman and Jack Pinckert.

Upcoming Events

Sunday Dec. 10th: FSOP Graduation after evening worship service. Please bring finger foods to share.

Friday Dec. 15th: Girl's night for the young ladies (middle school to young adult). They will be doing a service project and decorating cookies at the Grimes house from 6-9 p.m.

Saturday Dec. 16th: Annual Christmas party at 5:30 p.m. at the Sweeney's house.

Saturday Dec. 16th: Men's breakfast at the Hilltop church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 a.m.

Thursday, Dec. 21st: Senior Saints trip to see local Christmas lights. Meet at the building at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday Dec. 23rd: Young and young at heart are invited to a outdoor Christmas movie night at the Grimes at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a movie snack to share and a lawn chair.

Response


Toney Wilson, Brenda Mask and Darlene Thompson responded to the invitation Sunday. Let us encourage them and other members in Christ.

Christmas Stockings

We will be making Christmas stockings for some needy families this year. If you would like to help please see Rene Bingle.

Visitors

Dustin Walling, Cathy Garland and Zachary and Brian, Barbara Farmer, Teresa Murrell, Anita Shearer and Kaeli, Charles & Regina Stribling, Kyle & Amanda Faneuf, Dennis & Jean McCarter, Mary Moore and Bitsy Thomas.

 **Our new curriculum, "Engraving Heavenly Truths" is off to a great start! Thanks to everyone who is helping!**

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** Josh Estridge
Chaz Hine..... **Assist** David Anderson

Sunday, December 10, 2017

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Opening Prayer..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... John McShane
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... David Williams
Opening Prayer..... Steve Hunley
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tim Croson
Greeters..... Bob & Bea Pratt
Att. Cards..... Paul and Sebastian
Open & Close Building..... Bob Cooper

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Song Leader..... Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer..... Kyle Bingle
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005

Sunday, December 17, 2017

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Bingle
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Kenny French
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Ken Walker

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... David Williams
Opening Prayer..... Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jim Turner
Greeters..... Bingles
Att. Cards..... Antonio and Paul
Open & Close Building..... Bob Cooper

Wednesday, December 20, 2017

Song Leader..... David Williams
Opening Prayer..... John McShane
Closing Prayer Fred Strickland

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov. 12.....	\$6,940.50
Nov. 19.....	\$5,369.11
Nov. 26.....	\$4,607.82
Dec. 03.....	\$6,147.12
Contribution Average.....	\$5,390.52
2017 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,716.51

Paul's Placement in the Ministry (continued from page 2)

but as Paul elsewhere confirmed, "obtaining mercy" from God only comes as a result of being faithful in Him (cf. Rom. 11:30-31; 1 Cor. 7:25; 2 Cor. 4:1).

Additionally, Paul received mercy because he "did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13). This clause is often taken out of context to teach false theories about amenability. This verse does not support the "unaccountable for sin" theory of a sincere sinner outside of Christ! The statement alludes to Numbers 15:23-31, where Moses compared "unintentionally committed [committed by ignorance, KJV]" sin and "presumptuously" committed sin.



**Thanks For
You Support**

In Judaism, as well as in the New Covenant, there was no atonement for "presumptuous sins" (Num. 15:23-31 cf. Heb. 10:26). Paul mentioned the fact to explain how his life prior to conversion became the object of God's mercy rather than His wrath. Paul acted in "good conscience" while he sinned against Christ (Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3). Although he was lost, Paul at least thought he was serving God. His main problem was he did not believe that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Paul changed his view about Christ while on the Damascus Road, and this change of mind ultimately resulted in his obedience to the Gospel. Had Paul been in "presumptuous" sin while persecuting the church of Christ, he would never have come to repentance. No one can have *(continued below)*

♥ Brian



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

Return Service Requested

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



Please let one of our elders or deacons know if you are willing to help in the **sound booth** or in **organizing the benevolence food pantry**. Your help is needed and would be appreciated. The SFA church of Christ grows with your help. To God be the glory!

Save the Date

Feb. 23-25, 2018

YES Weekend

Forrest Park, Valdosta



If you would like to attend YES Weekend, see Hiram or Brian so we can work on accommodations & travel logistics!

(continued from above) "godly sorrow" while at the same time willfully resisting God (2 Cor. 7:8-11).

Conclusion

One reason Christ saved Paul was to set him as a "template" for others to follow (1 Tim. 1:16). The word translated "pattern" refers to a prototype, standard, example. God's "longsuffering" is His willingness to forebear the sins of people (cf. Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:8). This willingness has been clearly manifest through the sending of His Son to save even the worst of sinners. If God can save a sinner like Paul and place him in the ministry, then He can save and place into His service any sinner who, like Paul, gives himself or herself over to the Lord! Have we allowed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to target and transform our lives? ♥ Brian