

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.49 12-06-16

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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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WEB PAGE

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

The Eyes of Jesus

Hiram Kemp

The devil lied when he told Eve that disobeying God would open her eyes (Gen. 3:5). When people disobey God, their eyes are not spiritually opened, but they are closed and fail to see His love and the reason for His commands. Jesus says if our eyes are focused on the right thing, then our lives will follow suit, but if they are not, we will be filled with evil (Mt. 6:22-23). There are at least 285 million people that are visually impaired worldwide (www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/). For those of us with eyesight, we should thank God for it. God has blessed us with eyes to see his goodness, to see the needs of our fellowman, and to acknowledge evil and turn from it. Have you ever considered how much the Bible says about the eyes of Jesus when He was on earth? Let us notice some things Jesus did with his eyes.

Angry Eyes

On one occasion Jesus entered the synagogue and saw a man with a withered hand and in need of healing. Jesus knew the Jews of His day attached many man-made laws to the Sabbath, and they would not appreciate good being done on the Sabbath (Mt. 15:7-9). Jesus asked the audience if they thought it was right to do good on the Sabbath day or whether it was evil, or if it was right to save life or to kill (Mk. 3:1-4). Those in the synagogue would not even answer Jesus' question. Then Jesus looked on those people with anger (Mk. 3:5). Jesus used his eyes to evidence his anger. He was no doubt angry that these people were so hardened and blinded to the love of God that they could not stand to see a handicapped person healed. He looked on them with anger because he could see the unbelief in their hearts concerning His identity as God's Son (Jn. 2:24-25). They did not have compassion on their neighbor as the law taught (Lev. 19:18).

We should look with anger in our eyes when we see injustice in our world. As millions of babies are aborted each year without a second thought, it should evoke the righteous indignation of every Christian. It is not wrong for the Christian to be angry (Eph. 4:26-27). When people are treated wrongly due to physical or mental handicap, race, gender, or ethnicity, we should look around like Jesus did with anger. Jesus looks down from heaven with anger when we fail to be grieved over the things that grieve Him (Rev. 2:14-16). Jesus' eyes were sometimes filled with anger, and so should ours.

Eyes of Compassion

Jesus was the busiest preacher who ever lived. Jesus was always surrounded by multitudes of people who wanted to be healed or wanted to see Him perform a sign. Jesus could have been frustrated and agitated by the continual request of the people, yet He remained compassionate.

Jesus' eyes were often filled with compassion and concern for the people. When He saw the crowds of people that resembled sheep not having a shepherd, He was compassionate (Mt. 9:36). When Jesus saw people in need of healing, He did not see people who were inconveniencing His ministry. He looked with compassion (Mt. 14:14). Once a woman had been tormented by a spirit for eighteen years, and when Jesus saw her, He saw a daughter of God. With compassion, He removed her ailment (Lk. 13:12). Jesus did not just see humans as He walked the roads of Palestine. He saw souls made in the image of God.

As Christians, we are told to do good to those who are in need, this will only be done if we have eyes of compassion (Gal. 6:10). True religion is described as taking care of the needs of orphans and widows, yet this cannot be done if our heart and our eyes are not filled with compassion (Jas. 1:27). As we watch friends, family, and neighbors destroy their lives with sin, we should be wise and use opportunities to introduce them to the God who can heal them of the greatest plague, which is sin.

Eyes of Surprise

Jesus was sometimes surprised by the things that He saw. Jesus once talked with a centurion about healing his servant. The centurion believed Jesus could heal his servant without being physically present (Mt. 8:9). Jesus was surprised at what He heard and the faith displayed by this centurion (Mt. 8:10). Jesus' eyes no doubt filled with amazement as this Gentile showed more faith than Israel in His ability to heal. Jesus was accepted by foreigners but rejected in His own hometown. In Nazareth, Jesus would not do many miracles because they refused to believe He was the Messiah. The people of Nazareth could only see Jesus as the neighborhood carpenter whom they had known most of their lives (Mk. 6:1-5). Jesus marveled at the unbelief of those in Nazareth. These are the only two times in the Bible where it says Jesus marveled. The eyes of Jesus are widened with marvel and amazement when people believe or fail to believe. Some readily see the evidence and accept that Jesus is the Messiah, while others, though overloaded with proof, will never submit to His Lordship (Jn. 20:27-29).

Today we should have our eyes filled with surprise, in a good way, when people obey the Gospel, though surrounded by evil and disbelief (1 Thess. 1:6). Likewise, when people have sat in the pew week after week, year after year, and have not rendered obedience to their Maker, we should be surprised. Even though the world at large will never believe the Gospel, unbelief should always disturb and surprise the Christian. Jesus marveled at belief and unbelief. For which reason would he marvel at us?

Eyes of Disappointment

Jesus was occasionally disappointed in those who should know better. As He overlooked Jerusalem near the end of His earthly ministry, there was disappointment as Israel had failed to be the nation God desired (Mt. 23:37-39). Jesus previously informed Peter that he would deny any association with Him when the trying hour of His life began. Peter did just as the Lord said. Luke records that just as Peter was denying Jesus for the third time, that Jesus turned and looked at him (Lk. 22:61). Those eyes no doubt cut through Peter's soul as he went out and wept bitterly. As Jesus was hoisted on the cross and looked out to see only John and a few of the women who had been in His company, what a disappointing view it must have been (Jn. 19:25-27). Where were the others? Where were those He healed or raised from the dead? Where were those who were lepers and had been cleansed and restored to society?

Today there is disappointment in the eyes of Jesus when those who have confessed Him as Lord and obeyed His Gospel refuse to remain faithful to Him (Heb. 6:4-6). When those He has restored into the fellowship of God casually worship Him or miss services at will, this is disappointing to say the least. When Jesus looks at your life, is He filled with excitement as you follow Him or disappointment as you flee in the other direction? When we see those who were once faithful but no longer living the Christian life, we should be disappointed and attempt to bring them back (Jas. 5:19-20). Jesus' eyes were sometimes filled with disappointment.

Conclusion

The eyes of Jesus carried many emotions in His earthly ministry. The eyes of the Lord still observe us today (Prov. 15:3). What does the Lord see when He looks at you? Does he see someone who responds to evil the same way He does? Are our eyes filled with sympathy for others like His so often were? Jesus wants our hearts, our minds, our souls, and yes, even our eyes (Mt. 13:16)! Ω



Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:3-4)

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: JoAnne Mitchell had a mild stroke and is undergoing tests. Jacqueline Dopwell is in a lot of pain. The doctor has added 6 more chemo treatments. Also keep Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Joe Dopwell, Kenny French, Genifer Johnson, JoAnn Hoback, Carol Eason, Elizabeth Tubbs, Jim Edmondson, Melody Baxter, Dorothy Trice and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Blanche Dopwell and Dayne Romine.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler and Duane Nelson.

Others: Jackie Stearsman is now under hospice care. Also Joyce Stearsman and Chrissi Fuesner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

Upcoming Events

Saturday December 10th: Youth Seminar here at South Florida Ave. Registration starts at 8:45 a.m. Let Hiram know if you plan on attending.

Sunday December 11th: F.S.O.P. Graduation after the evening service. There will be a fellowship meal immediately following. Please plan for visitors and bring finger foods and drinks (sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board). Please plan to stay and celebrate with this semester's graduate, James Lewis.

Saturday December 17th: Annual Christmas party at the Sweeney's at 5:30 p.m. Please bring finger foods, drinks and a gift if you plan on participating in the fun and crazy gift exchange.

Saturday 17th: Men's breakfast at the Hilltop Church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 a.m.

Visitors

Peter Saunders, Cheryl Barker, Tiffany Hash and Megan and Samuel, Mary Moore and Amanda Patterson.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

Frank Hamby **Table** Jimmy Sweeney
Matt Willcut **Assist** Kyle Williams

Sunday, December 11, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer Jim Turner

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer John McShane
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Greeters The Grimes
Att. Cards Quadarius & Sebastian
Closing Prayer Kyle Bingle
Open & Close Building Bob Cooper

Wed. December 14, 2016

Song Leader Bill Long
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231 or 602-9005

Sunday, December 18, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Bingle
Prayer Tim Croson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Charles Paulin
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Josh Estridge

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer C.J. Grimes
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Greeters The Williams
Att. Cards Paul & Ian
Closing Prayer David Deal
Open & Close Building Bob Cooper

Wed. December 21, 2016

Song Leader Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer John McShane
Closing Prayer Kyle Bingle

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

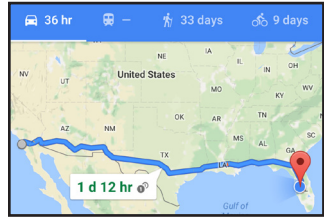
Nov. 13.....	\$3,894.00
Nov. 20	\$4,152.00
Nov. 27.....	\$4,485.00
Dec. 04.....	\$5,985.50
Contribution Average.....	\$4,941.13
2016 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,422.60



Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (of 6th Street) and our own Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

What Starts Out A Little . . .

hours of driving time to return home. When figuring fueling, bathroom breaks, and sleep, the trip would be more like three days or more, but time restraints forbade a leisurely return. At least three times on that trip, what was intended to be a quick stop ended up taking a few to several more minutes than planned. The mere time addition would not have been too much of an inconvenience. The main problem, however, was that during the few minutes longer at the rest stop or gas station, new wrecks occurred on our route or existing delays increased. The total trip back from California ended up taking about fifty-seven hours (with about eight hours in a hotel). All of this reminded me of what starts out to be a little bit (in this case, minutes) ends up being a whole lot more in the long run. This principle works both negatively and positively. Jesus said, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). In other words, how we handle smaller amounts is how we will be rewarded with larger amounts, whether good or bad. Consider the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). To the five talent man and the two talent man, who each doubled their talents, Jesus said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew [continued below]



While planning to return from a "road trip" to California, the GPS said it would take thirty-six hours of driving time to return home. When figuring fueling, bathroom breaks, and sleep, the trip would be more like three days or more, but time restraints forbade a leisurely return. At least three times on that trip, what was intended to be a quick stop ended up taking a few to several more minutes than planned. The mere time addition would not have been too much of an inconvenience. The main problem, however, was that during the few minutes longer at the rest stop or gas station, new wrecks occurred on our route or existing delays increased. The total trip back from California ended up taking about fifty-seven hours (with about eight hours in a hotel). All of this reminded me of what starts out to be a little bit (in this case, minutes) ends up being a whole lot more in the long run. This principle works both negatively and positively. Jesus said, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). In other words, how we handle smaller amounts is how we will be rewarded with larger amounts, whether good or bad. Consider the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). To the five talent man and the two talent man, who each doubled their talents, Jesus said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew [continued below]

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Ends Up A Lot



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 Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

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

SATURDAY YOUTH SEMINAR
 Saturday, December 10 • 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 hosted by the
South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST
 1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE • LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803

THEME **Gifts from God**

Hiram Kemp - Every Good & Perfect Gift Is From Above • Terrance Brownlow-Dindy - The Gift of God's Word • Nathan Franson - Putting God's Gifts To Use

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights in whom there is no variation, or turning as shadows."
James 1:17

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND
SFA ON DEC. 10 @ 9:00 A.M.

25:21, 23). However, the one talent man who hid his talent was cast into "outer darkness" (Matthew 25:24-30). What seemed to have been just a little bit of irresponsibility, ended up being a whole lot of consequent misery! Let us realize the tremendous impact the "little" things have in the "long run" and be responsible in taking care of them so our future can be more rewarding than our past. ❤️ Brian



We are planning again for a YES II mission trip to Penonome, Panama, July 1-9, 2017. If you want to go, please see Brian ASAP. If you would like to contribute funds, please see one of our elders. Please pray for us!