

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.....9:30a.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.

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WEB PAGES

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com
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The Importance of Biblical Balance

Christians Must:

*Contend for the faith, but not be contentious.
Be prepared to fight the battle, but seek peace
Never compromise, but always love.
Hate the sin, but love the sinner.*

“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again” (Romans 11:22-23 NKJV). Biblical balance is not between good and evil, false doctrine and true doctrine, error and truth, or manmade philosophy and biblical truth. Biblical balance is between “goodness” and “severity.” It is proclaiming the “whole council of God.” Biblical balance provides a well-rounded spiritual diet.

Riding a “hobby horse,” no matter how important or true the point of argument may be, is not biblical balance. One person only speaks of love and grace, with no emphasis on obedience at all; another does nothing but attack false doctrine that is affecting the church; another only preaches on how to become a Christian; another emphasizes man’s need to obey with little or no emphasis on the grace of God. The truth is that all of these topics should be preached. Any one of them is true, but is not enough by itself.

There is a story that has been around a long time about a young preacher who came to work at a congregation, and every sermon he preached was about baptism. Finally, the elders met with him and kindly said that baptism was a very important topic, which should not be neglected, but that he needed to preach on more than just that. He sincerely listened, and asked them to suggest a topic. One elder said why not preach on an Old Testament story, like Moses. So the next Sunday morning he told the story of the birth of Moses, and how his mother wanted to save him, and put him in a basket on the river. He said, “She put him on the river, which was full of water, which brings us to our subject: baptism.”

Do we need “fire and brimstone” preaching? Yes! Do we need preaching on the love and the grace of God? Yes! Do we need preaching that encourages and builds up individual Christians? Yes! Do we need preaching that adamantly opposes error, false doctrine and the evil of society around us? Yes! We could go on with the list, but here is the point: we need all of these kinds of preaching from every preacher in every pulpit.

The truth is that biblical balance is not easy. It is easy to be overwhelmed by a subject or a problem in society or in the church and to unintentionally fail to put forth a steady, complete, balanced diet in preaching and teaching. God is both “severe” and “good,” and our preaching and teaching should reflect that truth.

by Dean Kelly

THE SHINING

Colin McKee

In 1980, a horror film called *The Shining* was produced and offered to audiences across the world. It had to do with ghosts or spirits who were disturbing mortals that were occupying a hotel. *The Shining* was the supposed manifestation of occult power in the film, and of course, all of it was the fanciful invention of writers and producers.

Yet, a real true shining is described in God's Word. God promised to shine on man and in turn demanded a shining from man. In Isaiah God issued His promise for that shining and called on His people to shine His light to others.

"The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," says the Lord. "As for me," says the Lord, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendant's descendants," says the Lord, "from this time and forevermore." Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 59:20-60:3)

God, the Redeemer, promised to come and make a covenant with those who turned from transgressions. That coming was the light of His salvation and He promised to "arise" over those who received it (60:2). This is parallel to Paul's writing in 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In short, that was the light of the Gospel.

Since God gave the light, He then called upon the recipients to get up and shine (60:1). Who are the "shiners" that are "shining"?

- **Those who are spiritually wise.** "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3a).
- **Those who turn others to righteousness.** "And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3b).
- **Those who are turned to righteousness.** "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43).
- **Those who live justly.** "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).
- **Those who do the good works of God.** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).
- **Those who live the serene life.** "...you will be God's children without fault. But you are living with crooked and mean people all around you, among whom you shine like stars in the dark world. You offer the teaching that gives life" (Philippians 2:15-16 New Century Version).

"Therefore He says, 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light'" (Ephesians 5:14). He gives us light (His shining) that we may give to others "the light of His glory." We should take to heart the words of the Psalmist, "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5-6).

My brother, Bob McKee, wrote a song titled "You Will Shine as the Stars" that has the theme of going to shine the light of the Gospel to others. The chorus of that song is: "Go forth sowing the seed, even weeping; God will grant you a harvest of souls by and by; and forever when this life is over, you will shine as the stars in the sky." His people shine as bright stars when they go forth taking His Gospel to others and accompany it with a life that shines in godly living.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Dick & Joyce Burbage, Faith West, Jacqueline Dopwell, Duane Nelson, Margaret Coone & Sharon Washington.

Relatives: Jimmy Puckett, & Wayne Hendrix.

Shut In Members: Ann Howard, Virginia Plumlee, Bill Burton.

Others: Heather Tyre, Ann Barfield, Janie & Sandy Given, Ray Holler, Frances Sheffler, Bill Carroll, Frank Wood, Robie DeWitt

Upcoming Events

Dec. 20th: - The Men's Breakfast will be at the Hilltop church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 am.

Dec 20th: - The Annual Christmas Party will be at the Sweeney's home at 5:30 PM. Please bring finger foods, also an inexpensive "white elephant" gift to exchange. There will also be an "Ugly Sweater" contest. Don't be offended if you win!

Dec 21st: - Everyone is invited to linger a little longer after morning services. We will have a cookie exchange. You are asked to bring a batch of cookies to share and an empty tin to take yours home in. There will be sugar cookies to decorate. Take a few moments after services to partake in some cookie joy! See Jessica or Kelcey for details.

Visitors

Rembert & Gloria Allen, Katie Schultz, Travis Smith, Larry Ellis, Janet Moore, Carol Pace, Roosevelt Moore, Alicia Smith, Letraile Woodard, Orrin Smith, Barbara Farmer, Alex Boyd, Alex Fiore, Kaylin Glass, Brenda Andujar.

Thank you card

To my church family, Thank you so much for the thoughts, prayers, cards and encouragement to help me through the loss of my mother. It is such a blessing to be a part of this family.

*In Christian love,
the Smith family*

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

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

Sunday, December 21, 2014
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Fred Strickland
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Dave Williams
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Dave Williams
Opening Prayer Antonio Martin
Closing Prayer Kyle Williams
Greeters Williams family
Att. Cards..... Ian and Sebastian
Open & Close Building..... Bob Cooper

Wed. December 24, 2014

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Closing Prayer Jim Turner

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

December 28, 2014
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class David Williams
Prayer..... Josh Estridge

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Fred Strickland
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kyle Williams
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Dave Williams
Opening Prayer Kyle Bingle
Closing Prayer Antonio Martin
Greeters The Hamby family
Att. Cards..... Sebastian & Quadarius
Open & Close Building..... Bob Cooper

Wed. December 31, 2014

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Jason Hendrix
Closing Prayer Kenny French

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov 23	\$3,781.85
Nov 30.....	\$4,843.38
Dec 7.....	\$5,754.36
Dec 14.....	\$3,992.35
Contribution Average	\$4,471.43
2014 Weekly Budget	\$4,256.38

HEAR OUR RADIO SPOTS

This Week's Message

"Socrates"

1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com



Are We Jesus' Family?



An interesting account is found of Jesus in Matthew 12:46-50. The setting is opposition to Jesus as seen by the Pharisees accusing Him of violating the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-14) and speaking against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:15-37), along the scribes demanding that Jesus show them a sign, when He had already given them plenty (Matt. 12:38-45). The situation is “While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You’” (Matt. 12:46-47). Jesus’ culture did not favor Him leaving His family to teach like He was. Thus, their interrupting Him while He taught was okay in their minds. Must Jesus, though, forsake His heavenly Father in order to please His earthly family? Families are usually good, sometimes they are against us because we follow Jesus (Matt. 10:34-37). Jesus’ brothers, for example, did not believe Him at first (cf. John 7:3-5), and His mother was not always on the same page (cf. John 2:3-4). Despite this, though, Christians must remain faithful to God. The solution is Jesus “answered and said ... Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother’” (Matt. 12:48-50). Jesus is not here saying that earthly family is not important, but that earthly family is not *the most important* thing in life—doing the Father’s will is what’s *all important!* The only way to become part of Jesus’ family is to do the Father’s will! Are you in His family? ❤️ Brian



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

DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, December 20 Before the Sweeney’s get-together, there will be a group visiting our shut-ins to sing holiday cheer. We will depart at 2:30 p.m. If you would like to participate, please let Brian or Jagie know.

Sunday, December 21 Bible Bowl practice at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome, whether or not they are on a team!

Sunday, January 11 Lads to Leaders will meet following morning services. We appreciate all the students and mentors who sacrifice their time and offer their talents in spiritually strengthening the SFA congregation!

Saturday, January 17 Our next youth devotional and activity. Stay tuned for announcements on time and place. If you would like to host an event, check the sign-up sheet.

Winter Quarter Classes

Cradle Roll Jenna Hendrix (Sun.) & Michelle Paulin (Wed.)

Pre-school Rene’ Bingle (Sun.) & Melissa Craft (Wed.)

4rd-6th Grade Nicole Dix (Sun.) & Kathy Sweeney (Wed.)

7th-12th Grade Stacey Paulin (Sun.) & Hiram Kemp (Wed.)

Young Adults Jason Hendrix (Sun. “Basic Bible Knowledge”)

Auditorium Bob McAnally (Sun.) & Sam Crow (Wed.)



MORE THAN A “BABE IN A MANGER”

Contrary to common thought perpetuated this time of year, Jesus is not just a cute baby with an interesting birth. He is Lord of all! Let’s always give Him the rightful place in our hearts!