

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

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Don Iverson.....India
Randy Judd.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald.....Scotland
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Be at Peace

Robert Johnson

“So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (Romans 14:19). As we begin the holiday season, the concept of peace will occupy a prominent position in public thought. Peace of mind is one of the most needed, and one of the most sought after, attributes of our society. Even the most cursory glance at the newspaper or television news reveals the lack of peace in people’s lives. This lack of peace in our world comes from a lack of genuine spirituality.

Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth, “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Disorder and confusion are the opposite of peace. They are traits that fill many people’s lives, but their origin is not of God. “For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every vile practice” (James 3:16). Sin creates confusion and destroys peace in our own lives, in our relationship with others and especially in our relationship with God.

What is the way to find peace? The answer is Jesus. “For he himself is our peace...” (Ephesians 2:14). When we obey the Gospel and are cleansed of our sins by the blood of Christ, we can have peace. We have peace with God as our sins are forgiven. We have peace in ourselves, knowing the guilt of sin is removed. We can have peace with others, as we respond to them in love, not from sinful, selfish motives and attitudes.

So, peace is something God provides in Christ, but something as well that we must seek. The writer of the Book of Hebrews understood the need for his readers to positively respond in living the Gospel, if peace were to be a reality. Of course, those who reject God’s will, who still live in sin, cannot know God’s peace in Christ. This is why Jesus could say, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). We can be at peace with Christ, which helps us deal with those who remain in sin, which creates disorder and strife.

What can we do to encourage peace in others? Let them see Christ in you. What kind of example do they see? Do you live in godliness, or do they see sin fill your heart and actions? What kind of language do you use? Do you speak kind words, or words that create strife? “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). To a large extent, how I respond to others determines whether I can find peace with others.

If I have peace through Christ, I should try to be at peace with those around me. There will be some who, by allowing sin to influence them, will refuse to know peace. However, Christ living in me should make a difference in how I respond to others, in whether or not I have, and share, peace.

Anthropocentric or Theocentric?

T. Pierce Brown

The more I preach the more I am convinced that much of our preaching fails (even when we have a lot of responses) because our preaching is predominantly anthropocentric. It is most natural for man to want to know, “What good thing must I do to be saved?” The reason man is lost in the first place is because he is more concerned about what he wants than he is about what God wants. So when he discovers he is lost, if his question about how to be saved is answered solely or primarily in terms of his wants, needs, desires and actions, he may stay basically anthropocentric.

Because of the Calvinistic emphasis on God’s sovereign grace and the fact that the followers of that theology taught that man could do nothing, our preaching has emphasized what man has to do to accept that grace. At least mine has, and I shall continue to denounce the Calvinistic theory as contrary to God’s Word, even though some connected with the Lord’s church are now teaching it, and teach that man must respond to God’s grace in God’s appointed way.

However, even if man did not need to do anything, our preaching could still be man-centered if it dwelt primarily on man’s needs, wants and desires. It would be well to start our teaching with the nature and purpose of God rather than with the wants and desires of man.

Most evangelists of the denominational type urge their hearers to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. (In my opinion that would not be too bad if there was a proper explanation of what those non-biblical terms mean.) Most of us who uphold the Lord’s church in opposition to denominationalism would not put it quite that way. Yet, we might put it this way: “If you want salvation; if you want remission of sins; if you want every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, you may have it all and more, freely in Christ.” Then, we tell how the water is warm, the clothing is ready, the aisle is carpeted, the preacher is waiting with outstretched arms, and the angels in heaven are practically holding their breath waiting for him to act.

I am not trying to deny even that last part, but do you notice what is happening? The sinner has become the center of the stage! The attention is, from start to finish, on what he wants and gets. If the water is not warm, or the clothing is not ready, should he perhaps wait until all his needs are met or his wants satisfied?

There comes a time when the sinner should be told the blessings he has, and that the Father stands yearning for the prodigal, and will indeed give him the ring, the robe and the calf. Before that, though, the foundation should have been laid in the nature and character of God.

To help you see whether your preaching has been anthropocentric or theocentric, ask yourself some questions

about Acts 2:36-39. Have you assumed that the question of Acts 2:37 was primarily with reference to “What shall we do?” in view of gaining salvation, or “What shall we do?” in view of the fact that the Jesus we have crucified is both Lord and Christ? Of course it does not have to be an “either-or” situation.

Can you not see the difference in the reaction of one whose attitude is always predominantly Anthropocentric – what shall we do in order that we may get something – and one that is Theocentric – what shall we do in view of the fact that Jesus is Lord, and that we have offended a holy God? If a person obeys the Gospel primarily in terms of what he can get, then his subsequent life will probably be based primarily upon selfish considerations instead of on what will glorify God.

Do you not see that the concept of accepting Jesus as Savior is one thing (relating primarily to what He gives – salvation) and accepting Him as Lord is another (relating to what He demands or requires because of His nature)? Of course, the truth is that if one is truly converted in the Bible sense, he cannot accept Jesus as Savior without accepting Him as Lord. However, I am not talking about what can actually be done from God’s standpoint. I am talking about our concept of it. There are many that would like to accept Jesus as Savior without accepting Him as Lord!

The primary purpose for the existence of the church is not the salvation of souls! Does that shock you? The primary purpose is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:10, 21). Of course this purpose is realized primarily in the salvation of souls, for there is no greater way to glorify God than to help save a soul. Yet, the fact that the football team has to get to the one-yard line in order to get to the goal line does not mean that getting to the one-yard line is the primary purpose of the game.

To put it another way: If “getting saved” is the ultimate goal in life (an anthropocentric one), then when I think I am saved – whatever that involves – I will tend to stop or slow down. However, if glorifying God is the ultimate goal (a Theocentric one), there is no stopping place.

Those of us who talk to persons about the church find some that say, “I lean that way.” How do you lean on this point? If it should be emphasized that Acts 2:38 teaches that a man should be baptized for (in order to get) remission of sins (and it certainly should), should it not also be emphasized that he would be baptized because Jesus is Lord, and commanded it for the remission of sins? Almost any time a “why” question is asked, there is a “because of” and there is an “order to.” We should be able to understand and properly emphasize both of them.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Joyce Burbage will have surgery for glaucoma on her other eye this Thursday. Faith West, Jacquelin Dopwell, Rosalind Coleman, Dick Burbage, Duane Nelson, Margaret Coone & Sharon Washington.

Relatives: Bonnie James, Patrick Skaggs, Jimmy Puckett (cancer). Amy Powell & Wayne Hendrix.

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

Others: Heather Tyre, Ann Barfield, Frances Sheffler, Bill Carroll, Frank Wood, Robie DeWitt & Bonnie Hendricks.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 7th: - Fellowship in Service after our evening worship.

Dec. 13th: - The monthly youth devotional and activity will be in the fellowship hall at 3:00 PM & hosted by Bettye Bolding, Virginia Walker & Melissa Craft. Please let them know by Wed. Dec. 10th if you plan to attend.

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 an inexpensive "white elephant" gift to exchange.

Visitors

Brian & Gloria DeVrou, Barbara Farmer, Gary & Cathy Garland & twins Zach & Brian. Janice Zink.

Prayer Request

Tiffany Jackson went forward Sunday saying she had sinned, and asked for prayers from all of us on her behalf.

Thank you card

Thanks to all the ladies who put together the quilt for my family. It fills my heart with warmth and happiness for all the love put into it. It is beautiful, and will always be treasured.

Thank you all,

Lilly, Kathryn, Alexander, Marc & Carol Palermo.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

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

Sunday, December 7, 2014
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 Steve Hunley
Closing Prayer Bob Pratt
Greeters Phil & Dottie Fife
Att. Cards..... Quadarius Askew & Paul Sweeney
Open & Close Building..... Bob Cooper

Wed. December 10, 2014

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Closing Prayer David Williams

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

December 14, 2014
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 Jim Turner
Closing Prayer Josh Estridge

6:00 P.M.

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

Wed. December 17, 2014

Song Leader Ken Walker
Opening Prayer Frank Hamby
Closing Prayer Fred Rapley

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov 09	\$4,473.41
Nov 16.....	\$3,909.15
Nov 23.....	\$3,781.85
Nov 30.....	\$4,843.38
Contribution Average.....	\$4,454.68
2014 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,256.38

HEAR OUR RADIO SPOTS



This Week's Message

"Be Faithful"

1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page
www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com

The True Religious “Knowledge Formula”

In proving that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in last week’s bulletin, the true religious “knowledge formula” was given, but readers may not have known that because it was not explicitly identified as such. In any case, the true religious “knowledge formula” is as follows:

1. If God exists, and
2. If the Bible is the inspired word of God, and
3. If the Bible teaches a certain thing to be true,
4. Then, we can know that a certain thing is true.

Points 1 and 2 above have been proven in previous bulletin articles. The third point must be proven on an individual basis. That is, whatever subject is being considered stands or falls on its own Biblical evidence.

Applied to Music

For example, if a person wants to know what kind

of music God authorizes in New Testament worship, he or she must honestly consider the total teaching of the Bible. When so doing, that person will find that the New Testament passages that address the subject of music in worship this side of eternity only mention “singing” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, etc.), without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments (acapella singing). Therefore, we can know that singing is the only authorized kind of music for New Testament worship. By implication, we can also know that worshipping with mechanical instruments is sinful because it goes beyond what God has authorized (1 John 3:4; 2 John 1:9). Some may respond, “The Bible doesn’t say you can’t.” (continued below)



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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, December 13 Our monthly youth devotional and activity will be hosted by bettye, Virginia, & Melissa in the SFA fellowship room, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 14 will be our next L2L day. Our young people are making good progress in accomplishing their goals. We appreciate them and our adult mentors who sacrifice their time to help with our youth group.

Sunday, December 20 Youth are also welcome to attend the annual “white elephant” gift exchange at the Sweeneys. Make sure to bring a “tasteful” :) inexpensive gift.

(continued from above) In response, God does not authorize by what He does not say; He authorizes by what He says and the implications based on those statements. For example, when God instructed Noah about building the ark, He said to use “gopherwood” (Gen. 6:14). If Noah used any other kind of wood, he would not have been obedient nor faithful (Gen. 6:22; 7:5). If there was another verse that authorized another kind of wood, then Noah could have also used that wood. However, God did not have to tell Noah every kind of wood he could not use. Imagine how long that list would be! Let us know that we can know truth, seek to learn it, do our best to put it into action, and not be ashamed of it! ❤️ Brian

“Pew Packers” are meeting every Sunday evening at 5:45 to learn the Bible!