

# 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. 67 No.51 12-30-14

## ELDERS

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

## On the Jericho Road

*Emanuel Daugherty*

One of my fondest remembrances from my youth was hearing my mom and dad sing. They loved to sing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” One of their favorites, and mine too, was “The Jericho Road.” Dad’s bass voice could make that old song ring! It is a grand spiritual song with a solid message.

You remember the story that takes place on the Jericho Road—how the man was waylaid by thieves, robbed, beaten and left for dead. Along came a Levite and a priest who offered him no assistance. At last came a Samaritan, despised by the Jews, but in this case, a good man who had compassion on the one in need and distress. Read for yourself for the details (Luke 10:25-37).

Most of us will never see the actual Jericho Road going down from Jerusalem to Jericho with its steep descent and places where robbers can hide. However, as the song suggests, we experience the Jericho Road. It is the road of life with its responsibilities, opportunities, hazards, toils, difficulties and dangers. Yet, the road will not be near so dangerous and difficult if we take Jesus along as our traveling companion. He will take our cares and worries (1 Peter 5:7), give us healing for our soul’s diseases (Mark 16:16), and He has already paid the cost (1 John 2:2).

Finally, we must realize that the Jericho Road may prove to be costly, unpopular and difficult. It cost the Good Samaritan in terms of time, trouble and treasure—but his is the eternal reward. So too, will it be for us. Which side of the Jericho road are you traveling?

# Ceremony or Ceremonialism?

*T. Pierce Brown*

**T**he majority of denominational teachers ridicule some of the commands of God, such as baptism, as “mere ritual” or “ceremonialism.” We are reminded of a statement of Jesus in Matthew 23:23, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law; judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” He expresses the same idea in Luke 11:42. Notice carefully that He did not say, “Forget about the things you consider trifles.” He said, “These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

We have no right to take any command of God and suggest that it is not important. However, we do have the right and responsibility to know what things are more basic and central, and put proper emphasis on them in our teaching and living.

Because some religious leaders scoff at ceremonies, God has ordained that we need to make a distinction between “ceremonies” and “ceremonialism.” The Law of Moses, given by the authority of God, authorized certain washings of hands of the priests before offering sacrifices (Exodus 30:21). These were ceremonies ordained of God. Yet, the Pharisees had apparently considered washing as an act of great importance of itself, and had added many washings (Matthew 15:1-2) that had nothing to do with what God had commanded. Thereby, they had made void the Word of God by their traditions (Matthew 15:16), partly because they had perverted the commandments and made washings, per se, important, and partly because in so doing they made it impossible for the ordinary man to discern between a religious act that God had commanded, and a religious act that man had designed. That is, they made their ceremonial worship equivalent to, and sometimes even more significant than, God’s ordained ceremonies of worship.

Remember that a ceremony may be “a formal act prescribed by law.” That law may be God’s or man’s. Baptism is a ceremony. Taking the Lord’s Supper is a ceremony. They are not “church ordinances,” ordered by some group of religious persons for its own purposes. They are God’s ordinances—ceremonies ordained of God.

“Ceremonialism” would take those acts and give them sacramental value—from the idea that through the performance of the ritual itself, the grace of God is

conferred upon the person. When baptism is viewed in this way—as a mere ceremonial act—two bad results are achieved, or two wrong attitudes produced.

First, one may view it as a sacramental or meritorious act, for Peter says, “Baptism doth also now save us” (1 Peter 3:21). Thus one may take a little baby, presumed to be tainted with “the original sin,” and perform some sort of ceremony, called “baptism,” which, it is assumed, will remove that taint. Even a man in a drunken stupor could be “baptized,” especially if he were at the point of death, and the act would release him from the guilt of sin. This is, in principle, what happens in cases of “Extreme Unction.” That is Roman Catholic doctrine, but there are probably more persons connected with the Lord’s church who have an idea like that than we would like to admit.

Second, in a rebellion against that unscriptural view, one may conclude that baptism is a “mere ritual” which has no value, and in rejecting the “ceremonial” view, reject the value or purpose of the ceremony itself that God ordained. We are not concerned now with which is worse, any more than we would be concerned with which is worse—stabbing a man to death with an ice pick, or shooting him with a rifle. They both produce death!

“Ceremonialism”—the act of merely going through a ritual—has NEVER had any value. However, ceremonies ordained of God and carried out by His authority, in the way He said, for the purpose He said, with the prerequisites or conditions He prescribed, have always been approved of God, and those complying with them have received His blessings!

If we are to have the mind of Christ, we will condemn “ceremonialism,” which may lead a person to “get baptized”—merely go through the ceremony—either to join the church of his choice, or so he will not be lost, or “take a piece of cracker and grape juice” (which is what some persons do instead of taking the Lord’s Supper), or do some other foolish or useless thing. Yet, we will approve of God-ordained ceremonies, which include a penitent believer being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, by the authority of Christ, and will involve a person’s spirit communing with God’s Spirit and being changed thereby as he properly engages in the ceremony of partaking of the Lord’s Supper in memory of the sacrificial love of our Lord. There is a difference. Make sure you know and practice it!

# 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:** Ann Barfield, Janie & Sandy Given, Ray Holler, Frances Sheffler, Bill Carroll, Frank Wood, Robie DeWitt.

## Upcoming Events

**Dec. 30th-Jan. 1st:** - Gospel meeting at So. Hillsborough Church of Christ. Speakers will be students from FSOP.

**Jan. 17th:** - Men's Breakfast at Central in Winter Haven at 8:00 am.

**Jan. 17th:** - Ladies Day at Orange St. Church of Christ from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Registration and breakfast at 8:30 am.

**Jan. 11th:** - Lads to Leaders will meet after the morning services.

**Jan. 17th:** - Our Youth & Devotional & Activity.

**Jan. 19th - 22nd:** - Florida School of Preaching 40th annual Lectureship. See bulletin board for more information.

## Visitors

Mr. & Mrs. Chad Gachet & children, Kayelen & Jagger. Alicia Smith, Latraile Woodard.

## Thank you Card

Dear So. Florida Avenue,  
 Thank you for all the thoughts and prayers, and the poster that was signed by the youth group after my surgery.  
 In Christian love,  
 Amy Powell

## Hither, Thither & Yon

Bob & Grace McAnally are spending the Christmas holidays in Michigan with her family. Bruce Longfellow & Phil Fife are visiting in Michigan, Flo Duffy is visiting in Arizona. Stacey & Michelle Paulin are in Georgia for the holidays.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### December

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

### January

Sam Crow ..... **Table** ..... Fred Strickland  
 Tucker Sweeney ..... **Assist** ..... Josh Estridge

### 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

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

### Sunday, January 4, 2015

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Frank Hamby  
**Prayer** ..... Kenny French

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements** ..... Stacey Paulin  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Ken Walker

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Greeters** ..... The Sweeney family  
**Att. Cards** ..... Ian Enamorado & Paul Sweeney  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Jason Hendrix

### Wed. January 7, 2015

**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Paul Romine  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Frank Hamby

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov 30 .....	\$4,843.38
Dec 7 .....	\$5,754.36
Dec 14 .....	\$3,992.35
Dec 21 .....	\$5,533.67
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....	<b>\$4,492.25</b>
<b>2014 Weekly Budget</b> .....	<b>\$4,256.38</b>

## HEAR OUR RADIO SPOTS

This Week's Message

*"Sacrifice"*

1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com



# “A Check-Up from the Neck Up”

In response to hearing news about the craziness that goes on for the sake of false religion, a preacher known by this writer would often say, “He [or she] needs a check -up from the neck up!” This was a way of saying that for a person to do such a thing, he must not be right in the head; that is, not thinking right! The focus of this article, brought out by that expression, is the truth that thoughts control a person’s actions. The wise man, while considering a miser, said, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Thoughts and attitudes make people who they are! If a person constantly thinks on godly principles, his actions will be good. Likewise, if a person constantly thinks ungodly/worldly thoughts, his actions will eventually follow to do evil. Jesus put it like this, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil.



For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). It is no wonder that the wise man also wrote, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). What is our hearts’ condition? Are we thinking more on the heavenly and godly or on the worldly and ungodly? In the words of Paul, let us meditate on “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report...virtue and...anything praiseworthy” (Phil. 4:8) ❤️ *Brian*



*South Florida Avenue*  
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Return Service Requested

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

## *Dates To Remember*

**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.

**Florida School of Preaching**  
**Do You Understand**  
**Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount**  
**January 19-22, 2015**

**THANK YOU !!** **Tons of Thanks** to our young people and those who work with them for encouraging our congregation and community thru the many good deeds and acts of kindness!



## **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.)