

The South Florida Avenue **MESSENGER**

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

The Kingdom and the Church

Brian R. Kenyon

God's "kingdom" is an often misunderstood concept. "Church of Christ" always means kingdom of God," but "kingdom of God" does not always mean "church of Christ" (cf. Mt. 5:18-20). Context must always determine meaning. Also, the terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are interchangeable terms (cf. Mt. 19:23-24). Truly understanding the nature of God's kingdom will both strengthen the Christian and help evangelize the lost. This is why God's kingdom was a staple subject of preaching in the Book of Acts (1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

Meaning of "Kingdom"

"Kingdom" is from a Greek word (*basileia*, βασιλεία) that means "kingship, royal power, royal rule" (cf. Dan. 4:31, 36). Secondarily, it refers to "the territory ruled over by a king." Therefore, it first means "reign and not realm" (cf. Rev 11:15). Consider the parables in this light (Mt. 13:11, 24-32, et al.). Consider the priority object to be sought in this light (Mt. 6:33). Consider also some difficult "kingdom" passages in this light (Mt. 5:19; 8:11-12; 11:12; Lk. 17:20-21). Since the rule of God does not operate in a void, "kingdom" does imply people living under that rule; hence, the derivative meaning of realm.

"Kingdom" and the Old Testament

Since kingdom primarily means "royal rule," it is evident that God has always had a kingdom, although there have been different manifestations of it (Ex. 15:18). At least some aspect of God's "kingdom" was a present reality in the faith of the Old Testament. The psalmist declared, "The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all" (Ps. 103:19). Also, "They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, And talk of Your power, To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations" (Ps. 145:11-13). That God intended to be the King over His people is clear when Samuel reminded his generation, "And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God was your king" (1 Sam. 12:12 cf. 1 Sam. 8:7). Even the people of Israel were referred to as the Lord's kingdom (cf. 2 Chr 13:8).

(continued on page 2)

Although there was a sense in which God has always had a “kingdom” (because He has always reigned), there was also in the Old Testament the expectation of a future manifestation of God’s royal rule. This would be a future manifestation of God’s sovereignty when He would exercise kingship in a fuller way (Isa. 24:23; 33:22; Zeph. 3:15; Zec 14:16-17). This future manifestation was symbolically revealed by the prophets (Joel 2:28, “afterward” [cf. Acts 2:16]; Amos 9:11, “that day” [cf. Acts 15:16]; Isa. 2:2, “the last days;” Dan. 2:44, “days of these kings”). Such prophecies made clear that this final manifestation of God’s kingdom would be established in the last age of human history when the Messiah would reign (cf. “last days,” Heb. 1:1-2).

“Kingdom” and the Church of Christ

The church of Christ is the final manifestation of God’s kingdom this side of eternity. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord by, among other things, preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Mt. 3:2). Jesus also preached, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mk. 1:15). “At hand” in most contexts refers to something very near. The nearness of this final manifestation of God’s kingdom was affirmed by Jesus in two verses. First, in Matthew 16:28, right after promising to build His church, Jesus declared, “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” Some of those who heard Jesus, including Peter (Mt. 16:19), would be alive when this “kingdom” would come. Then, in Mark 9:1, Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.” Mark also affirmed that some of those who heard Jesus would be alive when this final manifestation of the “kingdom” would come, but he also added a detail that the “kingdom” would come with “power.”

Two passages particularly shed light on this power. According to Luke, Jesus said before ascending, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49). Jesus also told the apostles before ascending, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Remembering that the kingdom was to come with power, and that the power was to come from the Holy Spirit, a study of Acts 2:1-47 will reveal that this final manifestation of God’s “kingdom” was established with the establishment of the church (cf. Mt. 16:18-19).

“Kingdom” Is Present Reality

From Acts 2 to the end of the New Testament, God’s kingdom, the church of Christ, is spoken of as a historic fact. Paul told the Colossians that God “has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13). “Delivered” and “conveyed [translated, KJV]” deal with past action. Thus, the “kingdom” was a present reality when Colossians was written (AD 60-61). Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to “walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thes. 2:12). “Calls” indicates the Thessalonians were in the “kingdom” when the instruction was given (AD 51). Thus, the kingdom had to be in existence at that time! The Hebrews writer declared, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28). In order to receive something, it must be in existence! Hebrews was written around AD 68/69. Thus, the “kingdom” was in existence. Finally, from Patmos, John declared, “I [am] ... your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9). Just as sure as John was on the island of Patmos, he was in the “kingdom.” These verses show the “kingdom” was already in existence then, which means it is certainly here today!

Conclusion

There will be a future manifestation of God’s kingdom, synonymous with heaven, where all the faithful souls of all ages will dwell eternally with God, commencing on Judgment Day (cf. Mt. 7:21-23; 25:34; 1 Cor. 15:50-57; 2 Tim. 4:1, 18; 2 Pet. 1:11). The only way to be a part of God’s kingdom is to submit to His reign through the Gospel of Christ! The same way a person becomes a member of the church, he or she becomes part of God’s kingdom (Acts 2:38, 40-41, 47). All Christians are part of the culmination of God’s plan for His kingdom on this side of eternity. Are we faithful members of His church? Are we faithful subjects of His kingdom? ❤ Brian

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Bob Cooper injured his back and is having to take medication. Wanda Bruno has been admitted into L.R.M.C. Virginia Walker, Katrina Greene and Ron Cox have not been feeling well. Also remember Faith West, Margaret Norman, Sharon Washington, Jim Turner, Bill Long, Ginny Hamby, and Margaret Coone.

Shut In Members: Carol Eason, Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage and Sharon Edler.

Others: Lynn Stevens, Jack Pinckert, Chrissi Fuesner, Bob McAnally, Doris Smith, Joyce Stearsman, JoAnn Chancey, (Ginny Hamby's mother), Ruth Brunson, Chip Bolding, Tim Wade (friend of the Kirklands) and Gene Stanson, works with Stacey Wilson, (Toney Wilson's husband).

Upcoming Events

Sunday July 8th: Elders/Deacons Meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Monday July 9th: Work day to remove contents of preacher's old house. Meet at the church building at 8:30 a.m. An extra dumpster has been rented. This is all part of the process we must do before the house can be demolished. All helping hands would be appreciated!

Saturday July 21st: Men's breakfast at 6th St. church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday July 28th: One day Vacation Bible School here at S.F.A. Please invite family and friends.

Sunday July 29th: Monthly Fellowship Meal following our morning service and the afternoon service right after our meal. Jimmy Sweeney's team is in charge of set-up and clean-up.

Congratulations

Victor Travis was baptized into Christ on Saturday, June 30th. Please keep him in prayer and encourage him along this new journey.

Hither, Thither and Yon

Bob & Grace McAnally have a new temporary address: 4310 Maya Lane Swartz Creek, Michigan 48473.

Pantry

We have been cleaning out the pantry and throwing away the expired items, and need to restock. Individually wrapped items like crackers etc, canned items with pop top lids, no veggies needed at this time. Also small bottled waters are great!

Communion to Our Shut-in's

If you would like to have the opportunity to take the Lord's supper to our shut-in's, there is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

Visitors

Rick & Stephanie Kenyon, Klark and Karissa, Johnny Davidson, George & Marion Beals, Frederick Burris, Karen Napier, Annabelle Phillips, Walter Jefferson Bell, Linda Boon, Kayden, Callie, Collin and Lily

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

July

David Anderson	Table	Ken Walker
John McShane.....	Assist	Jimmy Sweeney

Sunday, July 8, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class.....	Ken Walker
Prayer	Bobby Sheumaker
Announcements	Fred Strickland
Song Leader.....	Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer.....	Wayne Shearer
Sermon.....	Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer.....	Josh Estridge
Sound Booth.....	Alex Parramore

6:00 P.M.
Song Leader..... Paul Romine
Opening Prayer..... Steve Hunley
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Jeff Bingle
Sound Booth..... Casey Paulin
Greeters..... Shearers
Att. Cards..... Paul/Sawyer
Open & Close Building Phil Fife

Wednesday, July 11, 2018

Song Leader.....	Ken Walker
Opening Prayer.....	David Williams
Closing Prayer.....	Paul Romine

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Stacey Paulin so he can get a replacement - (863) 838-8911

Sunday, July 15, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class.....	Jim Turner
Prayer	David Anderson
Announcements	Fred Strickland
Song Leader.....	Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer.....	Tucker Sweeney
Sermon.....	Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer	Paul Romine
Sound Booth.....	Alex Parramore

6:00 P.M.
Song Leader..... Paul Romine
Opening Prayer..... Jimmy Sweeney
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Casey Paulin
Sound Booth..... Alex Parramore
Greeters

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

Song Leader.....	Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer.....	Frank Hamby
Closing Prayer.....	Phil Fife

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

June 10.....	\$5,983.08
June 17.....	\$5,436.39
June 24	\$4,371.18
July 1	\$5,673.16
Contribution Average.....	\$ 5,790.15
2018 Weekly Budget.....	\$ 4,887.98

Specific Expediencies Are Not God's Immutable Law

While worshiping in Panama, I noticed that aluminum foil covered the trays containing the fruit of the vine and the unleavened bread for the Lord's Supper. The aluminum coverings were certainly not as beautiful as some of the laced, cloth coverings I saw in Africa, but they were all used for the same purpose — to keep the bugs out! In fact, before air-conditioning was common in America, churches featured decorative coverings over the Lord's Supper trays. The problem was that some brethren began to think the pretty laced coverings were part of God's law on first day of the week worship. As the constant threat of insects spoiling the Lord's Supper trays diminished, people thought it was irreverent to do away with these beautiful laced coverings. I have been told that some churches even split because of it! Here is a classic example of an "expedient" being equated with God's unchangeable law in the minds of some. An "Expedient" is something that is useful for effecting a desired result; suited to the circumstances or the occasion; advantageous; convenient. We have a Scriptural right to use expedients in carrying out God's plan (i.e., songbooks, bank accounts, individual cups for the Lord's Supper, etc.). Of course, some caution should be exercised. While it is true no unlawful action can be done expediently (cf. Rom. 3:8), merely because an expedient is lawful does not mean that it is always good to use — all lawful actions do not necessarily edify (1 Cor. 10:23 cf. *(continued below)*)



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 . . .



**Old
House
Help**

On Friday, June 22, 2018, John, Jason, Kathy, and Dee met with Emily Foster, the Senior Planner for Historic

Preservation for the city of Lakeland. It was a very cordial and informative meeting concerning what must be done to demolish the old preacher's home. The following steps are required: (1) place a sign in the yard for 90 days advertising that the house is free to anyone willing to relocate it, with information about the house placed on the church's website; (2) obtain an estimate from a licensed contractor on what the cost would be to bring the home up to code to make it habitable; (3) have a conceptual plan on how we intend to use the property after the house is removed; and (4) present all of this information to the Beacon Hill Historic District in a public meeting. The first action we must take is clean out the remainder of the contents. If you can, be here Monday, July 9, 2018, at 8:30 am. More work days will be scheduled.

(continued from above) 1 Cor. 8:1-13). Furthermore, the unlawful pursuit of a lawful expedient constitutes bondage, and thus results in sin (1 Cor. 6:12 cf. Rom. 6:16). Having said that, though, we must not think that changing an expedient is equivalent to changing God's law! Misunderstanding the authorized use of expedients has led to a number of unnecessary church splits (such as the ones over cooperation issues)! May we always study the Bible to gain better discernment in "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15)! ❤ Brian