

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.....9:30 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

LESSONS FROM A HOTEL

Hiram Kemp

When Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph, he was laid in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn (Lk. 2:7). The word translated “inn” is also referred to as the guest chamber in other passages throughout the New Testament (Mk. 14:14; Lk. 22:11). Also, when Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan, he mentioned that the Samaritan took the wounded traveler to an inn and took care of him (Lk. 10:34). While the inn mentioned in Luke 2:7 could mean a guest room used for various purposes, the word in Luke 10:34 refers specifically to a motel or a hotel. Lodging preachers was a common thing in the first century and was a way hospitality was shown in the early church (Acts 16:15). Last week I was privileged to preach in a week long VBS in Lake City, Florida, and the congregation was gracious enough to put me up in a hotel while I was there. The hotel was nice and clean, and allowed me the time to prepare for the lessons I was to deliver. However, there were some lessons that I learned while I was there that I would like to share.

MAKE GOOD RESERVATIONS

I arrived in Lake City on Saturday night and was ready to go to my room after driving for two and a half hours. However, there was confusion concerning the reservations that were made on my behalf. Instead of five days, I was only in the computer for a one-night stay. Also, the church was paying for my stay but the employee at the counter said my reservation was not paid for and so I had to pay that night. After speaking with the secretary at the church that week everything was settled, and I was reimbursed. There was a miscommunication between the employee who made the reservation and the rest of the staff. While this hiccup concerning my reservation was ultimately resolved, it showed me the importance of having proper reservations made.

As it relates to our eternal salvation, we should be sure that our calling and election are sure in Christ (2 Pet. 1:10). Many people will be surprised on the day of judgment as they have not made heavenly reservations with God but instead have taken someone else’s word for their eternal security (Mt. 7:21-23). Peter said there is an inheritance that is reserved in heaven for Christians that is incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal (1 Pet. 1:3-5). If we want to be sure that our heavenly reservations are made, we should obey the gospel of Christ and then do all we can to walk in the light, assured that the grace of God cleanses us of *(continued on page 2)*

all our sins (Acts 22:16; 1 Jn. 1:7). What a tragedy to travel through life and reach the judgment bar of God only to discover that no reservation had been made and then being cast out of God's presence eternally.

PEACEFUL SLEEP IS A BLESSING

I never have had a problem sleeping. I am typically in bed by nine or ten o'clock at night. The hotel I was in had an air condition that made a rattling noise all night. After the first night I was faced with a dilemma, either I could suffer through the night without air or tolerate the loud rattling of the air condition. I chose to try and sleep through the noise of the air condition. I survived, but it did wake me up several times throughout the night. I thought about the blessing Christians have since we can sleep in peace. If we heed the wisdom of God's word, we are assured that we can lie down and enjoy sweet sleep (Prov. 3:24). The Lord sustained David as he slept, and this gave him courage to face his enemies (Psa. 3:5-6). The Lord makes his people to dwell in safety, and we are able to enjoy peaceful sleep (Psa. 4:8). Health issues aside, the consciences of God's servants are clear, and all anxieties are cast on God so that when we lay down, we can enjoy rest uninterrupted (1 Pet. 5:7). Maybe you have not thought recently about how privileged we are to lay down each night knowing the cares of the world are not on our shoulders but on the shoulders of our God (Isa. 26:3) What a blessing!

CONQUER YOUR FEARS

Elevators are not my favorite thing. Unless I must, I normally take the stairs due to my claustrophobia. It just so happened that I was on the sixth floor of the hotel where I was staying. Initially walking up the stairs with all of my belongings was no big deal, but as the week wore on, I got tired of doing that. If I left something in the car it became a chore to walk six flights of stairs just to get it. The elevator would make my trip immensely shorter. I realized I could have just faced my fear and rode the elevator a few times. I did take the elevator some but just not as much as I could have. The lesson in this for me was that fears have to be faced or we will pay a price.

Fear carries consequences that are often costly in a spiritual journey. Fear caused a generation of Israelites to die in the wilderness as they did not believe they could conquer the land that God promised them (Num. 13:26-33). When Jesus walked on the sea to his disciples, they thought he was a ghost, but he assured them of his identity and told them not to be afraid (Mt. 14:26-27). Fellowship with God removes fear and emboldens us to live with courage and conviction (Heb. 13:6). When we are afraid, we should trust in God (Psa. 34:4; 56:3). Fear can cripple us as servants of the Lord as we will fail to reach our full spiritual potential. The one talent man in Jesus' parable did not make use of what he was given, partially because of his fear (Mt. 25:25). Fear can stifle congregations from making progress as all of the possibilities of failure are dwelt upon instead of success with the Lord (2 Cor. 2:14). My fear cost me some time and fatigue, but it will be a greater shame to allow our fear to cost us our soul (Mt. 10:28). May we trust the Lord and be confident in his power and overcome our fears.

CONCLUSION

There are preachers who have been in worse conditions than me. I have been treated well. Paul said that he endured shipwreck, beatings, robbery, hunger, anxiety, and a host of other things for the gospel's sake (2 Cor. 11:25-28). There are spiritual lessons everywhere, and if we keep our eyes open, we can see them and learn from them. Reservations are important, peaceful sleep is a luxury, and fear can be costly. As we seek to honor God and grow closer to his Son, may we have more boldness and dedication to his cause.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. ⁵Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? ⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:1-6)



PEW PACKERS EVERY SUNDAY EVENING AT 5:45

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Bob Cooper had surgery on July 19th and is home recovering.

Also remember Wayne Shearer, Faith West, Wanda Bruno, 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, Chrissi Fuesner, Joyce Stearsman, Ruth Brunson, Chip Bolding and Tim Wade (friend of the Kirklands).

Upcoming Events

Thursday, July 26th: Senior Saints outing to the Polk County History Center. Meet at the building at 8:30 a.m. All teens are invited and lunch will be provided for the teens! A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Saturday, July 28th: One day Vacation Bible School here at S.F.A. 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please invite family and friends.

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

Sunday, July 29th - Tuesday, July 31st: Vacation Bible School at Orange Street church of Christ, 6 p.m. Sunday, 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.

Sunday, August 5th: Youth and parents meeting after morning service.

Saturday, September 1st: Labor Day Weekend Cookout & Lawn Games for all ages!

Resignation

Chuck Wyatt has requested to resign as a deacon of this congregation due to his wife's health issues. We are grateful for his good work!

Congratulations

Darlene Thompson became a great grandmother (and Brenda Mask a great aunt) again with the birth of Anthony James Pollock on July 20, 2018. He weighed 6 lbs and 12 oz and was 18 3/4 inches.

Response

Wanda Bruno came forward Sunday requesting prayer and was restored. Let's keep her in prayer and encouraged.

Visitors

Johnny Davidson, Junior Erickson, Jason Goldtrap, Tiffany Hash and Samuel, Wadi Houry, Mary Moore, April Milton, Gloria Guay-Kenyon, Ron Lipsius, Amy Powell, and Will & Autumn Vann and children.

~ Communion to Shut-ins ~

Aug 5	Kemp
Aug 12	Pratt
Aug 19	Pratt
Aug 26	McShane
Sept 2	Kemp
Sept 9	Pratt
Sept 16	help needed
Sept 23	McShane
Sept 30	Shearer

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

July

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

Sunday, July 29, 2018

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class..... Kyle Bingle
Prayer..... Tyler Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements Fred Strickland
Song Leader..... Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer..... Kyle Faneuf
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney
Sound Booth..... Paul Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Paul Romine
Opening Prayer..... Wayne Shearer
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... David Anderson
Sound Booth..... Paul Sweeney
Greeters Edmonson Family
Att. Cards..... Willcut Boys
Open & Close Building Phil Fife

Wednesday, August 1, 2018

Song Leader..... Casey Paulin
Opening Prayer..... David Anderson
Closing Prayer..... Steve Hunley

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

Sunday, August 5, 2018

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class..... Frank Hamby
Prayer..... Stacey Paulin

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Matt Willcut
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Jim Edmondson
Sound Booth..... Casey Paulin

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer..... Kyle Bingle
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Paul Romine
Sound Booth..... Casey Paulin
Greeters Pratt Family
Att. Cards..... Colby/Ian
Open & Close Building Bob Pratt

Wednesday, August 8, 2018

Song Leader..... Ken Walker
Opening Prayer..... CJ Grimes
Closing Prayer..... Paul Romine

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

July 1	\$5,673.16
July 8	\$6,198.52
July 15	\$6,255.19
July 22	\$4,705.00
Contribution Average	\$5,782.84
2018 Weekly Budget	\$4,887.98



Does This Offend You?

It is hard to believe the message on the church sign would raise the ire of some to call it “offensive” and “disrespectful.” As mentioned last Wednesday, someone called the office to complain about this message. The caller further stated that “God did not invent marriage; man did.” Revealing the real opposition, the caller went on to say that “gays are fine because God loves everybody,” and that we, the South Florida Avenue church of Christ, “need to get it together.” Some Christians cringe at the idea of being controversial. While it is true that we should not go around trying to pick fights, where do we draw the line as to what constitutes picking a fight? Who would have thought that such a basic truth as “God Made Marriage One Man & One Wife, Gen. 2:18-25” would have been as controversial as the caller thought? Let this incident serve as a reminder of both the culture in which we live and the opposition those who uphold the truth will encounter. Paul said that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). Persecution comes in various forms. A phone call like this is nowhere near persecution like other people in the world today face and that was faced in the early centuries of Christianity, but the same attitude can be present in both scenarios. The Christian’s attitude is key. Jesus pronounced “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, *(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 . . .

VBS @ SFA July 28, 8:30 am-1:00 pm



Classes for ALL ages!

Special 3D Adult class teachers:

Emmanuel
Bruce
Vince **Daugherty**

(continued from above) for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Mt. 5:11-12). If our attitude is such that we crumble at criticism, it will be difficult to publicly uphold the simplest of Bible truths. However, when we know God exists and the Bible is His inspired word, we know that what it teaches is true and that His truth is worth living for and worth dying for (cf. Rom. 12:1; Rev. 2:10). May our attitude be evangelistic. Perhaps those in opposition to truth have never had it presented to them. Let us lovingly invite opponents to a Bible study, when possible. They may refuse to learn, but let us always stand with God! ❤️ *Brian*

 **The Florida School of Preaching begins its 50th school-year Aug. 6. Thank You SFA church of Christ for your support since 1969!**