



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.
Lakeland, FL 33803

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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.....6:30 p.m.

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“Much Studying Brings Death” — A False Claim!

Brian R. Kenyon

Recently, while on an evangelistic campaign in Costa Rica, many there had been taught, “Much studying brings death.” This expression is a false, twisted adaptation from Second Corinthians 3:6, which states that “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” Of course, the context of that passage shows Paul’s discussion about the “letter” of the Law of Moses and how it was “the ministry of death ... the ministry of condemnation ... taken away in Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:7-14). The main reason people appealed to this expression was they believed their “Holy Spirit experiences” were confirmation they were right with God. To them, it did not matter what the Bible taught because the Holy Spirit’s direct involvement in their lives would override anything the Bible could teach. As much as we would appeal to Bible book, chapter, and verse to teach the gospel, they would appeal to their “Holy Spirit experiences” to support their position!

The Holy Spirit or “Deceiving Spirits”?

It is easy for someone to claim the Holy Spirit miraculously did something to or through him. However, in the New Testament, the miraculous was used to prove to others that a person and/or his message was truly from God (Acts 6:8; 8:5-7; Hebrews 2:1-4). This is exactly what happened on that first Day of Pentecost following the Lord’s resurrection. The “sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind” and the “divided tongues, as of fire” that “sat upon each of them [the apostles, Acts 1:26]” alerted everyone present that those twelve apostles “were all filled with the Holy Spirit,” who miraculously inspired them “to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:2-4). This was proof-positive their message was true! Despite the claims, no one today has ever fluently spoken (down to the exact dialect!) a known language to which he had never been exposed or studied, but the apostles and others in the first century did just that by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:6-8, 11; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 14:22-23).

Why do people think the Holy Spirit miraculously does something to or through them? Where would they even get the idea the Holy Spirit works that way today? How do they know it is the Holy Spirit and not some other, unholy spirit, that has deceived them? Paul did teach about such deception. After identifying characteristics of “false apostles, deceitful workers,” he revealed they were busy “transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). The devil, who is the real enemy (Ephesians 6:12), uses deception as his weapon of choice (Genesis 3:1-5; Ephesians 6:10-13; Revelation 12:9; 13:14). He devises and promotes deceptive philosophies, doctrines, and “every high thing that exalts

itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Because a doctrine and/or “experience” seems spiritual or to come from God does not mean it is or does! Paul warned Timothy, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). John also warned, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). There is only one way to know for sure whether something comes from God or the devil: measure it by God’s revealed will in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12).

God's Written Word Is the Standard

Studying the Bible to know and correctly apply God’s will is work that takes desire, time, and sometimes very difficult pursuit (John 7:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:15-18). The devil knows the power of God’s word (Matthew 4:1-11). If the devil can remove or distort God’s word, he knows salvation would be impossible. Jesus began His interpretation of the soils, “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:11-12). Since the Holy Spirit inspired the written word of God (2 Timothy 3:16 cf. John 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:13), and since the written word of God completes and thoroughly equips us for “every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17), the Holy Spirit will never contradict what the word of God reveals, for “God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33). To the apostles, Jesus plainly said the Holy Spirit “will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

Miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were never intended to be a permanent part of the Christian age (i.e., “last days,” Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:1-3; 2 Peter 3:3). They were temporary, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13). Many have been deceived into thinking “till we all come ...” refers to the coming of Christ at the end of time, but the text reveals the time limit as “the unity of the faith ... the knowledge of the Son of God ... a perfect [fullgrown, ASV; mature, ESV] man,” who measures up to “the stature of the fullness of Christ.” This is all accomplished through the written word of God (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-4). Concerning these miraculous gifts, Paul wrote, “But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). The word translated “perfect” is from *teleios* (τέλειος), which means complete, perfect, whole; full-grown, mature. The word is never used to refer to Jesus! It is, however, used for God’s will revealed in His word (Romans 12:2; James 1:25) and frequently for people who are (or should be) spiritually mature (Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 2:6; Philippians 3:15; Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 5:14; James 1:4; 3:2). Paul’s comparisons between “in part” and “perfect” (1 Corinthians 13:9-10) and between “now” and “then” (1 Corinthians 13:12) were not of different things (“apples to oranges” or knowledge acquired through miraculous gifts to the second coming of Jesus) but quantities of the same thing. The “in part” means of revealing God’s will through the miraculous gifts of Paul’s day (“now” as Paul wrote) and the “perfect [complete]” revelation of God’s will with the New Testament being completed at the end of the first century (“then” from Paul’s perspective) are the comparisons. Since we now have the completed written revelation of God, miraculous gifts are no longer needed, and have thus have ceased and “vanished away” (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)!

Conclusion

Anybody can claim the Holy Spirit spoke directly to him or confirmed the direction he should go. Proving such a claim, however, is impossible. On the other hand, nobody can change what the New Testament teaches (Matthew 24:35). Proving what God authorizes is possible and required to please Him (Colossians 3:17). The Holy Spirit would never inform or guide someone in a way contradictory to His written word. Living the expression “Much studying brings death” is a feel-good, deceptive evasion of the authority of God’s word. Rather than blaming the Holy Spirit for our disobedience, let us “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21), and “live by ... every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

PRAYER LIST

Current: Jim Turner is now home from the nursing center. Joseph Faulk's sister, Kellie, has mental health problems. Chip Bolding, first surgery went well, will have another surgery to put new metal back in when the infection is gone.

Continual: Sharon Mathis Washington (Health & family) Fran Gabaldon (health), Stacey Wilson (health) Debbie Bush (struggles); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Jim Turner (health)

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin, Helen Perrin, bettye bolding, Sharon Roy, Nellie Anderson

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.

Bible Class Teachers Needed

If you are willing and able to teach a childrens

Bible class during our summer quarter,

please see Tonya Anderson.

Summer quarter begins June 2nd.

Join us Sunday May 26th

following the morning service for a farewell potluck lunch for the Rick and Stephanie Kenyon family.

Team 2 will be the team in charge of kitchen duties.

(See Rachel if you would like to donate to a money tree for them)



WEDDING SHOWER

for

TUCKER SWEENEY & ANNA CLAIR ROSS

SATURDAY JUNE 1, 2024

@5:00 PM

PLEASE RSVP TO THE OFFICE SO THEY WILL KNOW

HOW MUCH FOOD TO PREPARE!

THEY ARE REGISTERED AT AMAZON

THERE WILL ALSO BE A MONEY TREE

-SEE RENE' OR TONYA IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THAT.



Scheduled to Serve in May

Designated Elder	Bobby Sheumaker
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Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Announcements	Frank Hamby
Song Leader / Prayer	Landan Willcut
Devotional / Invitation	George Beals
Closing Prayer	Matt Willcut

Sunday, May 26, 2024

10:30 am Sermon	Bob Bauer
TBA	
6:00 pm Sermon	Rick Kenyon
A Field Guide From Jesus /John 4:31-38	

Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	Nona/Janis
Song/Pray before class	David Williams
Announcements (both)	David Anderson
Song Leader (both)	Tucker sweeney
Prayer / Bible reading	Brian Williams
Lord's Table (both)	Lou VanAllen
Closing Prayer	Jeff Bingle
Open/Close Building	Bobby Sheumaker
Attendance Cards	Peyton Willcut
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix

Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Olivia/Ingrid
Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader	Tucker Sweeney
Prayer / Bible reading	Kyle Bingle
Closing Prayer	Paul Sweeney

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Announcements	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Stacey Paulin
Devotional / Invitation	Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer	Phil Fife

How We Are Giving

May 5	\$10,999.00
May 12	\$5,852.56
May 19	\$7,331.00
Contribution Average	\$7,166.77
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

Eagle Lake VBS

June 15 @ 9 am

Since SFA is not able to have our VBS, let us support this as ours!

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Is prayer your steering wheel
Or just your spare tire?
Do you use it each day
Or just when you're stuck in the mire?

Do you only talk to God
When you're at your wits end,
Or do you enjoy talking to Him each day
as if you were talking to a friend?

Do we fly through the day
When life is going like we planned,
And forget to thank God
For His ever-guiding hand?

We may mumble some words
As if they were chanted,
And forget that prayer is such a blessing
That we often take for granted.

May we choose to take the time
No matter our location,
To stop each day
And in whatever situation.

To talk to our Lord
And share our joys and sorrows,
And learn to trust Him
With our today's and our tomorrow's.

For He wants to hear from you
Every day and every hour,
And to sustain you forever
With His omniscient power.

So when life's road gets bumpy
As it most certainly will,
You can share your trials with God
And trust Him with the steering wheel.

Thank You for Supporting These Recent Mission Campaigns!



The Costa Rica crew:
Jagie, James, Jarred,
Miguel, Brian, Tomas, and
Jose' (our main translator)



This represents a small portion of those who helped with the Lakeland campaign. Pictured are Roberson, Courtney, Kurtis, Rene', Cieara, and David. Several more SFA members & FSOP personnel helped!

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com
Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



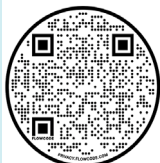
South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

"Be strong and of good courage, do not
fear nor be afraid of them, for the LORD
your God, He is the One who goes with
you. He will not leave you nor forsake
you."

Deuteronomy 31:6



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.