

# GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.4, January 22, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

## AMAZING GRACE FOR SINNERS!

**As set forth last week, in Ephesians 2:1-3 we have the first chapter biography of every Christian before they were saved; and we have the first chapter biography of every person who is still unsaved or lost—** The lost are **dead** in sin; **dedicated** to the fashions of this world; **demonized; disobedient;** and **dominated** by cravings of carnal passions; the **desires** of evil imaginations rule; and they are **DOOMED** under the just and holy wrath of God. (Ephesians 2:1-3) **Moreover, the lost/the unsaved, (1) Naturally love sin and hate God-** (Rom. 8:7); **(2) They love darkness-** (John 3:19); **(3) They will not come to Christ-** (John 5:40); **(4) They are dead in sin-** (Eph. 2:1; Col. 3:13); **(5) They will not seek God-** (Rom. 3:10-12); **(6) They love the praise of man** (John 5:42-44; 12:43); and **(7) They cannot receive the Spirit of truth** (John 14:17; 1 Cor. 2:14). [Being Divine revelation, these matters are not open for debate— no matter how uncomfortable they leave us feeling!]

**QUESTION: In light of the above condition of the lost— how can the lost be saved? Well, they must hear the gospel! They must repent and believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Yes, they must!** But read the first paragraph again— telling that crowd to repent and believe is like telling DEAD LAZARUS to ARISE from the dead! **INDEED! AND WONDER OF WONDERS, GOD QUICKENS THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD BY THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL AND HIS HOLY SPIRIT! BOTTOM LINE: Being saved is far more than** a mere human, man-initiated, decision for Christ!

**In John, chapter two— there was an occasion where MANY BELIEVED IN JESUS! GREAT! RIGHT? Not so fast: John 2:23-25!** They made a human decision. They 'decided for Christ!' Their decision was similar to millions of modern Evangelicals and Fundamentalists! **HOWEVER, TRUE SALVATION is not merely of man, but of God!** Jesus tells us that all those not planted by God will be rooted up: Matthew 15:13! In true salvation— **the 'WIND' of the Holy Spirit blows! (John 3:8) Yes! The Holy Spirit quickens the GOSPEL in hearts!**

**THE GOSPEL, which is the power of God, is proclaimed by someone who is obeying the Great Commission; and when the wind of the Spirit blows, sinners are born again!** So it is with EVERYONE who is born again! (Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-6; John 3:8)

**What follows is a GOSPEL PRESENTATION.** This one is longer than the average gospel tract. As we are more and more in a post-Christian culture, it will be even more vital to set forth the nature of God and a good understanding of the problem of sin. **After all, the first work of the Holy Spirit in the lost is to bring conviction of sin.** (John 16:8-11) MOREOVER, BY LIVING CHRISTIANLY AND BY PREACHING, TEACHING, SHARING, and DISTRIBUTING THE GOSPEL— WE PLANT! WE WATER! WE LOOK TO GOD TO GIVE THE INCREASE! Let us plant and sow extravagantly— PRAYING for the Holy Spirit of God to convict and regenerate! (1 Corinthians 3:5-9) **Tell, give the gospel to any and to everyone—** the 'WIND' may blow when you least expect Him to blow! **He is saving a numberless multitude! The saved have the honor and calling to be LABORERS together with God!**

Grace to you! James Bell (# like this **[1]** in the presentation note Scriptures... for the specific reference, see the end of the presentation!)

### **Coming To Faith in Christ, *by John Benton***

**The message of the Bible starts with God. What is God like?** God is the Creator of the World and of Every Person in it. [1] God rules his creation and everything that happens is decided by him. Because God made us, we are his property and he has rights over us. [2] Though God made all creatures, only man was made a spiritual being as well as a physical body. Originally man was made perfect in the image of God, [3] being closely related to God as his father and enjoying deep friendship with him. But the first man spoiled this by rebelling against God. By his action the whole human race has fallen under God's condemnation. [4]

**God is invisible to our eyes but sees and knows all things.** [5] Without our realizing it, God is in every place, and there is nothing we can hide from him. He even sees into our minds and knows us better than we know ourselves. **God is Holy.** [6] God's holiness means that God is good in the highest possible sense. He differs from us in his absolute moral perfection. God is pure and he hates all evil. The Bible says that God's holiness is light in which there is no darkness at all. He is therefore to be held in respect and fear.

**God is Triune.** [7] We often have to admit that we do not understand ourselves, and we ought to realize that we will never understand everything about the great God who made us. God's word, the Bible, tells us many things about God which we find above our understanding. It tells us that there is only one God, but there are three persons who are God. They are the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. Each of them is God, equal in power and glory, yet there are not three Gods but only one. **God is Love.** [8] We usually love the people who love us. But the love of God is far greater than that kind of love. Every day God shows love and does good to people who are his bitter enemies.

**What Sin is-** God, who made men, has given them a law by which to live. This law is for our own good. **It can be summed up like this:** [9] **1.** We may worship no one else but the true God. **2.** We should not have wrong thoughts about God, and should only worship him as taught in the Bible. **3.** We must not use the name of God thoughtlessly or as a swear word. **4.** We must keep Sunday as a special day set apart for God, and complete our work on the other six days of the week. **5.** We must respect and love our parents and obey them. **6.** We must not murder or have hateful thoughts about other people. **7.** We must not commit adultery, with our bodies or in our minds. **8.** We must not steal. **9.** We must not tell lies. **10.** We must not be jealous of other people's possessions.

**Sin is the breaking of this law.-**[10] There is nothing bad in the law and anything that is good does not break this law. [11] Jesus said that the two great principles on which the law is built are these: 'You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind: and love your neighbor as yourself.'[12]

**The Law and Ourselves-** Now as we read this law we realize two things. Firstly our conscience tells us that the law is right and good. But secondly we realize that none of us has kept the law and, if we are honest, we do not even want to keep it. Why? God says it is because we are sinners. Since the first man's rebellion against God, our nature is to love to do those things which break God's law. [13] **When we break God's law we insult him,** we spit in his face. God is not hard. God is not malicious. God is 'slow to anger.'[14] But our sinful hearts and the evil things we do are so serious that God's anger ought to make us afraid. God will punish all sin. [15] The fact that God is angry with men and women is the chief explanation for the present state of the world. But further, unless his anger can be turned aside, after we die we will be sent to hell and experience the wrath of God forever. [16] 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'[17]

**The Work of Jesus Christ-** All people are under God's curse because of their sin. But God has not left it there. He has done a very remarkable thing. [18] God the Son became a man. He did not cease to be what he had always been-God. But he became what he was not before-a man. At the beginning of the first century he was born in the town of Bethlehem in Israel and named Jesus. He worked most of his life as a carpenter in the town of Nazareth. [19] As a man he was not different from any other man except for one thing, he was not a sinner. He did no sin. Jesus fully kept the law of God in every detail. [20]

At about the age of thirty, three years before he was crucified at Jerusalem, Jesus began going about telling people to believe in him as the Son of God and follow him. During this time he did many miracles, so that people could see that his claim to be God the Son was true. Why did Jesus urge people to believe in him? Because God had a plan in all this to save people, to rescue people from the awful consequences of their sin. 'He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him'. [21]

**Jesus Christ in the Sinner's Place-** A substitute is a person who takes the place of another person. The very heart of the Christian gospel is that Jesus was a substitute. What do we mean? We have seen that the Bible teaches that all sin will be punished. There is no sin, small or great, which God will pass over. Every sin must be paid for. [22]

**But God has ordained two places where sin is finally punished.** One is hell. The other is the cross of Jesus Christ. Hell is where finite people suffer eternally the punishment for their own sin. The cross is where the infinite God-man, Jesus Christ, suffered in history for sins which were not his own. He suffered for the sins of others. [23]

'For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh.' [24] The pain which Jesus endured on the cross was far more than that of a violent death. He suffered the wrath of God as he bore the penalty for sin in full. [25] Jesus was the God-appointed substitute. He took the punishment due to others, so taking away their sin.

He died in the place of particular individuals. Which individuals? — **anyone who believes in him. He died in the place of all who in every age trust in him,** Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep ... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' [26]

### **Right Standing with God**

Jesus died on the cross and was taken down and buried. But three days later he was alive. God had raised him from the dead, never to die again. [27] This was God's proof that the guilt which Jesus bore for others had been fully taken away. It was God's way of showing that Jesus really had delivered people from the penalty of sin. 'God raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.' [28]

Jesus died for those who were in God's love and plan united to him from eternity past. [29] It is only, however, when a sinner trusts Christ for the forgiveness of his sins that union with Christ becomes a fact in his experience. **The Christian gospel is that God treats believing sinners as though they had personally obeyed and suffered all that Jesus obeyed and suffered, because they are united to him. God dealt with Jesus on account of what we deserved, and he deals with us on account of what Christ deserves.** [30] The believer must therefore say: "**Upon a life I did not live, Upon a death I did not die, Another's life, Another's death, I trust my whole eternity.**"

The sins of Christ's people have been paid for and forgiven, and the perfect obedience of Christ positively guarantees their acceptance with God. This is how it is that people are put right with God.

**How Can I Be saved?** 'Will I be accepted by God if I try to live a good life?'... **NO.** [31] 'Will I be saved if I promise God I'll do better?' . . . **NO. 'How can I be saved then?'** There is only one way to be saved. [32] That is by turning from your sins and

receiving Jesus Christ as your Saviour. [33] Jesus said: 'I am the way, the truth and the life: no man comes to the Father but by me.'[34] The Bible teaches us some most wonderful things, but perhaps one of the most wonderful is the fact that ordinary men and women may have their sins forgiven by God. **The door of salvation stands wide open.** The Lord Jesus Christ says: 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'[35]

A person whose sins have been forgiven by God and who therefore knows and obeys Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Friend is called a Christian. Perhaps you have some questions about becoming a Christian. In the remainder of this booklet we will consider some common questions.

**Is there a cost involved in becoming a Christian?** We cannot buy forgiveness of sins. It is a free gift of God. But if you become a Christian it means that in future Christ's will must rule your life. He will tell you to give up some things which you have done all your life. He will tell you to do other things which you have never done before. God's word is the rule of life for Christians. People may laugh at you for being a Christian. Perhaps you will find opposition from your friends or even from members of your family. All this is not easy to bear. Some of it is very hard. But it is the cost of being a friend and follower of Jesus Christ.'[36]

### **How do I know that Christ will accept me?**

'Do I have to do anything before I can ask God to save me?' **NO.** 'Is it necessary that I feel God's presence in a special way before I can ask him to save me?' **NO.** 'Am I too sinful to be saved?' **NO.** The answer to these questions and all questions like them is that Christ is ready to receive anybody. **Whoever** you are, **whatever** you have done, **whatever** you feel, **Jesus invites you, just as you are, to come to him and be saved.** [37] You do not have to come to Christ pretending that you are a better person than you really are. Remember, Jesus knows you better than you know yourself and he has said: **'Him that comes to me I will never cast out.'**[38]

In becoming a Christian a person must repent of his sin and believe and trust in Jesus Christ to save him. **What does it mean to repent of sin?** Without Christ we are all sinful people and are always doing and thinking things which make God angry. We willingly go the way of sin. To repent is to turn round and go the other way. It means to hate sin and to seek to finish with it so as to please God.[39]

**What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ?** You must believe that God sent his Son into the world for the purpose which he has declared: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'[40] Put your trust in him to save you. Depend on him alone. How do you know if you have put your trust in him? When you trust a person, you listen to him and do what he says. It is the same when we trust Jesus. [41]

**I feel too weak to repent and trust Jesus;** I would give up too easily; what can I do? None of us by ourselves has the strength and willpower to repent and believe. We are unable to do these things. We are all weak. But God is all-powerful. We must turn from our sin, but we must ask God to make us truly turn from it. We must put our trust

in Christ, but ask God to make it real trust. **It is God who enables** us to repent and believe. 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' [42]

When we become Christians we are not only forgiven, we are in an entirely new and permanent relationship to God. We are adopted into God's family. He is then our heavenly Father. And God the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. The Spirit gives us new desires to live for Jesus Christ. The Christian knows love for Christ and a feeling of debt that can never be repayed. The Almighty Holy Spirit is at work within the Christian and he is committed to bringing him safe to heaven. [43] **The Christian is able to sing:**

*"From Him who loves me now so well... What power my soul can sever... Shall life, or death, or earth, or hell? No; I am His forever! "*

### **Can anyone else speak to God for me?**

Other people can pray for you, but no one else can make you a Christian. Becoming a Christian, being saved, is something between you and Jesus Christ. It has nothing directly to do with anyone else. Are you sorry for your sin and do you want to finish with it ruling your life? Do you want to be saved from the judgment to come? Do you want to know Christ as your Friend and Lord? **Then God's word to you is:**

'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'[44]

You should find a place where you can be alone, and there seek God in prayer.

### **What shall I say when I pray?**

God is not interested in fine words or speeches. But he will listen to anyone who is sincerely wanting to speak to him, whatever words are used. **As you pray you should:**

**Confess** your sins to God. **Confess** that these sins are evil in God's sight and you deserve to be sent to hell for them. **Tell** God that you have no power to save yourself. **Ask** the Lord Jesus to help you repent and believe. **Ask** him to save you. **Tell** Jesus that you want him as the Lord of your life. Then trust God to hear and answer your prayers because of Jesus Christ, according to his promises in the Bible.

**'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'**[45]

Jesus spoke of a man praying for forgiveness of sin: 'the tax-collector standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner.** I tell you, this man went down to his house right with God.'[46]

**What should I do next?** There are two important things you should do.

**Firstly**, if you do not have a Bible you must get one and begin to read it. You could start by reading John's Gospel. [47] God is the author of the whole Bible. The Lord Jesus always speaks to his people as they read it.

**Secondly**, as soon as possible, you must go and tell a Christian friend what you have done. If you have no friends who are Christians you should try to find a church which believes the Bible and tell people there. It is very important that you find Christian friends as soon as possible. You will recognize them because they love Christ and trust him, and obey his word, the Bible.

**'Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is no other.'**[48]

VERSES 1. Genesis 1:1 ; Colossians 1:16. 2. Psalm 115:3; Proverbs 16:33; Romans 9:19-21. 3. Genesis 1:26. 4. Genesis 3:11-12; Romans 5:18. 5. Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 4:13. 6. Isaiah 6:3; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 1:5. 7. Matthew 28:19; John 5:18; Acts 5:3-4. 8. Matthew 5:45 ; John 3:16. 9. Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:21-32. 10. 1 John 3:4. 11. Romans 7:12. 12. Luke 10:27-28; Mark 12:30-31. 13. Romans 3:23; Romans 3:10-12; Ecclesiastes 7:20. 14. Psalm 103:8. 15. Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 7:11; Romans 1:18. 16. Matthew 25:3 1-46; Revelation 20:11-15. 1-15. 17. Matthew 10:28. 18. Ephesians, 2:4 19. John 1:1-14; 1 Timothy 3:16. 20. Romans 8:3; 1 Peter 2:22. 21. John 3:36. 22. Romans 6:23; Genesis 18:25; Romans 12:19. 23. Mark 9:43-48; Isaiah 53:4-12; 1 John 4:10. 24. 1 Peter 3:18. 25. Matthew 27:46. 26. John 10:11-27; Romans 8:28-32. 27. John 20:1-23; Acts 2:24-32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. 28. 1 Peter 1:21. 29. Ephesians 1:3-14. 30. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9. 31. Isaiah 64:6. 32. Acts 4:12. 33. Acts 16:31. 34. John 14:6. 35. Matthew 11:28. 36. Luke 14:25-35. 37. Acts 17:30; 1 John 3:23. 38. John 6:37. 39. Ezekiel 14:6; Acts 26:20. 40. John 3:16. 41. Acts 15:11; 2 Timothy 1:12. 42. Ephesians 2:8. 43. Romans 8:14-17; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Philippians 2:12-13; Philippians 1:6. 44. Isaiah 55:6-7. 45. Romans 10:13; Psalm 34:6; Acts 2:21; Hebrews 10:23; John 5:24. 46. Luke 18:13-14. 47. John 20:31. 48. Isaiah 45:22  
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**Note: Recommendation:** Purchase at least 13 copies from Amazon, get free shipping: <http://www.amazon.com/Coming-Faith-Christ-John-Benton/dp/085151252>

**OPTION:** This is a long time trusted source: <http://www.cvbbbs.com/> {Under 'search' type in TITLE, then **Coming to Faith in Christ**} ... it should take you right to it!

**COMING TO FAITH IN CHRIST!** **1.** Give a copy to someone who will promise to read it! **2.** Set up a meeting and 'go through it' together, etc. **3.** Have others praying. **4.** Take a partner with you! **5. AN APPROACH:** "If I loan this to you— will you promise to read it? I WOULD LOVE TO KNOW what you think of it!" "Could a friend and I set up a time to discuss this with you?" **[As stated earlier:** We are more and more in a post-Christian culture. It is more vital than ever to set forth the nature of God and a good understanding of the problem of sin— for that reason I really like to 'walk through' the **Coming to Faith in Christ** gospel presentation with folks.] **Near the end of the booklet under 'What I should do next'— I believe the author should have had a number THREE—** giving Scriptures about following Christ in believer's baptism! Thus, I supplement with tracts from the Reapers: **Life's Greatest**

**Discovery** and/or their tract on baptism: <http://www.thereapers.com> . I also like to use the 'visuals' in the Life's Greatest Discovery tract.

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!**

**1. Ladies Bible Study— 'LORD, HEAL MY HURTS!'— Tuesdays @ 10:30AM! Call the church — 615-452-5951**

**2. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! / YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Adam and Bethany's home.**

**3. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH VISITATION**

**4. EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am: Men's Fellowship and Bible Study**

### **Sunday Schedule for January 27, 2013**

**1. 9:30am- Sunday School**

**2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church**

**3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**

**4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**