

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.31, July 30, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."*** NOTE: This week's Newsletter is edited (Nothing changed, shortened for space, bold added) from a BLOG, ***Do Not Be Surprised***, by E. Benz

*The FIRST article is written by Pastor Patrick Slyman of [Pigeon Cove Chapel](#) in Rockport, MA. Pastor Slyman submitted the following to **The Gloucester Times**. He wrote in response to an incident that occurred earlier... when the mayor of Gloucester raised the rainbow flag to fly under the American flag in the city square. More information can be found in the Gloucester Times article "[Talk of the Times: Rainbow flag enhances city's 'welcoming' gateway.](#)"*

{PLEASE read **1 Chronicles 12:32!** These **VERY IMPORTANT** articles help us **UNDERSTAND** the times! Let us to give careful, prayerful reading and reflection!
Grace to all! James Bell}

Shaking Your Fist in the Face of God

The rainbow was given by God as a sign of His mercy upon sinful man. It signified a divine promise that “all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there be again a flood to destroy the earth” ([Genesis 9:11](#)). **The rainbow signifies the grace and mercy of a holy God.**

Yet, in light of God’s mercy and grace, one must not forget that God is holy and hates sin with a passion. He abhors sin. In fact, it was because of sin that God destroyed the human race (save Noah and his family) with the flood in the first place. His holy anger is stated by God Himself in these words, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth” ([Genesis 6:7](#)). Why? Because “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” ([Genesis 6:5](#)). **Wickedness is**

what fills the heart of man — wickedness that has infected all parts of our being, continually — the very wickedness that God hates.

Fast forward to June 1, 2013 when Gloucester Mayor Carolyn Kirk **raised the very symbol of holy God’s mercy and grace at the Gloucester rotary— a symbol that has been altered from its original meaning to one that exalts the very thing that God hates: sin** ([Romans 1:26-27](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9](#); [1 Timothy 1:9-10](#); [Jude 1:7](#)).

It is frightening to think, but on June 1 Mayor Kirk (representing the town of Gloucester) **actually shook her fist in the face of God**— supposing that God’s hatred of sin has dissipated, presuming that God’s grace will always be upon this town, thinking that God’s hatred against sin has changed. **In effect, it was a mocking of the holiness of God** — taking the very symbol of His grace and flying it proudly in the exaltation of sin — the very reason why God judged the earth previously.

There are some things one never wants to do: stir a hornet’s nest, wake a sleeping bear, etc. Yet infinitely more serious than those—one should never seek to rouse the holy anger of God. Yet, that is what happened just a few weeks ago. The very flag that would have flown high and proud in Sodom was raised in Gloucester. And what was the effect on Sodom? Fire (not water— God will always keep His promise of never destroying the world with water again!) rained down in destruction and judgment ([Genesis 19:24](#)).

Many will say that sin is sin, that no sin is worse than another sin. Well, according to the Bible, that is not true. Sexual sin is the product of a mind turned over to “degrading passions,” a mind abandoned by God ([Romans 1:26](#)).

Is there forgiveness for sexual sin? Absolutely— there is forgiveness of all sin! Jesus Christ was sent to save sinners from their sins ([Matthew 1:21](#)). He was sent to take upon Himself the sins of all who would believe in Him as Lord and Savior and suffer the full wrath of God’s holy judgment ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). God has never and will never wink at sin. **Sin has and will always demand payment, and that payment will either be experienced by the sinner or experienced by the perfect and righteous Jesus Christ.**

My plea for Cape Ann is to turn to Jesus as Lord and Savior. Confess the wickedness that infects your being, turn to the holy and merciful God for salvation through His resurrected Son. Do not presume on God's grace any longer. **Do not suppose that His anger against sin has burned out. Peter's words ring true today as ever,**

“Mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying...‘For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. **But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**” (2 Peter 3:3-7)

Is there hope? Yes. As Peter continues, “The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

<http://www.donotbesurprised.com/2013/06/guest-post-shaking-your-fist-in-face-of.html>

The Intolerance of the Tolerant: Massachusetts Pastor Receives Angry Backlash for Article Calling Homosexuality Sin, by E. Benz

Intolerance is not tolerated. Unless, of course, that intolerance is aimed at those who submit to the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the authority of Him and His Word over all things. **Yes, intolerance is the greatest sin in the eyes of men . . . unless it is aimed at Christians.**

It epitomizes irony, really, to watch the reaction of those who cry, "Tolerance! Peace! Love! Unity!" when they are faced with the truth about sin, condemnation and the wrath of a holy God. The response is stunningly unsurprising, but should not go unnoticed by Christians.

The latest example of this is taking place in New England. It is not making the national headlines, but it is a story to be told nonetheless. It was not too long ago that *Do Not*

Be Surprised ran a guest post by Pastor Patrick Slyman of [Pigeon Cove Chapel](#) in Rockport, MA. The post, entitled "[Shaking Your Fist in the Face of God](#)," was also to run in *The Gloucester Times*, a local newspaper. It finally did run in the *Times* on July 3, and the response has been predictable but noteworthy... **Even though Slyman beautifully shared the truth of the Gospel in his article, his words were not welcomed by some citizens of this city— a city that boasts of its supposedly warm, "welcoming gateway."**

Numerous letters-to-the-editor have been written and published by *The Gloucester Times* and, quite predictably, most of them were not written in support of Pastor Slyman.

Times editor Ray Lamont shared his explanation for running the "offensive" column in the editorial, "[Why did my newspaper do that? The pastor's fiery column.](#)" **He writes:**

In short, the column railed not only against Gloucester's flying of the Rainbow flag during the month of June — recognized across the nation as "Pride Month" — but harshly decried all gay men and women as "sinners" for engaging in their lifestyle, and condemned the city and Mayor Carolyn Kirk, whom he said was basically "shaking her fist in the face of God" for allowing the flag to be flown in the first place.

Now, do I agree with those beliefs? Not for a second. And did it fit the usual mold of our regular Midweek Musings columns? Not in the least. Did I expect it would be seen as offensive to many readers — and to other members of the clergy, who have submitted a response of their own on this same page today? Yes. So you may well ask — as some have — why would we run the column? Or as we ask here each week, why would your community's newspaper do that?

Because, while I recognized how volatile Pastor Slyman's column would be, I also recognized he has every right to express his views. . . . For what it's worth, I also think it's worth noting that, as pastor of Pigeon Cove Chapel, his hard-line views are in fact in line with those of some, if not all, of those who are part of the chapel's regular congregation.

And in that vein, there's something to be said for reminding readers that Rev. Slyman's staunch anti-gay views are not somehow limited to people of other far-flung religions or to other parts of the country, but are very much alive and well in some segments of the population here. . . . Rev. Slyman's column was more challenging -

and, some would say, offensive — than most, but it was indeed a column that readers needed to see. As always, let me know what you think.

Lamont can be commended for publishing Slyman's column, particularly because it meant that biblical truth was shared with everyone who read the article. It is rather unfortunate that Lamont's explanation and justification for doing so, however, was tainted with his own innuendos... It is clear simply from the first and second paragraphs posted above of Lamont's response that he does not understand the sinful nature of all men, hetero- and homosexual alike. **And when he states, And in that vein, there's something to be said for reminding readers that Rev. Slyman's staunch anti-gay views are not somehow limited to people of other far-flung religions or to other parts of the country, but are very much alive and well in some segments of the population here. -- His subtle implications are enough to make one mildly uneasy.**

Slyman's words apparently incited fellow clergy members of his community, as thirteen of them banded together to write their own response to Slyman's opinion, which they say "wrongly spread hate in the name of God."

We, as members of the Cape Ann clergy, are writing in response to the Midweek Musings column by Rev. Patrick Slyman (the Times, Wednesday, July 3) — a column with which we take great exception. In this country, we enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. These are vital rights and we believe our democracy is better for them. **However, when these rights are used to hurt people and to spread hate in the name of God, we as clergy are called to respond.**

The first book of the Bible begins with the creation of the world. It is written that humankind is made in the image of God. No one is excluded from this assertion. We are all made in the image of the holy, the sacred, the divine, to create and to sustain love. The rainbow is the symbol of God's covenant with humanity, and has long been associated with human rights.

It is a sign of inclusivity and kindness to all peoples and to all kinds of relationships. Relationships based on mutual respect and love are the building blocks to good, creative and safe communities. Jesus' own life and ministry bespoke love and inclusion, not condemnation. We love because God first loved us. May our community continue to reach out to everyone, welcoming, appreciating and serving all of God's

beloved people. May God's grace, mercy and peace reign within and among us all, . . .
(Source)

It really is unfortunate that these clergymen (and women) do not understand the Bible about which they speak. Yes, men were made in the image of God ([Gen 1:26](#)), but it cannot be forgotten that man fell into sin, disobeying the very God that created him (Gen 3). Henceforth all men and women are born as sinners ([Rom 3:9-18, 23; 5:12](#)). Why is it so offensive to simply proclaim this truth? **The clergy members here declare that the rainbow "is a sign of inclusivity and kindness to all peoples and to all kinds of relationships" yet here is what God says the covenant of the rainbow means:**

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."([Genesis 9:8-17](#))

Just as Slyman noted in his original article, the rainbow "signifies the grace and mercy of a holy God" yet it was because of sin that God destroyed humanity with the flood in the first place.

And just because God is gracious and merciful does not mean that He is not just, and He will once again judge men and destroy the earth, this time by fire ([2 Pet 3:7](#)). So do not denigrate God and turn Him into a weak and wimpy deity who

will from now on simply wink at sin. Oh no, our Lord hates sin and He judges it.

These thirteen religious leaders also declare in their response that, "Jesus' own life and ministry bespoke love and inclusion, not condemnation." Have they not read passages such as [Matthew 7:21-23](#), [8:11-12](#) or [Matthew 25:31-46](#)? Have they not read the Gospels at all? Do their Bibles include the book of Revelation? Their words seem to indicate that these men and women have not met the Jesus of the Bible.

There were numerous responses to Pastor Slyman's article written by readers of the *Times*. Many not only railed against Slyman, but also mocked God's Word. Some of them acknowledged Slyman's right to his opinion and praised the paper for publishing it, but most of these same people saw fit to condemn Slyman's views. **This of course is their prerogative, but how interesting it is that these same individuals who rally around a cry for tolerance seem to forget the meaning of the word when confronted with a view with which they disagree.**

Here is some of the feedback Pastor Slyman has received via letters-to-the-editor:

In [his article], he uses small snippets from the Bible to promote ill will towards gays and lesbians. . . . Rev. Slyman writes to encourage us to think of gays and lesbians as sinners. When some community leaders speak up to promote discrimination, we need other leaders to step up to encourage fair treatment. ([Source](#))

This offers an unfortunate misrepresentation of the original piece, yet it is representative of the majority of the letters (though some were far more volatile). Slyman's article neither promoted "ill will towards gays and lesbians" nor "discrimination."

It is not discriminatory to call sin what it is: sin, and all men and women are sinners.

In a [letter](#) that begins by applauding the paper for publishing the article, the same writer likens Slyman's use of the Bible to Osama bin Laden's followers' interpretation of the Koran to justify war. This person also surreptitiously labels Slyman "and his followers" as religious extremists. This theme of likening Slyman and those who would agree with him (i.e., Christians) to "religious extremists" was quite popular. Another person wrote:

When I read your "Midweek Musings," . . . your tone, and even your very words, seemed oddly familiar. I've heard them before. But where? Then it struck me: I've heard such words from the leaders of the Taliban. I've heard such words spoken from fundamentalist pulpits in Tehran and Baghdad. I've heard such words from those who insist upon the infallibility of the Koran. ([Source](#))

These comments drip with irony, hypocrisy and dramatization. Such words as "Iran-like theocracy," "religious zealots," "bigotry," and "racism" were tossed about freely in the various letters that were submitted. One person even had the audacity to say, "I severely doubt that the Times would give such credence to Nazi sympathizers or jihadists, so why differentiate? Hate is hate."

It seems apparent that, with the subject of homosexuality especially, many in this country and even in the world simply are wearing blinders. If a person deems homosexuality to be sin (as does the Bible), the immediate response is: hate.

"You must hate gay people." "You're not loving." Or, as one angry *Times* reader stated, "A message of doom is not a message of love."

Yet, in truth, a message of the reality of sin *is* a message of love.

The summation of the preaching ministry of Christ can be found in [Matthew 4:17](#): **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** Sinners are called to repent of their sin and turn to Christ, trusting in Him alone for salvation.

While it may be painful to expose sin, it is necessary so that the sinner may see the great glory of the Savior, and his immense need for that same Savior. You, homosexual, are a sinner. You, heterosexual, are a sinner.

Jesus Christ, the God-man, humbled Himself and came to earth, lived a sinless life, perfectly keeping every jot and tittle of God's law— a thing neither you nor I can do. He was beaten, spit upon, mocked, scourged and crucified— the perfect, spotless, blameless sacrifice for sin.

He bore the wrath of God upon that tree— the wrath of God that was punishment for every sin of every sinner who would ever believe upon Him. He was buried and three days later He rose from the dead— proof that God had accepted His sacrifice and that sinners who would repent and trust in Christ alone would be saved from God's wrath and condemnation.

Dear sinner, is that not good news? Is this not a God whom you wish to serve and obey? A God who owed man nothing yet offered him everything is a good God indeed. And yet we spit upon Him still. We mock Him. We beat and scourge Him. In our unrighteousness, we suppress the truth of His Word ([Rom 1:18](#)). We hate that His Word searches the heart ([Luke 16:15](#)) and cuts to the marrow ([Heb 4:12](#)). We hate that God does not delight in our sin as we do. In our natural, fallen state, we hate God.

Perhaps that is the ultimate irony of the reaction to Pastor Slyman's article: that a man seeking to proclaim the truth of God would be accused of hate by those who hate God. **Such a reaction does not surprise because our Lord warned us of such behavior:**

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. **But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.** ([John 15:18-21](#))

Those who do not know God hate Him. Those who define themselves by love, tolerance and peace often are those living in staunch rebellion to the Lord. And while this does not surprise the Christian, it can grieve him. Most of all, however, let it motivate him and encourage him to continue to proclaim the gospel of salvation as found in Christ alone.

As persecution progresses beyond mere angry words, let the Christian stand firmly and boldly upon the Word of God and the promises contained therein.

Not only will God save all those whom He has chosen, but He will ensure that all of those are brought to full and final glory ([Jude 24](#)).

Dear Christian, you have nothing to fear.

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. ([Matthew 10:28-33](#))

<http://www.donotbesurprised.com/2013/07/the-intolerance-of-tolerant.html>

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES for August!

LADIES SUMMER BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

August 15 @ 10am— Cindy Bell teaching!

EVERY Saturday @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study

SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST 4, 11, 18, 25

- 1. 9:30am- Sunday School**
- 2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church**
- 3. Noon Fellowship Meal {Covered Dish}**
- 4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

NOTE: LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE— AUGUST 18 @ 1:00PM

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!

Way back in the sixteenth century, the great reformer, Martin Luther said: "I am much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. **Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.**"

Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents as to their critical roll.

QUESTION: Is it wise for a child to spend 7-8 hours per day, 180 days a year for 12 or more years in a school system that does not support Christian family and local church values?

REALITY— there are growing problems with drugs, immorality, disrespect of authority, and lack of discipline in America. Typical schools teach the godless theory of evolution. Books and materials teaching alternative sexual lifestyles are being required.

In contrast, at Southside Christian School we proclaim that **Jesus Christ and His wisdom** are central and the best preparation for the real world. **SCS offers** a sound academic education which is integrated with the Word of God.

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>

Please call us at: 615-452-5951