

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.33, August 13, 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."***

[IF WE YIELD TO THE CONVICTING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; IF WE GIVE FAITH/OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH SET FORTH IN THESE PAGES— THERE WILL BE A POWERFUL TRANSFORMING WORK OF GOD IN OUR MIDST!]

LET US MAKE CHRIST-HONORING RESPONSES!

Let us YIELD to God so that there will be a manifesting and a magnifying of the spirit of Christ in and through Christ's local assembly called Southside:

The Christ-like spirit of the church is a most tangible thing. When we gather for services you can know it, see it, and hear it; and most importantly **each one of us makes it happen.** This spirit, of which we speak, is the product of the Holy Spirit— the inner spirit of our lives shining through smiles, greetings, conversations, conduct, and the kind courtesy of our greeting one another. There is the warm handclasp of friendly interest. There is the heartfelt participating in a Sunday School Class or in a Prayer Service or in a Worship Service. **There is, in the Worship Service, the centering of our attention upon our primary business of the hour, the worship of God—** as we gather to give HIM praise, thanksgiving, adoration, and honor; and as we gather to give Him ourselves, our gifts, talents, and offerings; and as we gather to give united

hearts crying out. **“Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done; Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory! Amen!”** MOREOVER, let us be those who gather to sit at HIS FEET and to receive HIS WORD; and those who commit ourselves to heed HIS Word; as well as those who go forth to TELL THE **GOOD NEWS OF JESUS!** [To the degree that these things are NOT TRUE of us— let us REPENT, immediately!]

MOREOVER, WHEN WE GATHER, let us give OPEN, PUBLIC testimony to the wonderful acts of God! In fact, PLEASE, do not merely go to or attend church this LORD'S DAY! Instead, do something very Biblical and Christian: Assemble with the saints and as you do FUNCTION as a living member of the Body of Christ! Gather to worship God and involve yourself in the building up of fellow saints! And as you do — **just obey the LORD and TESTIFY of what God has done for your soul!**

- **Psalm 22:22,25**— I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: **in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee. My praise shall be of Thee IN the great congregation:** I will pay my vows BEFORE THEM that fear Him.
- **Psalm 35:18**— I will give Thee thanks **IN the great congregation:** I will praise Thee AMONG much people.
- **Psalm 66:16**— Come *and* hear, all you who fear God, And ***I will declare what He has done for my soul.***

THERE WILL BE A POWERFUL IMPACT FROM OPENLY SHARING ONE WITH ANOTHER— before Sunday School, in Sunday School, between Sunday School and the Worship hour, during and after worship, during lunch and in the early afternoon service: **“This week... or today... or from Daily Bible reading, or from the Sunday School lesson or from the preached Word of God— “the Holy Spirit made alive the Word of God to me today... **convicting me of** _____; **encouraging me in** _____; **instructing me in** _____; **rebuking/correcting me in** _____; OR: HE brought me **from spiritual death to life in Christ!**”**

POWERFUL REALITY: When we READ/STUDY the Word of God and/or when we participate in a group Bible Study and/or when we sit under the sound of the preaching of the Word of God— we should be asking ourselves questions like—

- Is there a sin to confess? Are there promises to claim? Are there commands of God to obey? Are there examples to follow? Is there error to avoid? Is there truth to believe? Is there PRAISE and THANKSGIVING to give to God?

THEN, LET US FOLLOW UP SUCH TIMES BY TESTIFYING in the midst of the Congregation: Psalm 35:18— I will give thee thanks **in the great congregation:** I will praise thee among much people. **Psalm 66:16—** Come *and* hear, all you who fear God, *and I will declare what He has done for my soul.*

THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY CALLED SOUTHSIDE!

OUR LOCAL CHURCH is never 'they and them'... but 'we, us, or our! Indeed, the **SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH** is seen as we **NEVER SPEAK OF THE CHURCH** as "they"— it is always "we" or "us" or "our." When there are times when the spirit of the church is not high and fine, we never blame "they" or "them"— rather, we search our own hearts. Moreover, we stand ready to repent of our own failures; and ready to contribute needed forgiveness, godliness, purity, joy, faith, hope and love. We stand eager and ready to help and serve.

We refuse to think evil or speak evil or to listen to evil about our brothers and sisters. Moreover, we are not merely those who are willing to serve... if all goes according to our personal liking; rather, we are the LORD'S SERVANTS and will be found at our duty posts in all the seasons of life.

Continuing revelations of The Spirit of the Church at Southside are seen as we all refuse to be side-tracked from **powerful everyday ways that God delights to use us to build up His Kingdom:**

1. I CAN AND WILL BE FOUND PRAYING for the rule and reign of God in and through us in our individual lives, in our homes, at our work places and especially in the midst of our church family.

2. I CAN AND WILL BE FOUND 'talking up' my brothers and sisters and not talking them down. I refuse to do satan's work of fault-finding, accusing, back-biting, slandering, tale bearing, or discord sowing. RATHER, I choose to do Christ's work of loving, blessing, praying, and doing good. I choose to speak words of patience and kindness and encouragement. If I see a brother or sister overtaken in a fault, I choose to go to them privately and in humility to seek to be Christ's agent of healing. (Galatians 6:1) FURTHERMORE,

I choose to speak well of the Body of Christ called Southside. There is so much to give thanks for as we look at the various works of God's grace in the midst of and through the saints at Southside. **Because it is a glorious testimony to my Savior, the LORD JESUS CHRIST,** I will speak well of the local church to which He has joined me. Nothing of the work Christ that is yet to be accomplished or completed in the Body at Southside is ever godly grounds to deny or minimize the amazing works of grace already done and being done.

I choose NOT to persecute JESUS! I remember that the words and attitudes I manifest toward my brothers and sisters reveal words and attitudes I am, in fact, manifesting toward Jesus! I may sing, preach, testify loudly, and have a reputation of being a great spokesperson for Jesus— but what I say and do toward another Christian reveals the reality of what I have just said and done to Jesus! (Matthew 25:34-46) When any of us participate in satan's work of back-biting, slandering, tale bearing, discord sowing, and/or evil speaking against another Christian or against a local Bible-believing church or against our spouse— we are, in fact, PERSECUTING JESUS! (Matthew 25:41-46; Acts 9:4-5)

3. I CAN AND WILL BE FOUND READY, TRUE AND FAITHFUL so that I am a contributing, building up member of the Body of Christ at Southside. I choose to give full proof of my own faith in and love for JESUS by my faithful contributions to the building up of the Body of Christ at Southside. In the midst of the crookedness of this present world, I will walk uprightly in all my dealings with both saints and sinners. (Philippians 2:14-16)

In the local body of Southside, I may be a "little toe" or an "arm" or an "ear" or "a hand".... or I may not feel sure as to what my gifts are.

\

However, I know that we are all built up by the streams of grace that God has ordained to flow through one to another, (Ephesians 4: 11-16; 1 Corinthians 12). **Thus, I embrace all of the many "One To Another" commands of my LORD, on behalf of my brothers and sisters:** *You, my brothers, were called to be free but do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command; "Love your neighbor as yourself. (Galatians 5:13 & 14)*

Love one another: John 13:34-35; 5:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; John 3:11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11, 12:2; II John 1:5 and 1 Peter 1:22!

We are to interact with care: Have fellowship one with another (1 John 1:17) Forgive one another (Eph. 3:13, 4:32 & Col. 3:13) Greet one another with a holy kiss - or an embrace in some cultures (Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12 & I Peter 5:14) Wait for one another to break bread (1 Cor. 11:33) Bear one another's sufferings (1 Cor. 12:26)

We are to serve one another: Serve one another with the gifts each person has received (1 Peter 4:10) Serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13) Be kind to one another (1Thess. 5:15) Care for one another (1 Cor 12:25) Bear the burdens for one another (Gal. 6:2) Wash each other's feet or humbly serve one another (John 13:14) Work with one another (1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1) **We are to teach one another:** Teach one another (Col. 3:16) Instruct one another (Rom. 5:14) **We are to encourage one another:** Encourage one another (Col 3:16; Heb 10:25) Exhort one another (Heb. 3:13) Speak the truth to one another (Eph 4:25) Lay down our lives one for another (I John 3:16) Spur one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24)

We are to edify one another: Edify (strengthen, build up) one another (I Thess. 4:18 & 5:1, 11) Edify one another (I Cor. 14:26) **We are to give spiritual care:** Confess our sins one to another (James 5:16) Pray for one another (James 5:16)

To cultivate unity and to act with humility: Honor one another (Rom. 12:10) Be of one mind one with another (II Cor. 13:11; Rom. 12:16, 15:5) Do not criticize one another (James 4:11; 5:9) Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21) Be clothed with humility toward one another (I Pe 5:5)

We are to live in harmony: Have patience one with another (Eph. 4:2) Live in peace one with another (Matt. 9:50) Receive one another with hospitality (Rom. 15:7; I Peter 4:9) Glorify God together, (Rom. 15:6).

We were never meant to walk the road of Christian living alone. We need each other!

4. I WILL CHOOSE TO OPEN MY EYES TO THE HARVEST, for souls are perishing. Some time ago, 10,000 active Christians were asked this question:

\

"Who or what was responsible for your coming to Christ and the church you attend?" Here is how they replied:

2%- I had a special need. **4%-** I just decided to. **6%-** I liked the pastor.

½ of 1%- I attended a revival service.

******78%-** A friend or relative influenced and invited me.

9½%- All other reasons.

Therefore, let us each and everyone go out into our daily world and live holy and humbly, and live lovingly and forgivingly, and live to give kindness and hope, and live to be a blessing to others

THUS, CREATING ENTRANCE WAYS so as to be empowered to influence and invite others to Christ and to the local assembly where God has us worshipping.

For it is the will of God that when we bring folks to our Sunday School classes and Worship Services **that they will be able to experience, to see the GOSPEL we have been telling them about!**

5. I CAN AND WILL CHOOSE TO LIVE BY THE WORD OF GOD:

"For feelings come and feelings go, And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God; Naught else is worth believing.
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever:
For, though all things shall pass away,
HIS WORD shall stand forever!" (Martin Luther)

With THANKSGIVING TO GOD for all the saints in Christ at Southside!

James Bell