

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No.9, March 4, 2014 / 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: Time change: Spring Clocks forward ONE HOUR the evening of 3/8!******

O, COME LET US WORSHIP THE ONE, THE TRUE, AND LIVING GOD!

WORSHIP is not just an underlying theme— **WORSHIP is the ultimate issue of life.** Where we spend eternity is totally dependent upon **who we have, in reality, worshipped** while here on earth! Why is this statement true? Because the NEW BIRTH transforms us into true worshippers of the true and living God!

I. FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES, THOUGHTS AS TO DEFINING WORSHIP!

1. Worship is the overflow of a grateful heart to God for His greatness and goodness. **2. Worship is** the occupation of the heart— not with needs or blessings, but with GOD HIMSELF. **3. WORSHIP IS THE UPRISING OF A HEART THAT KNOWS** (1) God the Father as the Great Giver; (2) God the Son as the Great Shepherd; (3) and God the Holy Spirit as the Indwelling resident in and President over our daily lives. **4. WORSHIP is** adoring contemplation of God Himself, as He has revealed Himself in Christ and in the Word of God. **5. ONE OF THE WORDS translated 'Worship'** literally means, "To reverence, to kiss the hand." The English word "Worship" means Worth-Ship— the emphasis is on the worthiness of

the one worshipped. In other words— Praise and Obedience are given to God because of WHO HE IS and because of His great acts of Creation and Redemption.

OBVIOUSLY our conception of God will greatly influence the nature of our worship. **QUESTION:** Is God a mere Grandfather type? Bellhop? Policeman? OR is He our Holy, Almighty and loving Father? **In order to have a right conception of God,** it is vital that we behold in the Holy Word of God the continual, grand revelations of God. (Note: Books by A.W. Tozer, Arthur Pink, and J.I. Packer are very helpful in the study of the Attributes of God! Such a study will motivate worship!)

II. In TRUE WORSHIP There is Genuine Celebration of the Great Triune God Himself!

God is the focus, not man. **When we gather as a Church Family to worship God,** it means that we have gathered to ascribe worth to God, to prostrate ourselves before God in loving submission, to offer unto Him honor, praise and adoration. We gather to recognize God's glory, greatness, power, majesty and rule. And it means that we offer ourselves as His servants.

IT'S NOT ABOUT US— IT IS ALL ABOUT HIM! It's not about our TASTES, our likes, and/or dislikes. It's not about, "I did not get fed, I did not like the music, or I did not like the style!" RATHER, GENUINE WORSHIP IS ALL ABOUT **WHAT DID I GIVE UNTO GOD?** Did God receive my whole hearted praise, adoration? Did He receive from me offerings of repentance, submission, and fresh obedience? **A Christian worship service is not an entertainment event.** A Biblically based worship service is not designed to attract crowds, but an opportunity for saints of God in Christ to worship God in spirit and in truth.

When God is our focus in genuine worship, we never have the "IF ONLY" syndrome. Many folk live in a world of the "IF ONLY!" IF ONLY our place of worship was more beautiful— I could really worship. **IF ONLY** we had a certain style of music and with certain instruments— I COULD REALLY WORSHIP. **IF ONLY** the worship here was POLISHED and PROFESSIONAL— like some of those TV ministries— I COULD REALLY WORSHIP... IF ONLY, IF ONLY, IF ONLY! **HOWEVER, true worship is not an 'ART FORM' condition. RATHER, TRUE WORSHIP IS A MATTER OF THE HEART!** (Deut. 6:6; Prov. 4:23; Romans 10:10; Heb. 10:22; Matt.

22:37) IF GOD DOES NOT HAVE OUR HEART— THEN OUR WORSHIP IS VAIN.

IDOL WORSHIP is not only the worship of the wrong god, but also the worship of the true God, the wrong way! EXAMPLE: This worship scene was a case of the RIGHT God but the WRONG kind of worship: Isaiah 1:1-17— these folk had heart failure toward God. But they still ‘DID CHURCH’... In fact, they were very expressive in their ‘church’ services. **Many of us would have walked in and said, “WOW! These folk really know how to worship!”** It looked good. It sounded good. They had the crowds. They had excitement. **THERE WAS ONLY ONE PROBLEM— GOD HATED AND TOTALLY REJECTED THEIR WORSHIP! O TO BE SURE,** they really put great energy and effort into their worship services! However, it was all a vain show because GOD DID NOT HAVE THEIR HEARTS! **Their worship and their living were not in harmony and so, God HATED their worship! Yet, amazingly, God pleads—vs. 18; God invites—vs. 19; God warns—vs. 20. And God has not changed!**

Here is a DEADLY REALITY:

The more we dislike and reject genuine worship, the more energy we will spend seeking to create and/or to find EXCITING worship experiences as substitutes! This is not only plain in Isaiah 1:1-17; it is also obvious when Israel rejected God and the leadership of Moses. **They found a compromising preacher, (Aaron), and proceeded in a CREATIVE worship service that pleased the crowds immensely!** Of course, God hated it and let them know in no uncertain terms! **(See Exodus 32) And GOD has not changed... and judgment day is approaching!**

In the true worship of God a congregational worship service is the overflow of saints who have been worshipping God all week, gathering for GRAND CELEBRATION!

III. MAJOR PROBLEM:

Most folk think of ‘worship’ only as what is done during a Sunday ‘Worship Service!’ Many think of ‘worship’ only as relating to MUSIC! HOWEVER, as stated earlier: IN TRUE WORSHIP, **Praise and Obedience** are given to God because of WHO HE IS and because of His great acts of Creation and Redemption.” True worship to God **is done in daily life** as we respond to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit **with TWO grand notes of worship: 1. Amen— so be it in my life, O LORD! 2. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

As with Jesus, so with us— satan is ever seeking worship! And satan has the power to give you/us some grand temporal gifts! (Matt. 4:9) We must have our hearts set in daily life to make the confession of Jesus: ***“Get thee hence, satan; for it is written, Thou shalt WORSHIP the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” (Matt. 4:10)*** That’s the ‘AMEN’ of genuine worship!

In other words, life tumbles in with trials, temptations, testing, pressures, persecutions, heartaches, or whatever! **GENUINE WORSHIP is responding in faith obedience to the clear and pure Word of God.** MAYBE, the temptation is to be bitter about something; or maybe the temptation is to lust or to fornicate— BUT GOD SAYS: Forgive the offender. Flee the fornication. **Genuine worship is when we say, ‘AMEN, SO BE IT LORD, I embrace thy will, I surrender, submit, yield and bow to Thee— I choose to forgive. I FLEE! etc.’** Without those ‘AMEN’ responses, we are just playing church. GOD SPEAKS. WE BOW and OBEY, speaking from our hearts, ***“Be it unto me according to Thy Word!”*** **That’s the ‘Amen’ of genuine worship.**

When daily life worshippers of God show up for worship service celebrations with fellow saints— **No one has to prime the worship pump!**

When we are true worshippers of God in daily life— GENUINE EXCITEMENT, THE JOY OF THE LORD, AWESOME PRAISE and FRESH FAITH/OBEDIENCE WILL TEND TO EXPLODE in the congregational Worship Celebration services!

If we reject this way, then we can continue to resort to **professional manipulators** who will stand before congregations with charismatic personalities, with high powered electronics bringing SIGHTS AND SOUNDS and with powerful, flesh appealing musical and dramatic presentations. THE CROWDS LOVE IT! GOD HATES IT! It’s the same deadly method as we find in Exodus 32 and Isaiah 1:1-17. Jesus calls it vain worship! (Matt. 7:1-9)

IN CHURCHES ALL OVER the land, so called ‘worship wars’ are taking place. Congregations are fighting one another over ‘styles’ of music, etc. The focus is on human likes and/or dislikes. The church faithful, who have not worshipped in spirit and in truth all week, walk in for worship services demanding to be pleased, to be made to feel good, desiring to be religiously excited. Modern day Aarons go to work, pleasing the crowds; and God hates it!

HOWEVER, there are those who diligently seek to be true worshippers of God, 24/7— 1. Daily they live in the spirit of, ‘Be it unto me according to Thy Word, O Lord!’ 2. Daily they ‘hit’ the “Amen!” note of true worship— “SO BE IT LORD!” 3. And they do so, not with a long face, but with a, ‘HALLELUJAH!’ For joy is experienced IN THE STEPS of Jesus! **And there is the Hallelujah of knowing that JESUS IS THE VICTOR, reigning in heaven, bringing His purposes to earth, moving events toward the day of HIS RETURN and to the day when we shall see Him, FACE TO FACE... and rule with Him for all eternity. SO, indeed, the ultimate issue of life and all eternity is worship! Amen! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

IV. When the Church Family GATHERS to Worship God

AGAIN: Real Congregational Christian Worship Takes Place When

— 1. We gather as a church family **to ASCRIBE** worth to God. 2. We gather **to PROSTRATE** ourselves before God in **submission to** the truth of His Word. 3. We gather **to offer UNTO HIM** honor, praise, adoration and thanksgiving— REMEMBERING the redeeming love of God which births, sustains and builds up worship! 4. We gather **to RECOGNIZE and REJOICE in** God's glory, greatness, power, victory, majesty and rule. 5. We gather **to offer unto God** willing heart offerings and our own selves! 6. We then **SCATTER** out into the world to **live and proclaim** the GOSPEL— this too is a part of our life of worshipping/serving the true and living God! **REMEMBER:** *Worship may have full acceptance and praise from men; but if that worship is void of overflowing obedience to God it is but a vain, empty show! (Mark 7:1-13)*

The Results of a Genuine Worship Service will be that we go forth into the world living lives of love, purity, compassion, forgiveness, joy, peace and more. **We will go forth on mission** to make Christ visible and known to the lost world around us. **GLORIOUS REALITY:** *When we adapt ourselves to Him and to His revealed will in worship, we will receive what we truly need from worship— namely, **JOY IN GOD, renewed power** to win daily spiritual battles, and **fresh boldness** as witnesses for Christ!*

V. Biblical Guidance to Encourage God-centered Worship— Exodus 20:1-10

Exodus 20:1-3— the exclusive object of our worship must be the one, the true and the living, triune God himself. In the worship of God, no room is allowed in the Bible for idols, icons, saints, angels, Mary, (the earthly

Mother of Jesus), nor any object, nor any other being in the entire universe.

Exodus 20:4-6— the manner of true worship must be spiritual and not physical. **Thus, we are forbidden** by God in His Holy Word to attempt to worship God by means of visual representations. **All attempts, INCLUDING MOVIES/DRAMA, to visually portray GOD the Father, Son or Holy Spirit obscure God's glory.** (Deut. 4:15-16; Isaiah 40:18; 46:5-10; Rom. 1:22-23) Instead of man-made images, ACTORS, and/or 'paintings' supposedly portraying true DEITY— God reveals Himself **through the Word of God and by His Spirit** (Ps. 16:7-9; 2 Cor. 3:18; Isa. 53; Revelation 1:13-17); and declares Himself through creation! (Ps. 19:1-6)

Exodus 20:7— the specific attitude for true worship is that of **reverence** for God and, thus, **reverence** for God's Name. The third commandment not only means that we do not CURSE; but also that we refrain from using God's name in our jokes or humor or in any cheap or insincere fashion. **Moreover,** as a Christian we are 'taking the name' of Jesus— His name is not to be taken in vain. His name is not to be taken in a mere empty show of religion— to be singing 'Praise the LORD' while secretly proceeding to love sin is to greatly misuse the holy name of Jesus.

Exodus 20:8-11— certainly all of our time is to be used in such a way as to glorify God. Nevertheless, the principles of Scripture call for the specific setting aside of one day in seven for rest, good deeds and for corporate worship. **(Isaiah 58:13-14) Living, vibrant love relationships require and are inwardly motivated to give sacred, specific time!**

Jesus Unfolds the Nature of New Covenant Worship— John 4:19-21. Christian Worship is not a matter of a sacred, physical locality. Rather, it is the spiritual reality of communion with God that is of supreme importance. In other words, **True Worship must be in spirit! WORSHIP is not outward ceremony or fleshly incited emotions from high energy music and/or gyrations and/or rituals.** Rather, **worship in spirit** relates to being in accord with the Holy Spirit, aided by the Holy Spirit and is a manifestation of sincerity in hearts which are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, **HE** is the **HOLY** Spirit and **He** is the Spirit of **TRUTH** and **His** master passion is to **Exalt Jesus!** (Matthew 15:18; John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:13) **THEREFORE: Worship that is "in the Spirit" will manifest and promote (1) Holiness, (2) Loyalty to Biblical Truth, and (3) Will exalt Jesus!**

Exuberance, various physical expressions, **may or may not be** the expressions of being "in the Spirit"— **they may only be a pumped up man-manufactured display of religious flesh that makes God sick, as revealed in Isaiah 1:2-15. True Worship must be in truth!** Worship in truth is worship which is in agreement with God's Word. (John 17:17) True worship has God and God alone as the object of the worship being offered. (Ex. 20:3) **Moreover, worship 'in truth' yields forth obedience to God!** (Isa. 1:15-20) In the true worship of God we receive and heed: **"Preach the Word; ... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.** (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

SADLY, in our day there is a growing rejection as to preaching the **"Thus saith the LORD!"** Instead, many are seeking to 'grow churches' by means of foolish stories, by man-made fictions, by promoting temporal patriotism and/or by an abundance of fun! (2 Timothy 4:1-4) **Give the masses what they want and they love it!** (Jeremiah 5:30-31) In many places folks are led to believe that they can continue to love the world and keep their sin and have the Savior also! **In reality, that IS how the Harlot Church is built!** However, those who know and follow the LAMB, (like Noah), must live and preach RIGHTEOUSNESS! (Heb. 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5)

VI. Various Biblical Expressions in the Corporate Worship of God!

1. The preaching/teaching of the Word of God is critical and central in corporate worship. "To worship God we must know who God is, but we cannot know who God is unless God first chooses to reveal Himself to us. God has done this in the Bible, which is why the Bible and the teaching of the Bible need to be central in our worship." (J. M. Boice)

2. In the worship of God it is a good thing for the whole congregation (in response to the preached/taught Word of God) to freely and expressively speak forth words of Praise to God; and to openly say, **"AMEN!" Saying 'AMEN' is saying "Yes!" to God! "So be it LORD!"**

Nehemiah 8:6— "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, **and all the people** answered, **AMEN, AMEN...**" 1 Chronicles 16:8-36— A great, God-centered Psalm was read before the people...**And all the people said, AMEN,** and praised the LORD!" Psalm 106:48— "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and **let all the people say, AMEN, PRAISE YE THE LORD!** Revelation 7:9-12— All those in heaven are worshipping God and saying, **"AMEN! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, BE UNTO OUR GOD forever and ever. "AMEN! AMEN! ALLELUIA!"**

3. In the worship of God it is a good thing for the congregation to freely and expressively SING and/or SPEAK praise unto the LORD! Psalm 95:1— "O come, let US sing unto the LORD. Let US make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." Ephesians 5;19— "Speaking to YOURSELVES in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD!" (Col. 3:16; Matt.26:30)

4. It is a good thing to give TESTIMONIES in the midst of the congregation! Here are just a few Biblical examples: Psalm 22:22-25; 35:18; 66:13-16; 107:1-2; 107:31-32.

5. In the worship of God it is a good thing for a congregation to stand, to kneel, to bow, etc. In the Word of God, we find various physical postures in worship conveying gratitude, reverence, submission, humility, and/or dependence, etc. **Yes, mere physical actions can become mechanical and/or hypocritical; and make God sick— Isaiah 1:2-15.**

Yes, we must come to God in worship with right heart attitudes. But also, among those right attitudes is the submissive, godly embracing of Biblical expressions in worship, such as the ones we are setting forth from Scripture in this study. **Note: The fact that there are** those who "get in the flesh" and just put on a show, rather than truly worship God— DOES NOT GIVE US LIBERTY TO IGNORE OR REJECT STANDARD BIBLICAL PATTERNS!

6. In the worship of God it is a good thing for our hearts and hands to blend in worship to God. "Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, *as I lift MY HANDS* toward your most holy place." (Psalm 28:2) "The LORD is my strength and my shield; **My HEART** trusteth in Him, and I am helped. MY HEART leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song." (Psalm 28:7) **EXTENDED HANDS** reveal the worshipper in a posture of faith, looking to God for mercy and grace. (Psalm 88:9b) **LIFTED UP HANDS** are also in the context of praise to God for his greatness. "Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD... **Lift up your hands** in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD!" (Psalm 134:1-2) "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, AMEN, AMEN, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground." (Neh. 8:6) God inspired the Apostle Paul to write: "I will therefore that men PRAY everywhere, **LIFTING UP HOLY HANDS**, without wrath and doubting." (1 Timothy 2:8)

VII. Bottom Line, as to Genuine Worship!

“The loss of God’s centrality in the life of today’s church is common and tragic. It is the loss that brings us, sadly, (1) to transform worship into entertainment, (2) gospel preaching into marketing, (3) being and becoming Christ-like into feeling good about ourselves, and (4) faithfulness into being successful... **THE GREAT NEED OF THE HOUR:** We must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship; we are not. Our concern must be for God’s kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success.”
[As normal... a number of sources used in developing this article.]

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell /www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing with us every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Any questions contact Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

MARCH 6, 11:00AM— LADIES BIBLE STUDIES— led by Cindy Bell

***** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service.

YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith_

*****SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am: Men’s Fellowship/Bible Study!*****

REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 9, 16, 23, 30

1. 9:30am- Sunday School→ Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church [LORD'S SUPPER, 3/16/14]

3. Noon: Fellowship 'covered-dish' Meal together!

4. 1:00pm- Early afternoon Service, in the Fellowship Hall

NOTE: 3/9- Time change: Spring Clocks forward ONE HOUR the evening of 3/8!

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!

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!

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