



**GROW  
IN  
GRACE**  
NEWSLETTER

**Volume 40, No. 39, September 30 , 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 is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), 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."***

(This article is gleaned from the 180 pages of **When Your Rope Breaks**, by Stephen Brown! IT IS FINE SPIRITUAL FOOD FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN JOURNEY! DIG IN DEEPLY!)

## **BROKEN ROPE SYNDROME! [B.R.S.]**

**There are some ground rules for living life here on planet earth—** some basics in life which we need to understand and to which we need to make right responses!1

### **I. FACE THE BAD NEWS OF 'BROKEN ROPES!' (Job 3:23-26)**

**All is not right with the world.** Long before we were born— Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God, to sin; and today we are still dealing with the repercussions. In a sin-filled world, with our own personal hearts capable of deep wickedness and all others around us afflicted by the same **Broken Rope Syndrome (BRS)** — we cannot afford to close our eyes and pretend that everything is fine. **REALITY:** Sin is a part of a fallen world; and we all have hearts that are deceitful and full of rebellion against God! (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 8:7) We must face the fact that our sin nature can and does cause all kinds of trouble. Not only does our own sin create problems, but also the sins of others creates problems. Moreover, in a fallen world **BAD THINGS HAPPEN— and they may not** even be directly related to any of our own sin.

**There are inevitable storms in nature in a fallen world.** Rooted in Adam and Eve's choice of rebellion against God, we live in a world where something is terribly wrong in all of creation, (Gen. 3:17b-19; Romans 8:20-22). Living in a fallen world, we have to face the fact of natural disasters. **The whole of earth is deeply affected by the consequences of sin.**

**The sting of death** is another result of man's choice to rebel against God, (Rom 5:12, I Cor 15:56). Have you ever had someone tell you not to worry about death, because it was as natural as birth and just a part of life? They lied to you! Death is not natural. We were not born to die—disease and death are the result of sin.

## II. IT'S NOT YOUR PARTY!

The good news is we have been invited to a party. The bad news is that it isn't our party. But once we understand the One for whom the party is given, all things considered, it isn't such a bad party after all. **Understanding the way the world works.** Job 38-41

\*\*\* **God's plan, not ours.** Our fallen nature is egocentric. That's another way of saying that most of us in our hearts of hearts believe that the world revolves around us. The Bible teaches that the world was not created for us; it was created by and for God. Isa. 40:25; Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1; Rev. 4:11. God has created the world for His reasons and not for ours. That is the very bad news. \*\*\* **Gaining perspective on the rope.** We must understand early in our discussion of Broken Rope Syndrome that breaking ropes, as horrible as they are, may be seen from another perspective. **We feel,** when the rope breaks and the tragedy follows that something is out of control. **But that may not be the case.** Breaking ropes are not necessarily the major concern of God. He may have other priorities. \*\*\* **This isn't really happening.** You can choose to believe that the world is a wonderful playground created by a benevolent Creator for your enjoyment and pleasure. With this belief, you will see your broken rope as a temporary aberration in the norm, or you will pretend that the broken rope really isn't broken. \*\*\* **All is vanity.** You can adopt a second view of the world where your rope has broken. You can choose to believe that the world is essentially meaningless. "Life is hard and then you die." \*\*\* **GOD IS EVERYTHING!** The final option if you're asking questions about the meaning of breaking ropes poses a Creator who, for His own reasons, created the world. That is the Biblical option; and this truth brings genuine meaning into the equation. The Bible teaches that God created the world that He might be glorified.

**HOWEVER, there is a problem**— we live in a fallen world! EVEN SO, all things were created by God and for God and for his GOOD PLEASURE, to the end that He might be glorified. Life is about the King of Kings! It is not about His servants, or His lands, or His subjects. It is only about the King of Kings! **In the midst of breaking ropes, our God reigns.**

### III. THE VERY, VERY GOOD NEWS.

**CHRISTIAN: God loves you a lot.** Rom. 9:14-16; I John 3:1; I John 4:10. **What does His love mean?** Agape means to love the unlovely, to be benevolent and filled with good will, no matter what the response of the loved one. Paul said, “But God demonstrates His own love (agape) for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). \*\*\* **Your broken rope has purpose.** CHILD OF GOD: Because God loves you, your broken rope has purpose. Sometimes we are missing the one thing we would like to know— what is God accomplishing through our suffering? Sometimes we’re allowed to see the reason for our pain. But there are other times when we simply have to trust that God loves us and that He knows what He’s doing. John 13:7 \*\*\* **You will make it through.** Because God loves, your broken rope will not ultimately destroy you. **You can stand any tough times if you know they are only temporary. If you know that the suffering will end, you can get through it.** God promises that, though it may hurt now, there will come an end, and you will not ultimately be destroyed. His love assures that “bottom-line” fact. \*\*\* **You are not alone.** John 14:16-18 People are always saying, **“JESUS IS ALL I NEED!”** You will never know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you’ve got. And when Jesus is all you’ve got, then and only then, will you know that Jesus is all you need. \*\*\* **You are becoming like Christ.** 2 Cor. 4:8-11; I Peter 4:12-13a; John 15:18-20. When your rope breaks it is never pleasant, but at that point you can begin to understand in a deeper way the sacrifice and suffering of Christ. Don’t underestimate that gift. Phil. 3:8, 10

**Your broken rope is redemptive.** Col. 1:24; Acts 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:23-28. When your rope breaks, you can use it in a redemptive way— ‘Broken Ropes’ give many opportunities to testify, to give evidence of Christ in our life! God does not waste suffering, nor does He discipline out of caprice. If He plows, it is because He purposes a crop. Suffering can also be redemptive to the one who suffers. Suffering purifies us. Have you noticed that much of our Christian life is ego-oriented? There is a lot of ego that needs God’s refining fire. Paul wrote: I Cor. 3:11-15. \*\*\* **You have a**

**fellow sufferer.** Heb. 4:15; I Peter 2:21

#### **IV. HOW TO TIE A KNOT: What do you do when the rope breaks?**

**The means of grace.** The means of grace is the formal theological term for the ways God enables us to persevere in our salvation. \*\*\* **Honest prayer: Telling God the truth.** Honest prayer can really help when your rope has broken. Ps. 69:1-3 If you are angry and hurt, don't tell God that you love Him. He knows you are lying. Don't tell Him that you know He is doing whatever He is doing in your life for a good reason. He knows you don't believe that for a moment. Tell Him the truth. He is the only BEING in the universe who can absorb everything you hand out, understand why you do it, and still love you. \*\*\* **Honest fellowship: Being real with each other.** Gal. 6:2. A Christian facing surgery: "Are you kidding? Of course I'm frightened," she exclaimed. "I'm scared to death. People die in this place!" "Guys, I want you to know that my business is falling apart and I'm scared." \*\*\* **Honest Bible study: Reading beyond the "Spiritual".** In this kind of world - the world where it is common practice to lie-it's wonderful to go someplace where I know I'll hear the truth. That place is Scripture. The Bible presents great men and women of God doing very ungodly things. The more I read, the more I realized that God wanted us to see real people trying to deal with broken ropes. The Bible not only portrays the lives of people who, like us, dealt with broken ropes but also it shows us the best way to deal with broken ropes. \*\*\* **Honest action: Doing what needs doing.** The Bible is not a passive book. Scripture challenges us to run the race, to fight the fight, to wrestle with angelic powers (I Cor. 9:24, 27; Eph. 6:17). When you place your hand on a hot stove, your hand doesn't hurt because you haven't prayed enough or been spiritual enough. Your hand hurts because it's on a hot stove. **Don't pray. Take your hand off the stove.** Amazingly, the remedy for a broken rope is, at times, fresh obedience to God... OR PRAISE TO GOD—even if you are bloody and in prison.

**Honest relinquishment: Accepting what God gives you.** The book of Job gives illustration of relinquishment. Job 1:20-21; Job 2:9-10 The principle is positive relinquishment: Whenever something comes into your life that you cannot change or avoid, accept it as coming from the hand of your loving Father. \*\*\* **Honest victory: Celebrating when you get things right.** One of the problems with honesty about your failure and sin is that it can become addictive. Because we are talking about broken ropes, we need to talk about the realities of failure, sin, tragedy, and relinquishment. **However,** I don't want you to think that's the whole

story. God still answers prayer; He still mends broken ropes. Luke 22:31-32

## V. THE BANE OF BITTERNESS.

**No escape from the truth.** Listen to Job's words. Every rope that ever held him had broken, and he knew God. The bitterness with which he spoke was cutting. Job 9:14-18. You're caught with no place to go for recourse. You'd like to run away, to deny the reality you've known, but that simply isn't a viable alternative. \*\*\* **The root of bitterness.** Hebrews 12:15; Deut. 29:18. Bitterness - characterized by feelings of hatred, envy, resentment, cynicism, and severity - **begins when** one turns from God, and it results in a disease that infects others. **Someone has said that life is the only school where you take the test and then learn the lesson.** That sounds good, and in some cases I suppose it's true, but it isn't the way God works with breaking ropes. You can learn the lessons about broken ropes before you take the test. And if you can learn the lessons, you can avoid the bitterness which often follows the test. **The following three lessons** are hedges against the bane of bitterness:

**Prayer before you panic.** Daniel is a great example of someone who was faithful to God both before and after a crisis. Daniel 6:6-7; Daniel 6:10. The story shows how a man of God should face lions. Because Daniel had prayed regularly long before he faced the lions, Daniel did not become bitter. Too many Christians pray only in storms. \*\*\* **Knowledge before the kick-off.** Proverbs 18:15. Some feel that God is in the business of preventing tragedy and are devastated when their ropes break. They become bitter. I Peter 1:13; I Peter 4:12. **Let me give you a principle:** Most people react to breaking ropes in the same way they react to ropes that don't break. In other words, if you are faithful, loving, and obedient when things are going right in your life, you will probably be faithful, loving, and obedient when things are going wrong. \*\*\* **Thanks before the tragedy.** Ephesians 5:18-20. Understanding that everything comes from God and praising Him for it is an effective way to prevent bitterness. An attitude of praise will grant you power under pressure, but power without pressure is never promised by God.

**WHEN YOU AREN'T PREPARED: Recognizing the effects of bitterness.** Many of us have our emotional "hall of injustice," and we like to visit it often. We like to polish the statues of those who have hurt us. \*\*\* **Confessing the tendency toward bitterness.** I John 1:9 \*\*\*

**Exercising relinquishment.** To be perfectly honest, you can't turn bitterness on and off like a faucet. Bitterness is hard to destroy. God's Spirit must be given the freedom to act, and He normally does not act in you without our contrition. Ephesians 4:31. \*\*\* **Waiting for the light.** If God is sovereign (and He is) and if He loves you (and He does) and if you have done everything you can (and sometimes you have), then don't do anything more. Simply be still.

## VI. WHERE DID I GO WRONG?

The point of the book of Job is that the explanations Job's friends offered attributing his problems to his sin were dead wrong. Job had done nothing wrong. He had not turned his back on God. He was not out of the will of God. He had not done anything stupid. \*\*\* **Have I done something wrong?** Not necessarily. In other words, there is no direct absolute correlation between breaking ropes and breaking God's law. \*\*\* **The chastening rope.** First, you need to know that broken ropes can sometimes be the result of God's chastening. God does sometimes allow us to experience broken ropes so that we can learn valuable lessons. I John 3:2. \*\*\* **A dumb mistake.** Secondly, ropes sometimes break because we do something stupid. Exodus 8:2-3; Exodus 8:9-10. \*\*\* **The natural consequences.** Thirdly, some broken ropes occur because that's the way the world works. 2 Samuel 12:13-14. If we ignore God's laws, we do so at our own peril.

**You don't deserve broken ropes because of your sin.** Sometimes when our ropes break God is allowing us to face the natural consequences of our sin. **But there is no direct, absolute correlation between breaking ropes and our breaking God's laws. You deserve a lot worse.** If you got what you really deserved, you would be dead now. There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seek after God. They have all gone out of the way; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Romans 3:10-12

**Think for a moment of all the bad things you have done in your life.** What if God tried to balance the books right now? Where would you be? You would be holding so many broken ropes that you'd have to carry them off in a truck. **What's the point?** The hurt you experience may not be related to your sin. If it were, you would hurt a whole lot more. And if it is the Holy Spirit will show you with clear conviction; but never with condemnation.

**Bad people do prosper.** Your broken rope might logically have something to do with your sin, but then the converse would also have to be true; that is, turkeys do quite well sometimes, thank you. Psalm 10:3-5a. \*\*\* Someday when God balances the books, just rewards will be given, but only a fool would say that it works that way right now. \*\*\* **You are forgiven.** There is one other thing to think about if you believe you're hurting because you've done something wrong: forgiveness. I John 1:9.

## VII. WHERE DID JOB'S FRIENDS GO WRONG?

**There is no direct, absolute correlation between other people's breaking ropes and their breaking God's law.** John 9:2-3. **Learning a new way to relate:** The way most people deal with another's cancer is symbolic of the way most people deal with any tragedy in another's life. Christians must learn to relate to one another in tragedy as well as good times. God has given us to each other. I Cor. 12:12-13; 26-27

**What Job's friends did right! \*\*\* Be there.** First, they were there. Job 2:11 **Keep Quiet.** Second, Job's friends were not only there but they were also quiet, at least at first. Job 2:13

**Don't gossip.** Third, when Job's rope broke, his friends didn't talk behind his back. **Give your friend freedom.** Job's friends did another thing right. They allowed him to express his bitterness and anger. Job 3:3, 10-11

**What Job's friends did wrong! \*\*\* Don't be intellectual.** First, they tried to have an intellectual discussion with Job while he was holding his broken rope in his hand. Job 4:1-5a **You aren't beyond reproach.** Second, Job's friends took a superior position. Job 5:1-2, 8, 17; Job 12:1-3a. \*\*\* **You can't speak for God.** Third, the friends of Job presumed to speak for God. Job 11:7, 10-11, 14-15. Very interesting. Zophar said that one couldn't explain God, but then he went about trying to explain Him. Presuming to speak for God on almost any issue is very dangerous.

\*\*\* **You aren't immune to suffering.** Fourth, Job's friends assumed that what was happening to Job couldn't happen to them.

\*\*\* **Don't be impractical.** Finally, Job's friends didn't do anything practical. They just talked. Job needed someone to bind up his wounds. He needed money; maybe he even needed a hug. All he got from his friends was words.

## VIII. THE DEMON OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

**One of the greatest problems with ropes is the inevitable discouragement which follows. How does one deal with the demon of discouragement?**

**The great cloud of witnesses.** One of the keys to dealing with discouragement is found in Hebrews 12:1-3. The writer of Hebrews first suggests that we are surrounded by witnesses. (See Heb. 11:36-39) \*\*\*

**The demon of guilt:** The passage quoted from Hebrews 12 not only suggests that we have company, but also reminds us that we have been forgiven. I John 1:9 **Power to endure.** The author of Hebrews says that we are empowered to endure our broken ropes by **“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”**. Hebrews 12:2; Matt. 14:28-32. Let me tell you something: the principle is the same no matter what the circumstances. Either Jesus is there or He isn't. Either Jesus does have something to do with your situation or He doesn't. If he doesn't you have a whole lot bigger problem than discouragement. But the Scripture is clear about His involvement. Rom. 8:28

**Four important items we often forget when we're discouraged:** 1. **Remember the past.** Job 8:8-10- When you look at the history of God's people you see God's faithfulness and love. When you look to your own past, you can see God's faithfulness and love. 2. **Remember the facts.** (Eph. 6:13-14) Please note that Paul said we need to depend on truth for support; facts are the reality, not our feelings about the facts. “Never doubt in the dark what God has taught you in the light.” 3. **Remember the process.** When your rope is broken and you are discouraged, don't forget that God works out His purpose in the process. Ps. 37:23-2. 4. **Look to the future.** Finally when your rope has broken and you are discouraged, don't forget the future. I Cor. 15:51-54 Thirst may not prove there is water, and hunger may not prove there is food. But thirst and hunger are very good indicators that there is something somewhere to fulfill those needs, something for resolution and completion, pointing to the future and to a promise. John 14:1-2

## IX. PRINCIPALITIES, POWERS, AND RULERS OF THE DARK.

**Someone else put it this way: “If you didn't meet the Devil this morning it is a good indication that you were going in the same direction.”** Could it be. . . Satan? Job 1:9-12; Job 2:3-7. **Five important facts about broken ropes as they apply to Satan and his minions:**

**Alive and well.** The first thing you ought to notice about Satan is that he is alive and well. A discussion of broken ropes without a discussion of Satan would be like discussing World War II without discussing Adolf Hitler. The writers of the Bible called Satan the liar, the accuser, the dragon, the serpent, and the ruler of the world. When Jesus saw the unbelief of many so-called religious people, He said: John 8:43-44; Mark 4:14-15; John 12:31; Luke 22:31-32. **Under God's control.** Second, not only do we learn from Job that Satan is alive and well, but we also learn that Satan is controlled. Satan, though alive and well, is a defeated enemy (see Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:10). We must be careful not to give Satan credit for too many broken ropes. He already gets more credit than he deserves. If Satan has anything to do with your broken rope, he has done only what a sovereign God has either allowed or ordained.

**The student of God.** Third, Satan is learning. Job 1:8; Job 2:3. What does that mean? I don't know. But whatever it means, the scriptures indicate that we are being viewed by supernatural beings that we might increase their knowledge and praise of God, Ephesians 3:10. Alfred Martin wrote that this verse gave "further indication that heavenly beings are observing the Church and seeing in the Church the unfolding of God's wisdom. Both good and evil angels are evidently amazed at the working of God as seen in redeemed men and women." **If God wants to use my broken rope as a model to Satan of the sufficiency of God's grace, I don't like it, but I will accept it.** God is interested in showing an unbelieving world the difference in the way Christians deal with suffering and hurt and fear. If He is interested in showing the same thing to Satan, I'm glad to be a part of his education plan.

**A defeated foe.** Fourth, not only is Satan alive and well, controlled and learning, but Satan also is, for all intents and purposes, defeated. Col. 2:15 Satan is dead, he just doesn't know it. **A silent enemy.** Finally, from the book of Job we learn that Satan is alive and sometimes not recognized. Although I don't believe we should start looking for Satan under every bed and behind every corner, I do believe that we ought to be aware of his presence.

**How do you handle the enemy? If Satan is involved in my broken rope, what can I do about it? \*\*\* Learn to use the truth.** (See Ephesians 6:14; 6:17). If in the midst of BRS, you feel that God has deserted you, affirm the truth of His love for you. If you think that you will be destroyed, affirm the truth that God has given you eternal life in His

Son. If you start believing that God is punishing you, affirm the truth that God has already defeated Satan. \*\*\* **Learn to resist Satan.** I Peter 5:9; James 4:7 \*\*\* **Make prayer your hidden resource.** God's hand is not shortened that He cannot save you (See Isa. 59:1). \*\*\***Learn to submit to God in everything.** The other part of James's instruction for our dealings with Satan is submission to God.

**Satan has incredible public relations. He is blamed for everything from dry cows to cancer. But he isn't as powerful as his public releases would suggest.** Only God has the kind of power Satan claims. Try to remember that. It helps.

## **X. DOES MY FATHER KNOW I'M HURT?**

**The Father knows.** A sovereign God allows broken ropes because of His love. **The place broken ropes.** There is a place of broken ropes. It is not a pleasant place to visit, but everyone must go there at one time or another. The place of broken ropes will not always exist. It is only temporary, created by God's love. **Meeting God in the silence.** It is hard to bear the silence of God. But in that place, and sometimes only in that place, you meet God. Job 42:2-3, 5. If you want to meet the living God, you almost always have to go to the place of broken ropes. After the silence, you will meet Him. And to meet God sometimes (if we were wiser, always) makes your visit to the place of broken ropes worth all the pain and suffering and hurt.

**THE WOUNDED HEALER:** When you meet God at the place of broken ropes, you will notice something else you didn't expect. God holds some broken ropes too. You will notice nail scars in His hands. **You will see pain in His eyes, and you will know that the reason He speaks with authority is because the place of broken ropes is His place too.** I Peter 4:1; Heb. 5:8; Heb. 4:15

**The order of the broken rope.** You will discover that people who go to the place of broken ropes become a part of a secret society called the Order of the Broken Rope. A broken rope will make you sensitive to others who have broken ropes. I Peter 5:9 When you go to the place of broken ropes you will find not only fellowship but also a subtle but real separation. **Most people first arriving at the place of broken ropes congregate with others who have recently arrived. But gradually, two groups begin to emerge.** Luke 6:47-49

**In the place of broken ropes you will either be drawn to God or you will walk farther and farther from Him. THE BROKEN ROPES DON'T CAUSE EITHER.**

As in Jesus' parable, you will find whether your house is built of rock or sand. **AND BROKEN ROPES REVEAL THE TRUE CONDITION OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.** And you will notice separation between the group drawn to God and the group walking away.

**There is one final thing I want you to know about the plans of broken ropes. At that place you will find hope.** Job 19:25-27.  
**Be still. Listen to the hope. "THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM" (Hebrews 11:16).**

**Grace to one and all! James Bell [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)**

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!**

**TUESDAYS:** Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**\*\* WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; IN THE CHURCH AUDITORIUM! \*\***

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

**→ NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— October 9 @ 11:00AM,**

Led by Cindy Bell

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

## **SUNDAY Schedule for October 5, 12, \*\*19, 26:**

- 1. 9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
- 2. 10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
- 3. NOON FELLOWSHIP MEAL**
- 4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

**\*\*OCTOBER 19— 9:30am, Sunday School; 10:45am, Worship... concluding with the LORD'S SUPPER. NO MEAL AT CHURCH. EVENING HOME GROUPS**

### **SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!**

Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!  
<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>