



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 42, October 21 , 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."***

REPENT! BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; AND YOU SHALL BE SAVED!

Recently in volume 40, No. 40, October 7, 2014, we sent out an article titled, ***The FREE WILL of the 'Wind' and the Saving of Sinners!*** Several comments were received— some expressing 'thanks' stating that they were encouraged and/or helped. Also, a couple of brothers and I have engaged in some friendly 'give and take' due to the reality that 'we are not at the same place' on some of the issues addressed in that article. I rejoice that the 'spirit' of the give-and-take has been Christ-honoring. This is as it should be for IN CHRIST we already have God-given, fundamental, essential, foundational UNITY.

We all embrace the Biblical truth of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ alone; and not of works. Resting in the unity of the Spirit, all Christians are to strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit. (Ephesians 4:1-6) THAT UNITY does not require UNIFORMITY on matters about which one may be wrong and still get to heaven! IN TIMES PAST, we have called the following "the BRIDGE of salvation" that one travels from LOSTNESS to being SAVED, to being in Christ and on the way to heaven: ***"By grace alone, through faith alone, In Christ alone; and not of works."*** If you are a genuine Christian, then somewhere along the way the Holy Spirit convicted you of sin, revealed Christ to you, and empowered you ***by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone! TO GOD BE THE***

GLORY! [The required matter of repentance is always present when there is saving faith.]

In this article, we start with a section from an article titled ***Issues Often at the Root of Controversy in Churches*** which we printed and shared a couple of years back. We dealt with various ‘issues’ which related to Southside and to my own pilgrimage. From that article, here, we set forth the portion dealing with **Predestination:**

This is presently a HOT BUTTON for many folk in Southern Baptist and Independent Baptist circles. Sincere Christians do not fully agree on these matters. However, we should not be divisive or mean spirited one toward another. At Southside we are presently blessed. We have folks at different places; but we also have a spirit of love and respect. On several different doctrines, [and especially on predestination /election / calling] it is all too common for Christians who are in one ditch to be throwing stones at other Christians in the other ditch who, of course, are throwing stones back!

REALITY: A good number of other Christians don't know what they believe. Others will stand for what they have been taught; but they have never personally worked out from Scripture their beliefs. Some tend to run to some ‘proof-text’ out of context and make arguments that bring about a denial of other Scriptures.

BUT LET US ALL KEEP THIS IN MIND: All understanding of Biblical truth comes to us by gracious revelation from God— not by stone-throwing and/or heated arguments. So, let us continue to heed the call of God to LOVE ONE ANOTHER, to benefit from ‘iron sharpening iron’... and then to wait patiently for Biblical revelation to grip both ourselves and others. **MY OWN JOURNEY:** As a college student, upon listening to the warnings of a seasoned pastor, I proceeded to fear Biblical words like *predestination* and *elect* or *election*. **Many years later, here's what I have concluded:**

There are many Scriptures which set forth the GOD-SIDE of salvation; and there are many other Scriptures which set forth the responsibility of man in salvation— sometimes in the same set of verses BOTH are set forth. There is a common tendency to lean to one side or the other—often in an out of balance way because we just

cannot grasp how both can be true simultaneously. I do not claim perfect balance or perfect understanding— however, **I am committed to RUNNING TO ALL of the verses!**

*** **TO THE LOST SINNER:** I do not hesitate to proclaim to one and all and/or anyone— *“JESUS DIED FOR SINNERS! God so loved the world that He gave... **O Sinner, REPENT, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST and THOU SHALT BE SAVED! ... The blood of Jesus is sufficient for whosoever will!**”* (John 3:14-21; 3:36; 5:24; Acts 8:35-39; Romans 10:9-13)

Here are some verses relating to ‘OUR’ faith... verses which should be encouraging to sinner or saint: *“And he said to the woman, **Thy faith** hath saved thee; go in peace.”*(Luke 7:50) *“When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel”* (Matt. 8:10). *“Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, **great is thy faith:** be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour”* (Matt. 15:28). *“But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; **thy faith** hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour”* (Mark 9:22). *“And he said unto her, Daughter, **thy faith** hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague”* (Mark 5:34). *“And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; **thy faith** hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way”* (Mark 10:52). *“And he said to the woman, **Thy faith** hath saved thee; go in peace”* (Luke 7:50). *“And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: **thy faith** hath made thee whole; go in peace”* (Luke 8:48). *“And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: **thy faith** hath saved thee”* (Luke 18:42).

THESE ARE PRECIOUS VERSES which speak of ONE’S OWN FAITH. **YET, faith is also stated in the same New Testament to be GOD’S GIFT.**

ANOTHER has well said:

*“Faith in Christ is not a notion, or a doctrine, or a principle. It is the heart confidence of every needy sinner who looks to Christ as his only Savior that causes him to confess, *“My Lord, and my God”* (John 20:28). Yet, it is*

also God's gift and God's operation in us. (Ephesians 2:8-10) Faith is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23). **Yet, it is our faith. If God gave it to me, that makes it mine.** The breath in my lungs is God's gift. He enables me to breathe. Yet, it is my breath and my breathing that is the evidence that God still gives me life. And the breathing of my body is as necessary to my living as God's gift of life. The two cannot be separated. If you doubt that, try putting a plastic bag over your face and see if you can live without breathing! **So it is with faith.** We "*are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:26). The Holy Spirit tells us plainly that the faith you have by His grace is "*your faith in Christ*" (Eph. 1:15; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2:5).

It is God's gift; and because God gave it to you, it is "your faith." And "*your faith in Christ*" is just as necessary, just as vital to your everlasting salvation, and just as precious (2 Pet. 1:1), as God's decree of election, Christ's accomplished redemption, and the Holy Spirit's effectual call. — "*Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*" (Heb. 11:6).

Two Questions:

1. Do you, like the Philippian jailer of old, ask, "**What must I do to be saved?**" I do not hesitate to answer with Paul and Silas, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:30-31). Do not allow anyone to put you looking to yourself, and your experience. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,*" and salvation is yours.

2. Do you ask, "**How can I know that I am saved?**" Answer this one question — "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" (John 9:35) It does not matter whether you can answer "What did you know when you first professed faith in Christ?"... or "When did you believe?" Those questions are totally irrelevant. This is the only question to be answered — "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" If you now trust the Lord Jesus Christ, salvation is yours." [Long quote is from:

http://www.donfortner.com/bulletin_articles/42_luke/luk%2007v50%20Saving%20Faith.htm]

***** TO THE CHRISTIAN:** I ALSO rejoice **in the verses that tell believers** that we were **chosen** in Christ before the foundation of the

world, (Ephesians 1:3-13). 2 Timothy 1:9 tells Christians: [GOD] Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, **which was GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.**"

What a word to Christians: God saves; God calls; God calls according to His own purpose and grace. Moreover, the verse tells us that all this was purposed, decided, by God in Christ before the world began. That is, before anything that was made was made; and therefore, even before I could do anything good or evil, God decided to save me and to call me according to His good pleasure and purpose.

We are **specifically GIVEN** by the Father to the Son, (John 17:1-6). We love Him **because He first** loved us, (1 John 4:19). GOD proclaims all of the above in the Bible. **All the verses are true.** They are all needed and none of them needs to be explained away. **I do not pretend to understand the mind of God as to how all of the above verses to sinners and to saints are simultaneously true.**

On one occasion, Charles H. Spurgeon had a young man come to him with a great text of Scripture on God's sovereign predestination and another on the free offer of the gospel, with the promise of life to "whosoever will" come to Christ. He asked Mr. Spurgeon, "Can you reconcile these two things?" Spurgeon's answer was, "**I never need to reconcile friends.**" There is no contradiction in the Word of God. The Scripture is never at odds with itself. It presents one God and one salvation without any contradiction. LET US BE HUMBLE and teach all the Word of God.

May we go forth with a simple faith: "**God said it; that settles it; I believe Him!**"

**** **NOW, LET ME BRING UP the WORDS: Calvinism and Arminianism;** or... Calvinist and Arminian. **I HAVE A GROWING CONVICTION:** As we seek to understand what the BIBLE ACTUALLY TEACHES about salvation— we need to 100% drop, not use the words **Calvinism** and/or **Arminianism** and/or **Calvinist** or **Arminian** and/or the setting forth of the positions of these imperfect, mortal men. (I rejoice that in the 'give and take' with some dear brothers... these words were not even brought up!)

REALITY: There are NO 'Arminian' or 'Calvinistic' verses in the Bible— N O N E!

God spoke His truth long before these men were born.

TO EQUATE either of these men with any Scripture is 100% error— it is historical error and more importantly it is Biblical error.

I recently listened to a respected Bible teacher, who after quoting Jesus in John 6:44, triumphantly proclaimed, ***"Jesus was a Calvinist!"***

RESPONSE: No matter how well intended, that STATEMENT is 100% untrue, a lie; and SERIOUSLY DEGRADING TO JESUS CHRIST.

Likewise, if someone said that *Jesus was an Arminian*— that would also equally be 100% false, untrue, etc. It would be 100% TRUE to say that Joseph Arminius and John Calvin both professed to be followers of Jesus... or Christians.

However, Jesus should NEVER be put down on the level of any mere sinful man— to do so is UTTERLY DEMEANING to Jesus Christ no matter how well intended one may be!

MOREOVER, it is almost impossible to have any serious Bible study on the Biblical doctrine of salvation if we insist on setting forth and defending men; and/or if when a Bible verse or passage is set forth, **all we do is pigeon-hole it and slander it as Arminian or Calvinistic.**

AS TO SALVATION:

This I know, * ACCORDING TO the Word of God, we saints have the awesome responsibility to be laborers together with God: **We plant. We water. GOD gives the increase.** (1 Cor. 3:6-7) **We are commissioned** to take the Gospel to the whole world. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) Ultimately, a numberless multitude out of every kindred, tongue, tribe and people will be saved. (Rev. 7:1-17)**

What a high calling it is to live and proclaim the gospel of Christ to any and to all throughout the world!

***** All humans start out as sinners by nature and as hell-deserving sinners, ALREADY under the wrath of God.** (Ephesians

2:1-3) Those who are saints in Christ get what they could have never deserved or earned— mercy and grace and thus, HEAVEN. I confess with Paul the praise found in Ephesians 2:1-10 and in Titus 3:2-7. INDEED, from the pure Word of God, I know that ALL WHO get to heaven **get there solely** by the AMAZING GRACE OF GOD. *** **Moreover, all who will one day spend eternity in hell will do so ONLY because they were rebels who hated God and refused whatever light God gave them, and thus, they get holy justice. GOD’S WORD IS CLEAR that they are without excuse: Romans 1:18-32; 3:10-19.**

THUS, let us teach:

1. All of Romans 8-11. In those chapters, **Romans 8:28-39** — (especially, verses 29, 30) — the Holy Spirit **presents glorious predestination**. It is plain. And while those verses focus on the Divine side of salvation— **Keep in mind, the Bible only speaks about predestination to those who are ALREADY saved.**

There is ZERO Biblical warrant to use the word ‘predestination’ in relation to the lost in any shape, form, or fashion— God’s Word does not, so neither should I!

Furthermore, it is foolish to claim that God predestines some to be lost— when in reality, ALL FALLEN HUMANS are ALREADY dead in sin and UNDER the wrath of God. Being sinners by nature and sinners by choice— all are automatically LOST and under the wrath of God.

They do not need nor does the Bible prescribe to them any sort of predestination in order to be lost.

Reality: the wonder is not that there will be those who die in their sin and experience holy JUSTICE. **The wonder is that ANYONE is saved! What a wideness in God’s mercy and grace— He is saving a numberless multitude!**

Moreover, in the midst of strong God-focused verses in Romans 8-11, as to calling and election — AS THE BIBLE SO OFTEN DOES — **in the same section of Scripture, the Holy Spirit has Paul to pen verses that focus on MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY to believe:** Romans 10: 9-13. I believe those verses just as strongly and often quote verse 13.

2. Ephesians 1:3-14, (verse 5 & 11) is the only other passage in the Bible that has the word ‘predestinate’.... But again, this is

precious truth to those who are already saved. I cannot add to it. I cannot deny it. However, it is NOT written to the unsaved.

3. REALITY: There are those who focus on Bible verses that speak of God's predestination, calling and election; **and they minimize or deny the verses that focus on man's responsibility and the free offer of the gospel to whosoever will!** The New Testament is unashamed to set forth truth such as, ***'repent, believe and thou shalt be saved!'***

There are others, (as I was taught) who focus on man's side and deny or minimize the Divine side. My encouragement is that we accept, believe, and rejoice in all the verses.

Moreover, my encouragement is that we hold tight to our supreme witness: "By this shall all know that you are my disciples, IF you have love one for another!" (John 13:34-35) Without God's love flowing among us— we are zeros in God's sight! (1 Cor. 13) AND THAT WE TAKE SERIOUSLY our God-given assignment: **GO! MAKE! MARK! MATURE DISCIPLES!** (Matthew 28:19-20)

***** FINALLY, TO THOSE OUTSIDE OF CHRIST: There is NO PARDON** for the sinner who dies without Jesus Christ as their LORD AND SAVIOR. There is no purgatory from which one can ever be delivered. There are only eternal flames of torment. **Moreover**, if you will not believe the Gospel in the Word of God and/or if you will not believe upon hearing the Gospel of Christ preached, you would not believe if one came back from Hell to warn you! **PLEASE READ ALL OF Luke 16:19-31. One day Jesus WEPT** over Jerusalem, (Luke 19: 41-44). Why? Because they had missed their day of peace and now it was hid from their eyes, because they knew not their day of visitation. **TODAY is the day of salvation.**

There is an unseen line between God's mercy and God's wrath. For over 100 years God's mercy continued in Noah's day. Noah was busy building an ark of safety and preaching righteousness. From Genesis 6 we learn that wickedness was great as masses of folk worked overtime to think up and to do evil. They were a wicked, vile, and lawless crowd. But there were respectable folk, also. According to Jesus, in Matthew 24:37-39, they were simply busy buying and selling and eating and drinking, etc. I suspect they were horrified about the really wicked crowd who were a bad influence in their fair cities. **BUT THEY WERE ALL BLIND TO COMING JUDGMENT. THEY "KNEW NOT"...AND THE FLOOD CAME**

AND DESTROYED THEM ALL! As God warns in Genesis 6:3-- "My Spirit will not always strive with man..."

BOTTOM LINE: **One of God's most fearful judgments** is that God simply removes His restraining hands and lets humans have even unrestricted and unrestrained passions to go downward deeper and deeper into the paths of sin. **Nowhere is God's present tense wrath of abandonment more revealed than in Romans 1:18-32.** In this passage, the first line of application is most likely, Noah's generation. But also, **RIGHT NOW**, the wrath of God is being continuously revealed from heaven against ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNES. HOW LONG may men go on in sin, How long will God forbear?... **ONE ANSWER from the sky is sent: Ye, who from God live apart, while it is called TODAY, Repent and Harden not your heart! REPENT! BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; AND YOU SHALL BE SAVED!**

www.southsidegallatin.org Abundant Grace and Blessings to All!
James Bell

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 23 @ 11:00AM,

Led by Cindy Bell

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

******SUNDAY Schedule for October 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

****** SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! ******

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

SOME UPCOMING DATES:

1. November has 5 Sundays: Third Sunday, November 26— LORD'S SUPPER & Home Groups. First, Second, Forth, & Fifth Sundays [2, 9, 23, 30] — all Regular Schedule, including Fellowship Lunch. (**NO** 5th Sunday Evening Praise Service)

2. December Sundays: 12/7— Regular; 12/14 — S.S.; SPECIAL SERVICE REJOICING IN CHRIST'S BIRTH; Lunch; 12/21— Annual BRUNCH during S.S. & Morning Worship/LORD'S SUPPER;

[12/21 Evening Home Groups... each group decide to either have or take a December break]

12/28— Sunday School and Worship, only.