



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 46, November 18 , 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."***

JESUS is BUILDING HIS CHURCH— What are His Methods?

Jesus reminds us: "... ***I will build my church***; and the gates of hell [Hades: the powers of death] shall not prevail against it..." (Matthew 16:17-18) The believers in the New Testament understood that once you're born again, you're part of the fellowship of the redeemed: "God is faithful, ***by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***" (I Corinthians 1:9) That fellowship is not just me and Jesus; but it is— **Jesus and the local assembly of believers to which the Holy Spirit has joined me!** (1 Cor. 12:12-24)

This may be a surprise: In the New Testament **no one ever laments**, "Attendance was down last Sunday, what can we do to build it up? How can we get more members?" **Yes**, those first churches began strong; however as persecution came, many fell away. The cares of this life pulled others away. Indeed, there were many anti-Christis; and there were those who left the true congregations because they were false converts from the start! (1 John 2:15-19) **Nevertheless**, none of the New Testament churches lamented, "Attendance was down last Sunday, what can we do to build it up? How can we get more members?" **There is no evidence that** they did a 'poll' to find out what the lost like so as to adapt church to the lost. **They had no** sports, entertainment, or advertising budget to be spent on endeavors designed to attract pagans. **Instead**, the Holy Spirit in the New Testament called upon believers **(1)** to not blaspheme the gospel by bad living; **(2)** to ADORN the gospel by Christ-like living! (Every

New Testament Epistle MAJORS on these themes!) **(3)** Moreover, Jesus, in Revelation 2-3, reveals that which He commends and commands and what He rejects if a church is to be truly effective. **Also, the Acts of the Apostles overflows with revelation as to how Jesus turned situations into EFFECTIVE CHURCH advances:**

(1) Persecution of the church **led to** a church-wide prayer meeting, (Acts 4:23-33), **with the results being** a fresh advance of the kingdom of God.

(2) Sin in the church **led to** severe chastening by Christ, (Acts 5:1-14), **with the end result being** another fresh advance of the kingdom of God.

(3) Neglect of some members and murmuring in the church **led to** the appointment of special servants to minister to the Greek widows, (Acts 6:1-7), **with the ultimate result being** yet another fresh advance of the kingdom of God.

(4) Bold preaching brought martyrdom and more persecution, (Acts 7:1-60; 8:1-4), **which yielded yet another** fresh advance of the kingdom of God!

In the New Testament, all the believers had to worry about was to *stick to the business of holy Christian living and boldly proclaiming the gospel to the world* and let God add to the church as He would. (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 3:6-11) When needs and problems came up, they went before the Lord and sought His help - and got it. "What do we do when the Greek widows complain that the Jewish widows are getting more food?" "What do we do when they have Peter locked up in jail?" **There was always an answer, and the answer was always from the LORD... more often than not, in specific answer to prayer!** (Acts 4:23-33; 12:5-12)

QUESTION: In light of this reality, why is the Church-wide Prayer meeting so neglected by us today?

If we are together in a local assembly it's because **the Lord is still building His church.** What do we have in common, but Jesus? - He brought us together. - He holds us together. - He helps us with every

need and problem that arises, if we take it to Him. **For instance, here are two very real needs in all Bible-believing Churches:**

1. There is a need to genuinely praise God corporately... so that we are letting the Holy Spirit and the words of Scripture lift us into God's presence ... **So that when** we are singing hymns or choruses or praying or reading Scripture or preaching and/or giving testimony, we are truly before the Throne of God in worship in a spirit of unity. **We speak not of 'cookie-cutter' uniformity,** but of praise that is true and pure and beautiful before the Lord, coming from our hearts UNTO the LORD in God-given unity and holiness. (Ephesians 4:1-16)

2. There is also an urgent need for laborers, not only in the harvest beyond, but also in the house of prayer, in the assembly of the saints. Laborers are needed EVEN for **the sometimes thankless, monotonous tasks** that make it possible for us to be a well-equipped, well-nourished, gospel army.

WEEKLY EXAMPLES: - **People** to be responsible in the nurseries. - **People** to help get dinner ready at fellowship meals. - **People** to help cleanup. - **People** to open and close. - **People** to help with music and singing. - **People** to teach classes. - **People** to disciple others. - **People** to visit the sick, shut-ins and widows. - **People** to write letters. - **People** to minister to folks at home... or in jail, etc. **No assembly of believers can function with power** if it doesn't have an army of people to do the 'every day and unseen' jobs purely as acts of worship unto our LORD! (Worship is not just PRAISE! Worship is SERVICE unto the Lord!)

THEREFORE, TWO NEEDS: More praise! More laborers! The temptation is to sit down and map out a solution. But the solution, if it's going to be valid, **has to come from the LORD Himself:**

(1) You don't go to man for artificial stimulus when you need to learn to worship and praise— **you go to the Holy Spirit breathed** Word of God and behold GOD and His gospel of mercy and grace. (Rom 12:1-2)

(2) You don't go to man when you need laborers— **you go to the LORD of the harvest!** (Matt 9:36-38; Luke 10:17-20) **Further Note:**

(3) Going to God IN ONE ACCORD **brings forth PRAISE and boldness in preaching the gospel!** (Acts 4:23-33);

(4) DEALING WITH SIN in the church brings forth new laborers! (Acts 5:1-14)

EXAMPLE: We need to take literally our Lord's promise that if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things, including funds, will be added to us. **THEREFORE, we don't beg or ask for pledges.** When things get tight we must take it before the Lord. For many years, we have seen the Lord provide enough so that we can support local needs and ministries; and ministries beyond our own fellowship in places near and far. **Let us agree** with the brother who said: "If we as an assembly should reach a place where the money isn't coming, freely and unto the LORD, from the hearts of believers who know the importance of being faithful in the unrighteous mammon, we should take it as a revelation from God that we are out of step with Biblical Christianity!" (2 Cor. 8:1-15)

And so these two needs for more true praise and more laborers have to be approached in the same way. They have to be taken before the LORD of the church, remembering that He alone is the builder. - He knows what we need better than we do. - He cares more than we do. - And let us remember also that Jesus builds His church through the **intercession** of His saints! (Acts 4:23-33)

Man's way is this: Whatever 'packs the pew' must be of God!

With God's way, there are seasons of many (Acts 2) and there are seasons of few who remain, (John 6:63-66; Phil. 3:18-19). **The true work of God can NEVER be judged by size, only by SORT!** (1 Cor. 3:13)

1. We need to be clear in our minds as to what we're asking for when we ask for more true praise. "Lord, give us a spirit of true praise!" We can picture SINGING hymns and Choruses with our whole hearts, even with uplifted hands and with wonderful God-honoring testimonies, etc. - and these things should happen!

But true praise is something much more than that— the true praise of God is to serve God well with body, soul, and spirit,

24/7: *"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing."* (Ps 100:1-2; Rom 12:1-2)

If our joyful noise to the Lord is real and our singing in His presence is truly music to His ear— **then we're going to be serving Him gladly as we serve Him well. MOREOVER, WE WILL NOT ONLY SING WITH THE CONGREGATION; WE WILL SING AT MIDNIGHT IN THE PRISON! (Acts 16:22-40)** Moreover, we will be manifesting holiness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit and not the works of the flesh! (Galatians 5:19-23; Isaiah 1:11-20)

*"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works; **you have the name of being alive, and you are dead.** Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God.., "* (Rev 3:1-2) The church at Sardis had a name of being alive. **If you went to their meetings, there would have been GREAT CROWDS and you would have heard dynamic praises.** But those praises were not real: Because their works were not perfect in the sight of God, their works were not meeting God's requirements! **Most of her members were DEFILED WITH THE FILTH of this world!** (Rev. 3:4)

GOD REQUIRES HOLINESS, LOVE, and FORGIVENESS! GOD REQUIRES THAT WE REPENT OF all works of the flesh! **Moreover, God's way to HAPPINESS, which is foundational to worship, is serving others after the pattern of Jesus!** (John 13:13-17; 13:34-35)

Sardis, in their eyes, was the most alive church around! **But in reality,** most of the member's lives, (even as is true in many churches today), were deeply soiled with the filth of sin— lovelessness, hate, back-biting, slander, resentments, bitterness, immorality, etc.

GENUINE PRAISE is the offering up of our body as a living sacrifice, committing it gladly to the thankless, monotonous glory-less jobs in the service of God without grumbling; and praise from hearts repenting and

being purified from sin! (Ps. 51) *"I appeal to you therefore brethren by the mercies of God to present your bodies as **a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God** which is your spiritual worship."* (Rom. 12:1-2)

How did Jesus live so as to receive His Father's pleasure? By emptying Himself of His glory, taking the form of a servant, and serving obediently even unto death. How did Paul live manifesting spiritual worship to God? It was through endurance in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, fastings... REJOICING in the LORD always... seeing every situation as one to further the gospel! (Phil. 1-4)

So if we're asking the Lord to shower us with a spirit of true praise, we're really asking Him to help us to yield ourselves to a spirit of glad service in the every day and in the thankless places and the cruddy jobs. We are asking Him for BOLDNESS to take the gospel to the lost in our world. Moreover, **we are willing to be done with the filth of this world,** to be done with bitterness, anger, lust, etc. LET US: Make a joyful noise... **Serve the Lord with gladness...** and come before his presence with singing... with cleansed hearts. (Isa. 1:10-20)

2. We also need to get clear in our minds what we're asking for when we're asking for more laborers. "Lord, give us more laborers!"

THUS, we might picture MORE people gathered for OUTREACH ministry ... more help in the nurseries ... help with various Classes ... drivers that are faithful as a clock ... faithful ministry to the widows... parents nurturing their children in the ways of the LORD... men and women reaching out boldly proclaiming the gospel ... somebody going out to a foreign land to help those missionaries ... **All this and more may well happen.**

(1) But every laborer who is truly serving the Lord with gladness is first of all a person whose heart is on fire with praise and thanksgiving toward God!

(2) GETTING RID of all manner of sin that has been allowed to dirty a believer's heart is a foundational key to PRAISE-JOY-FILLED LABORS for the souls of others! (Psalm 51:12-15; 40:1-3) When King David repented

of his sin, then he began to SING again and then he went AGAIN into the harvest! (Psalm 51)

(3) TODAY, the Holy Spirit is already PRESENT and indwelling; but even so we must follow the same pattern: Acts 4:23-33; Acts 5:1-14!!

All too often the Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched.

Nothing so quenches the Holy Spirit as lovelessness and ungodliness.

Who are these laborers who get the work done? *People who* live a life of repentance and faith... ***People who*** have first learned to enter into God's gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise ... ***People who*** have learned truly to be thankful unto Him and bless His name. They work diligently with songs of praise **in their hearts** ... they continually renew their strength... for they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength... (Isaiah 40:31)

“... **I will build my church**, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18) **Jesus is building His church all over the earth, including the place where you and I are.** As we lay these two needs [More Praise and More laborers!] before Him we can be sure that our very desire to pray for these things is coming from Him.

And we can be sure that He waiting to give us these two miracles in the coming days in greater measure than we could ask or think! **But we have not because we ask not!**

SHALL WE BECOME A HOUSE OF PRAYER? Or shall we continue to go to the world for methods and techniques, drawing people to religious clubs rather than being those through whom JESUS CHRIST BUILDS HIS CHURCH?

(1) A spirit of true praise to serve the Lord with gladness - **May we yield to it!**

(2) An army of laborers who will joyfully live and die praising Him - **May we be found among them!** [from R.E. Bieber, edited, additions]

May Grace Abound! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

PS. *“All is in Christ! By the Holy Spirit! For the Glory of God! All else is vain!”* – Aldophe Monod

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— TBA

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

SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER 23, 30

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

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church

3. NOON FELLOWSHIP MEAL

4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service

(11/30/14-- **NO** 5th Sunday Evening Praise Service)

UPCOMING December Sundays:

12/7— Regular Schedule

12/14 — Sunday School; and a SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE REJOICING IN CHRIST'S BIRTH; followed with Lunch

12/21— **Annual BRUNCH** during 9:30am Sunday School; followed by Morning Worship; concluding at the **LORD'S SUPPER**. [No lunch] **NOTE**; [12/21 Evening Home Groups... each group decide to either have or take a December break]

12/28— **Sunday School and Worship Service, only.**