



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 43, No. 48, December 6 , 2016 / 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."***

THE CALL TO GIVE EVEN AS GOD GIVES!

"Do all things without murmurings and disputing... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation... [And SHINE] as lights... holding forth the Word of LIFE... (See Phil. 2:1-16)

WHICH is the GRIEF of God's heart— that secular businesses do not please our cultural senses for religion's big December holiday?

OR MIGHT IT RATHER BE that the redeemed get side-tracked from truly displaying THE LIGHT and LIFE of Jesus to a watching world?

THE DEEPENING DARKNESS needs the light and life of Jesus! IN THE DARKNESS— RARE IS THE JOY AND FOCUS ON THESE WONDERS:

- 1. GOD the Father** is the greatest GIVER of all eternity.
- 2. JESUS Christ** is the greatest and the costliest GIFT that was ever given!
- 3. Christians are gifts** from God the Father to God the Son! (John 17:1-2, 6-9, 11-12, 20)

4. And if that is not amazing beyond words— remember that Jesus HAD TO PAY for the gifts He received! EVERY sinner, given by the Father to the Son— the Son PURCHASED with His own blood!

GOD'S GIFT GIVING REVEALS HIS LOVING, SACRIFICIAL HEART FOR THE UNDSERVING, THE UNWORTHY, THE UNLOVING!

WHAT DOES MY GIVING REVEAL?

Our calling is to 'shine as lights in the world!' Our calling is to give as has been given unto us! **LET US CAREFULLY MEASURE our giving by the plumb line of the Word of God!**

HONESTY REQUIRES THIS CONFESSION: ALL OF US have too often given BAD 'GIFTS' from our carnal nature! (I know, we do not commonly refer to these as 'GIFTS'... Nevertheless, we give them! They are very destructive, deadly, discouraging, and even damning— but we give them!)

"Now the works of the flesh [Gifts given from the wickedness of our hearts!] **are manifest,** [THEY ARE QUITE OBVIOUS] which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings,** murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, **that they which do such things SHALL NOT inherit the kingdom of God.**" (Galatians 5:19-21)

[YES, if such is still our LIFESTYLE, we are yet enslaved to INIQUITY and will NOT ENTER heaven... even though we may have preached and done wonderful things in life— JESUS SAYS SO: Matthew 7:21-23]

CRITICAL NOTE:

PRIDE is the engine— the driving force behind these destructive gifts! “Only by pride cometh CONTENTION!” [Strife, Quarreling, Fighting, Debate] Prov. 13:10.

[I am not called upon to ‘call you out’ for your pride; but I MUST admit, confess, and repent of my own pride!]

SATAN’S GREATEST WORK IS TO TRY TO STOP THE ADVANCE OF THE GREAT, GOD GIFT OF LOVE by promoting PRIDE! Thus, satan encourages us with his lying deceptions to give gifts of ACCUSATIONS and the response gifts of DEFENSIVENESS; followed by gifts of counter accusations and counter defensiveness; AND THEN, he seeks to move us into name-calling, resentment, bitterness, and other expressions of anti-Christ gifts. In the midst of all this satanic giving, it is common for us to deceptively wrap ourselves in ‘hurt!’ [WHILE WE CANNOT ‘BLAME SATAN’ for these anti-Christ gifts— he is busy encouraging us to give them!]

BY THE WAY: BEFORE we GIVE the above flesh-inspired, satan-encouraged anti-Christ gifts to fellow Christians— we need to remember, **JESUS ASKED:** (Acts 9:4-6) *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”* **SERIOUS REALITY:** *The way you and I treat Christians with DEEDS, WORDS, and ATTITUDES is the way we treat Jesus!*

DOES my giving testify of Christlikeness or of anti-Christ?

AM I A GIVER OF GOD’S LOVE? IF NOT... I am a zero BEFORE God; (1 Cor. 13:1-7), I am doing the work of satan. I am persecuting Christ! ARE WE LISTENING? “Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?”.... The way you and I treat a Christian is the way we treat Jesus. "God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son...!" What will I, what will you give? **AM I A GIVER OF GOD’S LOVE? IF NOT, I am a zero BEFORE God. I am doing the work of satan. I am persecuting Christ by demonic gift giving!**

As Christians, the only way we can give the above ‘FLESHLY, DEMONIC’ gifts is to GRIEVE, QUENCH, and RESIST THE MINISTRY OF THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT!

HERE ARE EXPRESSIONS OF GIVING which are GRACE-FILLED, CHRIST-REVEALING, and HOLY SPIRIT ENERGIZED:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance*: against such there is no law. **And they that are Christ's** have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:19-22) **THESE are Christ-revealing GIFTS!!** By these we SHINE as lights... holding forth the Word of LIFE... (See Phil. 2:1-16)

WE REVEAL CHRIST TO A WATCHING WORLD BY LOVE! (John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-8; Philippians 2:1-16) **GIVING THESE GIFTS IS GOD'S primary method FOR ADVANCING THE GOSPEL.**

IS MY GIVING / IS OUR GIVING FROM SATAN OR FROM GOD?

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife [is], there [is] confusion and every evil work."

CHRIST SATURATED WISDOM GIFTS ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT:

"But the wisdom that is from above **is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,** [and] easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3:14-18)

WHEN OUR GIVING IS FROM GOD, THE KEY CHARACTERISTIC IS LOVE!

REALITY: IF WE TRULY GAZE UPON BETHLEHEM'S MANGER AND CALVARY'S CROSS... AND IF THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVES WITHIN US— WE WILL BE FRESHLY INSPIRED *TO ENGAGE IN WONDERFUL CHRIST GIFT GIVING and CHRIST GIFT EXCHANGING!* **WE WILL 'give and exchange' GOD'S LOVE!**

Just what will these gifts look like? 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Amplified Bible— [As we read the following... let us REPEATEDLY ADD: “*Christ IN us and THROUGH us...*”

4 Love [*Christ IN us and THROUGH us*] endures long and is patient and kind; **love** never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.

5 It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. **Love** (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].

6 It [*Christ IN us and THROUGH us*] does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. **7 Love** bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. **8 Love** never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].

Other Scriptures reveal that God's LOVE GIFTS ARE WRAPPED in many glorious expressions:

Accept one another (Romans 15:7) **Greet** one another (Romans 16:16) **Care** for one another (1 Corinthians 12:24) **Submit** to one another (Ephesians 5:18-21) **Forbear** one another (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16) **Forgive** one another (Colossians 3:12-13) **Be kind** to one another (Ephesians 4:31-32) **Serve** one another (Galatians 5:13-14) **Bear** one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) **Be hospitable** to one another (1 Peter 4:9) **Pray** for one another (James 5:16) **Build up** one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Teach one another (Colossians 3:16) **Exhort** one another (Hebrews 3:12-13) **Admonish** one another (Colossians 3:16)

Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18) **Prefer** one another (Romans 12:9-10)

Do not judge one another (Romans 14:13) Do **not** speak evil of one another (James 4:11)

Do no murmur against one another (James 5:9) Do **not** bite and devour one another (Galatians 5:14-15) Do **not** provoke one another (Galatians 5:25-26) **Do not** envy one another (Galatians 5:25-26) Do **not** lie to one another (Colossians 3:9-11)

RESPONSE: “THOSE ARE ALL MIGHTY HIGH SOUNDING WORDS! FRANKLY, I DON’T KNOW ANYONE WHO LIVES BY THOSE IMPRACTICAL ONE ANOTHERS! BESIDES, IF YOU HAD MY HOME ENVIRONMENT;

IF YOU HAD MY WORK ENVIRONMENT— you would understand just how impractical and discouraging this list is!”

OK... I think I understand, you are saying something like: “PEOPLE GIVE ME HEADACHES AND HEARTAKES... I am tortured by the works of the flesh because of he, her, them! THEREFORE, I QUIT THE MARRIAGE, THE JOB, THE CHURCH...

I understand! But... you know... I just don’t think IT, HE, SHE, THEM is the problem, BECAUSE JESUS CAME AND THRIVED IN THE SAME KIND OF ENVIRONMENT... only far worse! JESUS was the most joyful person who ever lived. He had negative environment and people— but He was never taken off focus from HIS FATHER’S BUSINESS!

REALITY: It, he, she, them, and/or difficult circumstances ARE NOT the problem.

LET EACH OF US face up to, confess, and REPENT of our own pride and rebellion; and let us EMBRACE the beautiful will of God:

Philippians 2:12-16 Amplified Bible ¹² So then, my dear ones,... continue to work out your salvation [that is, cultivate it, bring it to full effect, actively pursue spiritual maturity] ***with awe-inspired fear and trembling [using serious caution and critical self-evaluation to avoid anything that might offend God or discredit the name of Christ].*** ¹³ For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure.

¹⁴Do everything without murmuring or questioning [the providence of God], ¹⁵so that you may prove yourselves to be blameless *and* guileless, innocent *and* uncontaminated, children of God without blemish in the midst of a [morally] crooked and [spiritually] perverted generation, ***among whom you are seen as bright lights [beacons shining out clearly] in the world [of darkness]***, ¹⁶holding out *and* offering to everyone the word of life,...

Phil 2: 12: So then, my dear ones,... continue to work out your salvation [that is, cultivate it, bring it to full effect, actively pursue spiritual maturity] ***with awe-inspired fear and trembling [using serious caution and critical self-evaluation to avoid anything that might offend God or discredit the name of Christ].***

LET US CELEBRATE JESUS! / James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

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

WEDNESDAYS: ☐ **6:30pm— Children** Ministry/activities; ☐ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— (For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)

☐ **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Studies in the Gospel of Luke! TAKING A BREAK...

NEXT MEETING: January 3, 2017 @ 11:00am; Cindy Bell teaching. [Front door open at 10:45 till 11:05am; or come in Iron Steps side entrance!]

MEN: EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! {*DECEMBER Study: Matthew 1 & 2 and Luke 1 & 2*}... **Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee and biscuits!**

SUNDAY SERVICES:

*****Sunday, December 11:**

9:30am- Sunday School // **10:45am- Worship Service**

NOON 'Covered-dish' Lunch // **1:00pm** Afternoon Service

*****Sunday, December 18:** ☐ **9:30am- CHURCH-WIDE FELLOWSHIP 'BRUNCH'** (During the Sunday School hour, the ENTIRE CHURCH FAMILY is ASKED to gather in the Fellowship Hall. **Bring 'breakfast/brunch' food stuffs between 9am and no later than 9:20am...** We will start eating NO LATER than 9:30am)

☐ **10:45am- Worship Service**

Sunday, December 25:

10:45am WORSHIP SERVICE & LORD'S SUPPER

NOTICE: The above schedule for December 2016, is not exactly the same as we usually have... **but it is PRINTED CORRECTLY for this year's plans:**

1. NOTE: We plan to observe the LORD'S SUPPER only on the 25th.

2. NOTE: We realize that some families may not be in town on the 25th... BUT, SO AS TO HONOR CHRIST, PLAN NOW TO BE assembled with a congregation of Bible-believing, Christ-focused saints, WHERE EVER you are on Sunday, December 25th.

AND IF YOU ARE IN GALLATIN... and even if you HAVE COMPANY COMING... Honor the LORD! Plan now to be present for the worship service. Inform your guests. Bring them with you!

3. DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE on the LORD'S DAY of December 25th...

We will join together in SINGING unto the LORD, rejoicing in the ADVENT, the Birth of Jesus Christ the LORD; SEVERAL OF OUR MEN AND the congregation will also JOIN IN the sharing of some of the MANY REASONS why JESUS CAME!

We will conclude in worship,

by observing the LORD'S SUPPER— even as our LORD has instructed:

“THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCES OF ME!”