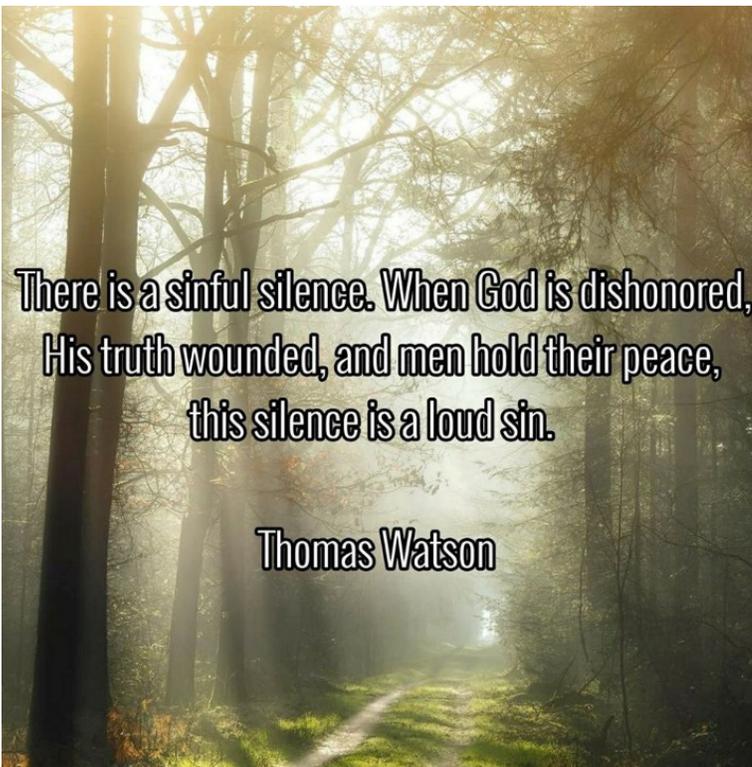


GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 44b, No. 14, April 9, 2019 / Southside Baptist Church / 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; and 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 Savior JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***



Crucifixion! / Resurrection! And Easter!

I. Easter is a big deal in the U.S., and it's hardly just about religion. Slightly more than half of Americans say they will go to church on Easter, according to a National Retail Federation survey, while 87% of parents will have Easter baskets for their children on the holiday. (More than eight in 10 parents say they'll eat

some of their kids' Easter candy as well!) **Total Easter Spending Is Rising Sharply:** The National Retail Federation estimates that Americans will collectively spend **\$17.3 billion** on clothing, food, decorations, and other holiday

items this Easter, up from \$16.4 billion last year. [18.2 BILLION WAS SPENT IN 2018] AMERICANS will spend **\$2.4 billion strictly on candy** for the holiday, up from \$2.2 billion last Easter. **SO, HAVING FUN and FEEDING ‘sweet-tooth’ appetites are major attractions of this ‘sweet’ holiday!**

II. EASTER is Big Deal in Churches

A BIG DIFFERENCE between the ATTRACTION FOCUSED HOLIDAY SUNDAYS, (Like Easter & Christmas), and all other Sundays is that for the holidays— there is much extra time, effort, and expense put forth in the concerted effort to attract visitors. Churches GO ALL OUT to impress with music, drama, pleasing HOPE-FOCUSED sermons, Easter Egg Hunts for the children, and etc. (Yes, it’s all for JESUS!) **However, in honest reality— what is truly MOST IMPORTANT is that the congregations and visitors are attracted and pleased!**

CONTRAST: For Sunday services, every week— the real issue is to worship God ‘in spirit and in truth’... in accordance with what the Holy Spirit has revealed in the truth of the Word of God and also, by New Testament example. **In genuine worship, what really MATTERS IS THAT GOD IS PLEASED!** Sadly, we humans have a long history of embracing our own ideas about worship and placing them above what God has set forth! (Cain and Aaron come to mind— Cain was pleased. Aaron and all of Israel were pleased. God was not! (Gen 4; Ex 32; Isa 1:1-18)

III. NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP— as it relates to the Death and Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST

REMINDER: ‘Sola Scriptura’— “That Scripture is the only infallible voice in the church, and is to be interpreted, in its own light, and with the gracious help of the Holy Ghost,

who is promised to every Christian (1 John 2:20-27)...” (A.A. Hodge) **Remember: We do not have any authority to add to or subtract from the Word of God**; therefore we must be on a lifelong pilgrimage of studying the Word of God and heeding the Word of God! (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:13-17) **CLEAR REALITY: The Word of God reveals that** when it comes to celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ— New Testament Christians simply obeyed Jesus and celebrated the **New Testament Passover or LORD'S SUPPER!** (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) **MOREOVER, the Word of God reveals that the LORD'S SUPPER has** a singular FOCUS— *Christ's DEATH, with His resurrection and second coming clearly implied!*

THE LORD'S SUPPER: There is no POMP, no grand ceremonies, no drama productions, no musical productions, nothing to entertain the crowds or children— just the simplicity of a piece of bread and wine, or juice— calling all who are in Christ to deep soberness, amazement, and THANKSGIVING for the LAMB OF GOD!

CONTRAST: Here are Easter practices which are ingrained in Christendom today— (Catholics observe most or all of these; Protestants/Evangelicals observe some of these) Lent, Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Fourteen Stations of the Cross, **Service of Darkness, or Service of Shadows, Holy Saturday,** Easter egg hunts, Easter Sunrise services, Passion Plays, and/or Easter Sunday! **[As you likely know, NONE of the above are set forth in the New Testament!]**

This is also common knowledge: Whenever the world wants to get their point across or promote their product or position— they spend mega-bucks! They put on a Big Show and DAZZLE the physical senses. AND SADLY, more often than not— many

Churches follow in that train as they seek to build impressive religious kingdoms. Thus, at Christendom's grand calendar moments of Christmas and Easter, she is on dazzling display; and IN UTTER DISREGARD of New Testament teaching and/or examples. NEVERTHELESS, **JESUS STILL CALLS HIS CHURCH to profound CELEBRATION of the most significant of all events in history— those hours on THE CROSS, where 'JESUS PAID A SIN DEBT HE DID NOT OWE; BECAUSE WE HAD A SIN DEBT WE COULD NOT PAY!' Thus, because of His FINISHED WORK OF PROPITIATION, Jesus says: "...This do In Remembrance of Me!"**

CONTRAST: Whereas **MAN'S CELEBRATIONS** require much money and skills for their grand **PERFORMANCES—GLORIOUSLY, the LORD'S SUPPER** is equally within the reach of the poor and the rich, the educated and the uneducated, the famous and the forgotten: **"...This do In Remembrance of Me!"** SO, I PLEAD WITH ONE AND ALL: **LET US 'MAKE MUCH OF' THE LAMB OF GOD! WITHOUT** any artificial enticements or inducements, **the pure Word of God and the blessed Holy Spirit are ready to carry us** to the most ultimate heights of wonder and awe **as we come to the LORD'S TABLE!**

SURPRISING: NEITHER JESUS nor HIS disciples EVER set up or observed a specific day of the year to CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OFF CHRIST OR THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST! Instead, what Jesus ordained was and is **THE LORD'S SUPPER—** which has us focus upon the LORD'S suffering and substitutionary death, while clearly including the reality of His resurrection!

THIS, OF COURSE, DOES NOT MEAN THAT there is not vital IMPORTANCE to the Resurrection— for, IF there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **IF**

Christ is not raised, there is not the slightest hope of our resurrection! **IF** Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is our faith. **IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED, THEN THE APOSTLES ARE LIARS!** (1 Cor.15:15-16) **IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED, THEN CHRISTIANS ARE YET IN THEIR SINS** (1 Cor. 15:17) **IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED,** we will experience no mercy, no love, no compassion, no forgiveness from God. **IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED,** when we stand before GOD, we will get everything that we deserve for every evil action, thought or motive we have done or had... **IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED, THEN DEAD CHRISTIANS HAVE PERISHED** (1 Cor. 15:18) **IF only** for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

INDEED: The resurrection of Christ demonstrated historically that the sacrifice of Christ for sin was sufficient, satisfactory, and accepted by God! **AS ANOTHER HAS STATED: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST was God's, "Amen!" To Christ's, "It is finished!"** SO, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is exceedingly critical! (1 Cor. 15)

However, IF Jesus HAD FAILED to make sufficient propitiation— there would have been no resurrection! MOREOVER, if Jesus had not been born of a virgin by the agency of Almighty God; and had Jesus not lived a sinless life— HE would not have qualified to make propitiation! So, His virgin birth is also VITAL!

(Even so, the New Testament offers NO day of celebration as to the Birth of Christ. And, strangely, modern Christendom who INSISTS of grand Christmas celebrations have no emphasis on... many even deny... the virgin birth of Christ!)

BOTTOM LINE: Jesus **DOES NOT** ask us to do anything special to remember His birth or His resurrection! JESUS DOES call us to remember Him and His sacrifice as we come to the LORD'S TABLE! **THE Holy Spirit DID NOT** move Paul to write— ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the resurrection...’ BUT RATHER— the Holy Spirit has PAUL to TESTIFY: **“GOD FORBID THAT I should glory, SAVE IN THE CROSS!”** (Gal. 6:14) **GOD, CLEARLY CALLS FOR OUR FOCUS TO BE ON THE PRICE PAID TO COVER OUR SIN DEBT!**

WITHOUT A DOUBT: It is much more ‘pleasing’ to glory in the hope of resurrection— **than to be confronted with and called upon** to focus on CHRIST ON CALVARY paying MY sin debt; **than to be called upon** to ‘Deny myself, TAKE UP MY CROSS DAILY, and FOLLOW JESUS!’ (Luke 9:23)... **or to be plainly told**, “Whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after Me, CANNOT be My disciple!’ (Luke 14:27) **SADLY**, MULTITUDES have rejected the WAY OF THE CROSS, yet they are quite excited to participate in performance-based religious observances!

YES, it is much more pleasing to produce and enjoy the fun of Easter egg hunts, Sunrise services, Passion Plays, and grand musical productions— **than to BE STILL, QUIET, IN AWE**, and **STUNNED** by **beholding the LAMB OF GOD through the Word of God**, hearing JESUS crying out: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?”... as He willingly became our sin-bearing Substitute!

REALITY: Jesus was anointed with the **OIL OF GLADNESS** as a result of His obedience to His Father; and so shall WE ... as we heed the voice of JESUS: **“...This do In Remembrance of Me!”**

THE LORD'S SUPPER! Our faith is called upon to focus upon the COMPLETE work of redemption: The cross is empty; the tomb is empty; Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven; HE IS COMING BACK as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah!" — but He will forever be seen AS THE LAMB! (Over 20 times in the Revelation— JESUS IS THE LAMB!)

In short: The Supper is a remembrance of Him. [Luke 22:19] The Supper is a special time of communion with Him. [1 Cor. 10:16] The Supper is a special time of fellowship with the body of Christ and especially the local body. [1 Cor. 11:18, 20] **The Supper is a commemoration of His substitutionary death.** [1 Cor. 11:26]

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME TO EAT AND DRINK THE LORD'S SUPPER?

It means that I accept with a believing heart the entire suffering and death of Christ for me.

It means that by the amazing grace of FAITH IN CHRIST, I am forgiven all my sins and now have eternal life. Eating the bread and drinking the cup does not wash away my sins.

Only Christ can remove my sins, and that happens when by His grace I put my faith in Him. THE LORD'S SUPPER CELEBRATES THIS WONDER!

BENEFITS WHEN COMING TO THE LORD'S SUPPER:

My sins are exposed for what they really are before a Holy God. **My heart is inflamed** with love for Christ. **I am reminded** of all that He suffered for me. My faith in Christ is strengthened.

My hope that one day I will live with Christ is made more certain. Although CHRIST'S resurrection body is in heaven at the right hand of the Father and I am still here on earth— the Lord's Supper reinforces the reality of His resurrection, His promise that **He is coming back; AND that He will one day raise my mortal body and take me home to heaven to be with Him!**

BUT I'M NOT PERFECT!

I may come when I know myself to be a sinner and am displeased with myself because of my sin, yet come trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of my sin. **I may come when** I know myself to be weak and in need of Christ to strengthen my faith and when I desire Him to enable me to live a better life.

AT HIS TABLE, Jesus is teaching me that, just as bread and drink nourish my temporal life here, so His crucified body and poured-out blood truly nourish my spiritual life.

Jesus uses this visible sign and pledge to assure me that all He has done for me in His perfect obedience, suffering, and death is certainly mine. I take the bread and the cup in my own hand and with my own mouth and am freshly assured **that what Jesus accomplished for sinners at Calvary is given to me personally.**

WHAT SHOULD I THINK AS THE ELEMENTS ARE DISTRIBUTED?

As I take the bread, I remember to thank God that Christ took up a human body; that He was tempted just as I am; that He was willing to suffer for me.

As I take the cup, I remember to thank God that Jesus poured out His blood for me; that He saves me from the guilt of my sin; that He sets me free from the power of sin; that I now have the righteousness of Christ and that I will live and reign with Christ forever. *(Portions of the above article is edited from an article by Pastor John Olson)*

IMPORTANT FINAL NOTE: PARENTS— Are your children saved, baptized believers? Spend time HELPING THEM to be prepared for SACRED WORSHIP at the LORD'S TABLE! Are they yet outside of Christ? MAKE SURE you help them to know that THE LORD'S TABLE is ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST! SHARE the gospel with them!

Great Grace to All! / James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

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<http://www.southsidegallatin.org/>

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SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— (This ministry is ON HOLD... PRAY FOR opening of doors!)

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at **5:15PM**.

WEDNESDAYS:

➔ **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE** ➔ Enter via **IRON STEPS, side door.** ➔ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— enter, side double doors.

➔ **6:30pm— Young Family Prayer Time!** THIS IS a time of Bible study and prayer geared toward **families with children in the nursery and pre-K class.**

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY—** Next meeting scheduled for **Tuesday, April 16, 2019 @ 11:00am; Continuing in LUKE.** ENTER at the back of the church building, [*Doors open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am*]

***** MEN: EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am:** Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! (**STUDY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN!**) ENTER AT THE back of Church building... under the drive-thru awning. [**DOORS OPEN FOR FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits & Donuts at 7:30am!**]

SUNDAY SERVICES, APRIL 14, 21, 28

9:30am— Sunday School Classes for All Ages

10:45am— Sunday Morning Worship Service

SPECIAL NOTES FOR SUNDAYS:

**** April 14 — 5:30pm - 7:00pm, Monthly Faithful Men, Study Guide, the 1689 Confession of Faith**

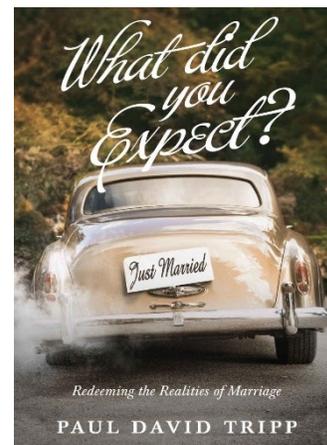
***** April 21— SCHEDULE FOR 'RESURRECTION SUNDAY'—**

9:30am, Sunday School

10:45am, Morning Worship & THE LORD’S SUPPER

[SOME HOME GROUPS, after services or at 5:00pm]

****** April 27— 6:00pm - 7:00pm, Church-wide EQUIPPING DISCIPLES by developing Christ-honoring Marriages: Paul David Tripp’s ‘WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? (Redeeming the Realities of Marriage)**



WORK DAY
NEW DATE
APRIL 27
9:30am



WORKDAY AT THE CHURCH