

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 26, June 30, 2020 / 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 JESUS CHRIST!”***

We live in a world of BAD VIOLENCE! WE NEED TO EMBRACE some practical application from: *Matthew 11:12, “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force!”*

THE NEEDED VIOLENCE!

(Adapted by Jay Wegter, from *Heaven Taken by Storm*, by Thomas Watson; FURTHER shortened for space considerations. No distinction is made between Wegter’s comments and Watson’s.)

*This is a strange paradox; Man naturally desires happiness, yet opposes it; he desires to be saved, yet hates that holy violence which would save him! **Matthew 11:12, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force!”** “And from the days of John the Baptist until the present moment the kingdom of heaven has been continuously taken by storm, **and those who take it by storm are seizing it as a precious prize!**” (Williams paraphrase).*

[NONE OF what we will see here is by SELF-EFFORT; BUT THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT— First, quickening the dead to LIFE; and then INDWELLING with power!]

Part and parcel of experiencing IN CHRIST holy violence is to take up our cross daily in true discipleship (Luke 9:23). “Leniency shaves the head (of sin) that should be cut off.” The saved should be always ready to have their hearts searched as the Psalmist was – Ps 139. **The reason**

people are tricked into error is because they do not adequately love the truth, (2 Thess. 2:10).

Foundational to winning the war: “*Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem His Name*” (Mal 3:16).

Holy violence entails: the ***resolution of the will***; the ***vigor of the affections***, the ***strength of endeavor***. The affections are “violent” things (Ps 42:2) Note the relationship between the mind, the affections, and the will—

[1] the mind explains what is precious to the affections and

[2] the affections instruct

[3] the will to pursue that which it regards to be its treasure!)

The Christian offers violence to HIMSELF. Pampering of the flesh is the quenching of God’s Spirit (*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit* – Gal 5:17). **The flesh, (Trojan horse within),** does all the mischief – when the flesh has its way, we won’t believe or pray. We must offer violence to fleshly desires! (Col 3:5; 1 Pet 2:11, Rom 8:12-14). **The true believer keeps mortifying sin in his entire Christian life!**

Paul beat down his body by prayer, fasting, and watching (1 Cor 9:27). We offer violence by mortification; the opposite of gratification and indulgence. **It is holy labor (violence) to stir ourselves to be centered upon God and raised above self-interest.**

Violence by the reading of the Word. The Word teaches us how to please God. The Word gives us weapons against sin to cut asunder the lusts of our heart. In this life, it is a profound mercy to have our consciences [1] Washed by the Redeemer’s blood, [2] Educated by the Word of God, and [3] Sensitized by the Spirit’s ministry.

Violence by prayer. The names of prayer imply violence: ***wrestling, pouring out the heart, fervency*** (Gen 32:24: 1 Sam 1:15). Stir the soul to take hold of God.

Violence by meditation. Meditation – how hard it is to fix our minds and

thought on God. Our flesh quarrels with this duty. **Hearing begets knowledge, but meditation begets devotion.**

Only by meditation do we **feed** our affections. Do you get your spiritual insights by personal meditation upon the Word of God, or are all of your insights “second hand” from your pastors and teachers?

Consider the paramount truths that are ready subjects for meditation: *meditate upon the corruption of your nature and what it means to pull down our pride. Meditate upon the death and passion of Christ and how He was bearing the Father’s wrath against our sins. Consider how dearly our sins cost Christ. See how this evokes love for Him in our hearts. Meditate upon your evidences for heaven:*

[1] Was your heart ever thoroughly convinced of sin?

[2] Did you ever see yourself lost without Christ?

[3] Has God ever made you willing to take Christ on His terms as your Priest and King?

[4] Are you willing to renounce the sins to which the bias of your heart does naturally incline?

[5] Are you willing to take Christ for better or worse; to take Him with His cross?

[6] Do you have the indwelling presence of the Spirit?

[7] What has the Spirit done in you? Has He made you meek, merciful, humble? Has He left the impress of holiness upon you?).

Meditate upon the uncertainty of all earthly comforts (Ps 49:11).

Meditate upon God’s severity against sin. Sin kindles hell and stirs up God’s wrath. Meditate upon eternal life.

Meditation - **“The clean animal chews the cud - the regenerate person chews truth.”** [1] Meditation makes the Word preached to profit.

[2] Meditation quickens the affections (assimilation of spiritual nutrition into the innermost being).

[3] Meditation has transforming power (note the principle of transformation - we become like that which fills the heart).

[4] Meditation produces reformation. The only way to consistently meditate is to **get a love for spiritual things.** *We naturally meditate on the things we love.*

If we loved heavenly things, we would meditate on them more.

Through meditation, our affections are conformed to God's truth.

If our affections are not continually conformed to the truth we will manifest some combination of the following sins against God's truth: ** suppress the truth, ** neglect the truth, ** distort the truth, or ** deny the truth.

Violence of self-examination. The good and wise Christian begins as if it were the Day of Judgment in his own soul. We must be aware of the impediments: ***self-love works against objectivity.*** *You would give yourself no rest if you bounced a check until the account was made right with the merchant, yet so opposed is our flesh to examination, that denial and self-deception reign; we're too willing to live with outstanding accounts of conscience.*

How the flesh resists self-examination – though we know that a lust is having its way in our soul like a raiding burglar, we do not even stir ourselves to turn on a light, instead we allow sin as a thief to steal our spiritual comfort, our boldness, our peace, and our sense of God's presence. ***The "harlot-professor" is seldom home, but always out spying on the faults of others. By contrast, the true believer does violence by self-examination.***

If we will not try ourselves and we belong to the Lord, God will try us by scourging! (Note the promise in [1 Corinthians 11:31](#) – *"If we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged."*) By way of example; a traveler talks about the home and country to which he is traveling, so also when we meet together, we should talk about our heavenly country ([Heb 11:16](#)).

We ought to provoke ourselves to good discourse (this is only possible with some kind of violence – without it our conversations will remain light and airy, void of any eternal good). Discourse reveals the contents of the heart. "While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus drew near" ([Luke 24:15](#)). ***Those with kingdom values cannot help but make those kingdom values the content of their discourse.***

Violence in overcoming the world – Christ gave Himself to redeem us from this present evil world ([Gal 1:4](#)). We must swim against the world like a fish against the current (p. 44). This world is ***deceitful, defiling, perishing.***

The world is always attempting to seduce us, inviting us to lodge in its false

refuges by promising comfort, security, fulfillment, and supply.

Violence in our pursuit of heaven. Consider the metaphors that clearly imply violence: *striving* (Lu 13:24); *wrestling* (Eph 6:12); *running* (1 Cor 9:24); *pressing* towards the mark (Phil 3:14); *fighting, laboring, warring* (1 Tim 6:12); praying *fervently* (James 5:16); *make calling and election sure by diligence* (2 Pet 1:10); *go from faith to faith* (Rom 1:17); overcome (Rev 2 & 3).

Without violent GODLY AFFECTIONS, we shall never be able to resist violent SIN TEMPTATIONS. The gates of hell are like the doors of an immense iron gate that open at their own accord. The way to its entrance is all downhill; nothing in our nature resists it easy and broad path. **Nothing is easier than to slide into hell.**

We must charge against the whole army of lusts – each one as strong as Goliath. A Christian can never take a vacation from the fight of faith. He is either watching or praying at all times. While not under trial, the believer watches; he is suspicious of the apparent calm, knowing that the enemy waits for negligence as an ideal time to spring his next ambush.

Countless souls sit in self-deception, imagining that they are on their way to heaven though they offer no holy violence. They content themselves that their soul's estate is well -- they sit under preaching (Or they preach and teach!), though they never look at their hearts.

Moderation is not to venture further in religion than may coexist with self-preservation (p. 50). Moderation in the world's sense is NEUTRALITY – a “happy medium” between strictness and profaneness (neither debauchery, nor purity). Here is the warning: ***moderation is lukewarm-ness. Be zealous and repent*** (Rev 3:19).

Take heed when the desire for heaven is not as strong as it once was. This is a shrewd sign of lukewarm-ness.

RECOVERY from LEAVING one's first love begins with diagnosis:

[1] The more violence, the more peace you will have (2 Pet 1:10, 11).

[2] Walking in the fear of God issues forth in the comfort of the Spirit (Acts 9:31).

[3] Deadness in service and duties opens us up to serious, dangerous

temptations. The more violent we are; the less violent Satan is.

[4] The more lazy a Christian is in his desires, the more lively his corruptions. Oh pray for quickening grace ([Ps 143:11](#)).

Examining whether we are offering violence. Do you thirst for the living God? Do you desire the holiness that is heaven? Do you desire to be like Christ as much as to be with Christ? Are you skilled in self-denial? **Can we cross our wills to fulfill God's? Can we "behead" our beloved sin? Do we love God more than fear hell?** Do we keep a spiritual watch? Are these disciplines and spiritual postures of soul increasingly your practice? Plead for more grace to do violence at these junctures.

In every step of progress toward heaven, we leave something behind down here. Every pinched place on our journey, every thorn, every tear shed helps the saint consolidate all of his hopes and affections upon glory. Difficulties in the Way steel and solidify our determination to have a united heart before the Lord.

If a man is so drunk with the cares of the world that he cannot find time for the needs of his soul, he is not offering violence in seeking to take heaven. God does not intend to make His eternal abode with strangers who loved the Egypt of this world and who have not set across the wilderness to enter Zion.

Holy violence has much delight mingled with it (Prov 3:17). The joys and comforts of the new covenant are experienced by us when we are violent, not when we are double-minded. **Think about how violent Christ was about our salvation:** Sleepless nights in prayer, fastings, weeping, violent death.

Holy violence brings rest ([Heb 4:9](#)). Holy violence prevents much sin and blocks the devil's designs. **Holy violence is always energized by the Spirit's working** (Phil 2:12, 13). **A little violence would ease our fear of death and make the believer willing to die to be with his Lord.**

Those who profess Christ but fear death are bothered by a conscience that correctly tells them that they have taken none, or too few pains for heaven. (The conscience will not generate peace and comfort if bogged down with the rust and baggage of this world. By contrast, the

heavenly citizen is willing to endure the hardships of travel on the narrow way.)

Christ and free grace is the cause of us inheriting heaven. But God's will is that we should pray and repent, making our calling and election sure (2 Pet 1:10). He has from the beginning chosen us for salvation **through** sanctification (2 Thess 2:13). Labor to grow in sanctity/holiness - for the more grace, the more strength, the more strength, the more violence.

A man will be violent for nothing but what he loves. Are you constrained by the love of Christ? (2 Cor 5:14). Are your most precious hours of the day those spent with God? If you would be violent for heaven, make sure that going to heaven is your business. To the degree that you are indifferent, you will not be violent. **When it is your business, you will be industrious about it.**

One thing is needful; to get Christ and heaven (Lu 10:42). To lose the prospect of heaven is to slacken the pace - certainty is therefore your duty (2 Cor 5: 1-10). If you would be violent, be sure heaven is your consuming goal (Heb 12:1-3).

Find companions that fear God! (Ps 119:63) (pp. 96, 97). Godly companions will sharpen you. Their company will energize your conscience - holy dialogue will heighten your awareness of areas where you have been slack and repentance is needed.

Prepare your affections for God by contemplating the excellencies of God. Study your own wants - consider how much you need God - you cannot be happy without Him. Draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Heb 10:22).

Meditate upon your completeness in Him. Think upon His suitability for your every need. Dwell upon all that God is toward you in Christ, and all that He will be to you throughout eternity.

When our affections for the Lord burn bright; our taste for the "cistern water" of this world will be dulled. Our longing will be for the "Fountain of Living Water" (Jer 2:13).

Have you walked with the Lord for many years? Consider just how much those around you are in need of your ministry in their lives. Let this sink in next time you are reluctant to do holy violence - ***“Those around me need my holiness; for it is only by holiness that I shall be a clean vessel available to the Lord for their spiritual welfare”*** (2 Tim 2:21).

Grace and Peace to all in Christ! James Bell

NEWS NOTES:

EVERY Saturday, * 8:00am — Men’s Bible Study: Studies in Titus.**

****** NEXT Ladies Bible Study— July 7, 11:00am: Women of the Bible: MARY and MARTHA, Luke 10:38-42**

1. SUNDAY— July 5: *Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children’s classes, Youth, and Adult classes. ***** WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

NOON ‘Covered-Dish’ Fellowship Meal... Note: Bring ‘food dishes’ as usual. We will have ‘SERVERS’ wearing gloves, who will serve your plates, according to your wishes!

2. SUNDAY— July 12: *Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children’s classes, Youth, and Adult classes. ***** WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

***** Training Faithful Men,
The 1689 Confession of Faith, 5:30pm**

3. SUNDAY— July 19: *Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children’s classes, Youth, and Adult classes. ***** WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am! / ***THE LORD’S SUPPER**

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*****HOME GROUPS... inquire as to times and locations**

4. SUNDAY— July 26: *Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes. *******
WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!

****** CHURCH-WIDE DISCIPLESHIP, 6:00PM... New Study Series, by R. C. Sproul: PRAYER: "Intimate communion with God is at the heart of our relationship with Him. Through Christ we are accepted by God and enabled to call upon Him as our LORD and FATHER!"**

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ SOUTHSIDE: 6:30pm— ** Adult Prayer Service // 6:30pm— ** Young FAMILIES Prayer Service

6:30pm— ** Youth Bible Study

***** REMINDERS as to CHURCH SERVICES IN JULY *****

1. IF YOU ARE SICK... OR if you are presently in a state of high immune deficiency or if (at home or work) you are caring for one who is sick— WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT ATTEND any of our gathered services.

[If you have • **Fever**; • Coughing; • • Chills; • Headache; • Sore throat; etc.... **please stay home!**]

2. IF YOU ARE HEALTHY and well... you may or may not choose to wear a mask... or gloves... WE do not require; we WILL NOT provide such.

3. WE CONTINUE to encourage 'social distancing'— 6ft apart... BUT MOST OF ALL, WE ENCOURAGE LOVING ONE ANOTHER, RESPECTING EACH OTHER ON MATTERS LIKE THIS... WHERE WE ARE NOT ALL AT THE SAME PLACE IN OUR CONVICTIONS and/or FREEDOM.

4. WE EXPECT THAT EACH OF YOU WILL DO YOUR PART in personal hygiene. ***IF you use the restrooms— please wash your hands with SOAP before leaving... and once outside the bathroom... use nearby SANITIZER.***

5. IT IS A MATTER OF SAFETY for all ESPECIALLY SENIOR ADULTS, CHILDREN IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE... ARE NOT TO BE WITHOUT A PARENT AT THEIR SIDE...

6. FOR THOSE AT HOME: THE *10:45am LIVE STREAMING* of the worship service for June 7... **SIMPLY GO TO OUR CHURCH WEBSITE: www.southsidegallatin.org**

7. LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD BY MAIL or ONLINE GIVING:
SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO:
Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066
OR, you may choose to GIVE, via ONLINE GIVING @
<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>