

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 27, July 7, 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!"***

ANOTHER DEADLY 'VIRUS'— this one is called: SUICIDE!

2019: Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. **On average**, 132 Americans died by suicide each day. 1.4 million Americans attempted suicide. Men died by suicide 3.6x more often than women. Women were 1.4x more likely to attempt suicide. 48,344 Americans died by suicide. • 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-34 • 4th leading cause of death for ages 35-54
https://chapterland.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2017/11/US_FactsFigures_Flyer.pdf

I. PASTORS of various size ministries and A GROWING NUMBER OF WIDELY RESPECTED, SUCCESSFUL PASTORS ARE COMMITTING SUICIDE...

***** A PASTOR killed himself...** He was a successful, 'Mega Church' pastor. He authored books... He was involved in missions... He was an incredible teacher, and pastor, etc. However, in 2016, the Elders of the previous church removed Pastor from his position and required him to step down from all internal and external leadership positions. The reasons given were "pastoral misconduct" and a "historical pattern of sin." ***** A PASTOR** for 25 years in a North Carolina church, (the church was in great conflict) — the pastor drove to a motel in Tennessee and

killed himself. *** **A PASTOR** in Macon, Georgia, did not show up for the worship service... was discovered in the driveway of their home, dead from a self-inflicted gun-shot wound. *** **A PASTOR** in Illinois, took his own life in front of his son... his wife had died a year earlier from a brain aneurysm.

*** **A PASTOR** in Florida, committed adultery... months later, killed himself. His wife of 13 years, (months earlier after the adultery was exposed) filed a domestic-violence petition against her PASTOR husband... describing him as "unstable, erratic, and suicidal."

*** **A PASTOR** in California— age 30, a church leader, author, and mental health advocate, died by suicide. **THE DAY wherein he killed himself THIS PASTOR ‘tweeted’ the following on Social Media:**

“Loving Jesus doesn’t always cure suicidal thoughts. Loving Jesus doesn’t always cure depression. Loving Jesus doesn’t always cure PTSD. Loving Jesus doesn’t always cure anxiety. But that doesn’t mean Jesus doesn’t offer us companionship and comfort. He ALWAYS does that.”

RESPONSE: WOW! That is tragic, unbiblical theology; and BAD THEOLOGY is a deep root of depression and suicide! **REALITY:**

1. If I am CURED of something, I no longer have to deal with it. SUCH IS NOT THE BIBLICAL GOSPEL.

2. The Biblical Gospel does CURE TOTALLY from the guilt and the penalty of sin; and the DOMINION of sin.

3. However, there is NEVER a hint that in this life we will be CURED from having to deal with sin and/or the various frailties that can come upon us in a fallen world. We are in a FIGHT! BUT

we are given SUFFICIENT ARMOR— the Word of God is completely sufficient, quickened by the Holy Spirit.

4. Until we get home, we are in a royal battle requiring us WITH OUR EYES ON JESUS— to be continually PUTTING OFF the old ways of life and PUTTING on Christ; and requiring us to be being continually filled with the Holy Spirit... letting the Word of God dwell in us RICHLY.

5. In Old and New Testament— in a world where saints of God in Christ fought many spiritual battles... including incredible battles with depression, etc.... ***THERE IS NOT A RECORD OF EVEN ONE believer who LOST the battle with depression and committed suicide!***

6. O by the way... I know that much of Christendom and many big time preachers have been thoroughly 'psychologized'... — WHICH not only exposes that they think and teach different than the New Testament; but also reveals that **THEY ARE OUT OF STEP with a growing number of Psychologists:**

“Psychiatry makes unproven claims that depression, bipolar illness, anxiety, alcoholism and a host of other disorders are in fact primarily biologic and probably genetic in origin...**This kind of faith in science and progress is staggering, not to mention naïve and perhaps delusional.**” — *Dr. David Kaiser, psychiatrist.*

“There is no blood or other biological test to ascertain the presence or absence of a mental illness, as there is for most bodily diseases. If such a test were developed...then the condition would cease to be a mental illness and would be classified, instead, as a symptom of a bodily disease.” — *Dr. Thomas Szasz, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, New York University Medical School, Syracuse*

II. NOW, I HAVE NOTICED THAT ALL PASTORS WHO COMMIT SUICIDE... AUTOMATICALLY— GO TO HEAVEN! (Of course, that would be no surprise in America... where all anyone has to do to get to heaven is— TO JUST DIE!) **MOREOVER, FELLOW PASTORS ARE QUICK to give testimonies like this:**

“We know that ‘PASTOR’ loved JESUS and is deeply loved by Jesus and we are assured of his continuing relationship with Christ, now in heaven, Romans 8:38-39.”

REALITY: 1. WE DO NOT, WE CANNOT KNOW THE TRUE SPIRITUAL STATE OF OTHERS! ONLY GOD KNOWS: 2 Timothy 2:19 (NKJV) *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ **depart from iniquity.**”*

2. MANY WHO HAVE PREACHED WITH GREAT APPARENT SUCCESS... — shockingly, JESUS WILL say to them: “I NEVER knew you, depart from Me, you that work INIQUITY!” (Matthew 7:23)

III. LEADING PASTORS PROCLAIM THAT DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE ARE THE RESULT OF ‘MENTAL ILLNESS’ for which those enslaved, (pastor or whoever), are not responsible: ***“Mental illness, which often includes deep depression and suicidal thoughts, is like heart failure or liver failure. It is not a moral issue.”***

***** Dr. ED Stetzer:** “... if we are not afraid to put a cast on a broken bone, then why are we ashamed of a balanced plan to treat mental illness that might include medication to stabilize possible chemical imbalances? Christians get cancer, and they deal with mental illness. We’ve long seen the value in the medical treatment of cancer. It’s time for Christians to affirm the value of medical treatment for mental illness as well... **Mental illness has nothing to do with you or your family’s beliefs...**”

REALITY: The 'catch-all' concept of 'Mental Illness' is of relative new invention. Depression, by various names, is at least as old as Cain in Genesis 6:4!

THANKFULLY, A GROWING NUMBER OF HIGHLY TRAINED
Psychiatrist RADICALLY DISAGREE WITH STETZER:

1. “Despite more than two hundred years of intensive research, **no commonly diagnosed psychiatric disorders have proven to be either genetic or biological in origin**, including schizophrenia, major depression, manic-depressive disorder, the various anxiety disorders, and childhood disorders such as attention-deficit hyperactivity. **At present there are no known biochemical imbalances in the brain of typical psychiatric patients**— until they are given psychiatric drugs.” — ***Peter Breggin, Psychiatrist***

2. “**We do not have** an independent, valid test for ADHD, and there are no data to indicate ADHD is due to a brain malfunction.”
 — ***Final statement of the panel from the National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference on ADHD***

3. “**Psychiatry has never been driven by science.** They have no biological or genetic basis for these illnesses and the National Institutes of Mental Health are totally committed to the pharmacological line. ... **There is a great deal of scientific evidence that stimulants cause brain damage with long-term use**, yet there is no evidence that these mental illnesses, such as ADHD, exist.” “In reality, psychiatric diagnosing is a kind of spiritual profiling that can destroy lives and frequently does.” — ***Peter Breggin, Psychiatrist***

4. “**There’s no biological imbalance.** When people come to me and they say, ‘I have a biochemical imbalance,’ I say, ‘Show me your lab tests.’ There are no lab tests. So what’s the biochemical imbalance?” — ***Dr. Ron Leifer, Psychiatrist***

**** **Yes, multitudes have already ‘bought’** the counsel set forth by pastors and other Christian leaders who are **promoting mere psychological theories- not science! MOREOVER, they deny the power of the gospel of Christ to give spiritual backbone to saints in the midst of deep trials.**

They vote for an approach laced with mind changing, life altering drugs which create more slaves, zombies, and suicides than they do positive deliverance.

MY QUESTION: Is there no longer any place for a Biblical faith?

Is there no longer a place for the GOSPEL of God which EMPOWERS saints to win over even the deadliest of mental/emotional/spiritual sins and demons; **and/or over** the mysterious trials of life?

FOR 2000+ YEARS — LONG BEFORE THE PSYCHOLOGIZERS CAME ALONG — THE GOSPEL WAS and REMAINS POWERFUL AND TRANSFORMING!

Charles H. Spurgeon told his students,

"Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy." Yes, he rightly understood that depression is not necessarily traceable to personal sin. He wrote, "Spiritual darkness of any sort is to be avoided, and not desired."

COMMENT: INDEED, in a fallen world, there are many 'SPIRITUAL NIGHTS!' Job had a few!! And we know that they were not rooted in any sin in his life. However, to win those battles he needed communion with God and to be teachable in the presence of God.

He did not need humanistic Christian or secular counseling and/or drugs. ***Be it Job, or Elijah, or Jonah, or Jeremiah— the solution to depression was found in FELLOWSHIP with and in humility before God.***

Cain, who was angry and depressed— his problem WAS A SIN problem. He rejected repentance and things got worse! (Gen. 4:5-7)

***The Prodigal son** had a sin problem. He repented, and things got exceedingly better, to put it mildly, Luke 15:11-24.]*

Being well taught in the Word and ways of God, Spurgeon was clear that SUFFERING is a normal part of life in a fallen world:

"Even under the economy of redemption it is most clear that we are to endure infirmities, otherwise there were no need of the promised Spirit to help us in them. It is of need be that we are sometimes in heaviness. Good men are promised tribulation in this world."

Spurgeon had to deal with very severe physical pain from gout. It is known that he might be WEEKS AT A TIME in bed agonizing with excruciating pain. **On one such occasion he wrote the church family he served,**

*"I have been brought very low... **My flesh has been tortured with pain and my spirit has been prostrate with depression. . .** With some difficulty I write these lines in my bed, mingling them with the **groans of pain and the songs of hope.**"*

NOTICE: His testimony is encouraging and faith building. He had severe physical sufferings and he had 'dark nights of the soul' or depression/burnout.

IN THE MIDST of the darkness and groaning he looked to the LORD and PRAISED HIM, regardless. **Thus, he was NEVER CONSUMED or destroyed by the pain, the depression, or the trials. Moreover, he did not allow** these 'circumstances and situations' to become EXCUSES.

On October 19, 1856, when Spurgeon was only 22 years old, he was preaching for the first time in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall in London. Literally thousands had gathered. Suddenly FIRE broke out. Seven people were killed and many injured. Spurgeon wrote, ***"I was pressed beyond measure and out of bounds with an***

***enormous weight of misery.** The tumult, the panic, the deaths were day and night before me, and made life a burden."*

AGAIN, BAD THINGS happen in a fallen world. **The crushing blows can be beyond words.** YES, the circumstances of life can be as varied as the seasons of a year. Over them or other people we generally have no control. **We have** various temperaments/personalities, as well as various physical ailments and/or limitations; along with emotional scars. **We have** consequences from our own failings.

And sometimes, along come 'mysteries'... situations and stuff which we do not understand.

Then there is the significant issue of the maturity of our faith. **And what of** the 'trying of our faith' which is much more precious than the 'trying' of gold!!?

Spurgeon said, "Any simpleton can follow the narrow path in the light: **faith's rare wisdom enables us to march on in the dark with infallible accuracy, since she places her hand in that of her Great Guide.**"

Bottom line: In responding to mysteries, failures, trials, troubles, tribulations, and dark nights of the soul— **many PREACHERS are ready to excuse all manner of behaviors and point us to drugs.**

Their message is popular and pleases the masses— but it leaves you without hope and deliverance... AND MOVES A GROWING NUMBER of folk to SUICIDE!

I am thankful for C. H. Spurgeon modeling the freeing power of the GOSPEL. Let us follow, as he followed the LORD!

IV. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SUICIDE?

The Bible mentions six specific people who committed suicide:

Abimelech (Judges 9:54), Saul (1 Samuel 31:4), Saul's armor-bearer (1 Samuel 31:4-6), Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), and Judas (Matthew 27:5).

Five of them were wicked, sinful men (not enough is said regarding Saul's armor-bearer to make a judgment as to his character). Some consider Samson an instance of suicide (Judges 16:26-31), but Samson's goal was to kill the Philistines, not himself.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUICIDE?

***** If an unsaved person commits suicide,** he has only “expedited” his/her journey to hell— however, the suicide would have simply been a 'work' of his/her lostness... AND NOT the cause of his/her destiny.

In other words, the UNSAVED person who commits suicide will ultimately be in hell BECAUSE NATURALLY he/she was a sinner already abiding under the wrath of God, not because he/she committed suicide. (John 3:36; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3)

What does the Bible say about a Christian who commits suicide? RESPONSE: The Bible gives NO example of a Christian committing suicide.

But can a GENUINE Christian commit suicide? I can only say that **I think** it is possible— especially if such ones are taking prescribed psychotropic drugs... which are well known to flood people with suicidal thoughts and other crimes; **or if** the person had a physical ‘brain tumor’...

1. BUT I KNOW: I have no BIBLICAL basis to ever give the LIVING assurance that if they commit suicide that they will go to heaven— for I do not know what ONLY GOD KNOWS... NAMELY, the state of their soul: 2 Timothy 2:19

2. BUT ALSO: I would never preach that the DEAD, (supposed genuine Christian who has committed suicide), goes to hell— for, again, I do not know the state of their soul; AND BECAUSE it is NEVER suicide that condemns one to hell but RATHER the matter of being a hell-deserving sinner who never came to Christ, repenting of their INIQUITY, trusting Christ alone!

3. PRAISE GOD, IF THE PERSON WAS TRULY SAVED— then they will be in heaven. Nothing can separate a GENUINE Christian from God's love ([Romans 8:38-39](#)).

Grace and Peace to all in Christ! James Bell

NEWS NOTES:

EVERY Saturday, * 8:00am — Men's Bible Study: PHILEMON!**

****** NEXT Ladies Bible Study— July 21, 11:00am: Women of the Bible: MARY and MARTHA, John 11 through John 12:9**

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** / *****HOME GROUPS...**

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 ** Young FAMILIES Prayer Service ** Youth Bible Study

***** HEALTH REMINDERS as to CHURCH SERVICES**

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; **or 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 FREEDOM... as to ‘social distancing’— 6ft apart... give sensitivity and respect one to another.

4. LET each of us DO OUR PART IN personal hygiene. *IF you use the restrooms— please wash your hands with SOAP; and use nearby SANITIZER.*

5. IT IS A MATTER OF SAFETY for all, (ESPECIALLY for SENIOR ADULTS), CHILDREN IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE— no unsupervised Children!

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>