

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 46, No. 16, April 20, 2021 / 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!"***

JESUS— "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH!"

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) As Jesus builds His church— each saved/born again person is a **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.***" (1 Corinthians 1:9) Moreover, this fellowship is not just me and Jesus; but it is — **Jesus, me, and the local assembly of believers to which the Holy Spirit has joined me!** (1 Corinthians 12:12-24)[Yes, we are IN FELLOWSHIP with ALL who are in Christ, all around the world— but we are in very specific fellowship with a local community of saints!]

WE MUST UNDERSTAND: The entire New Testament period was NOT filled with churches to whom the LORD WAS ADDING new converts every day, as was the case in Acts 2! FOR during the New Testament era and even to our day,

1. The preaching/teaching of Jesus and the Apostles DROVE and still drives MANY AWAY! (John 6:66-71; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5)

2. Just as Jesus warned in Mark 4:14-18— the work of satan, the reality of persecution, the cares of this life, and/or the love of

money— these all REVEAL the lack of true conversion in many and so they fall away.

3. The Apostle John reported that there were many anti-Christ; and that they left the true congregations because they were false converts from the start! (1 John 2:15-19)

EVEN SO, none of the New Testament churches lamented, "Attendance was down last Sunday, we need a high attendance promotion!" **AND:** When the strong teaching of Jesus, (John 6:32-65), caused many who had been following Jesus to leave— **Jesus did not panic or tell the few who stayed,** *"O gee, we had better do some CREATIVE PLANNING and develop a plan to appeal to the likes of the masses! ... Maybe I need to up the amount of dramatic miracles!"*

MOREOVER, there is no evidence that they took a 'poll' to find out what the lost like so as to adapt church to the lost. **They had no** sports, no comedians, no entertainment, no advertising budget to be spent on endeavors designed to attract pagans— or to hold on to and bring back the carnal multitudes who previously attended!

GENUINE New Testament Christianity is radically different! The Holy Spirit via the New Testament REPEATEDLY calls upon believers, (1) To not blaspheme the gospel by bad living! **(2)** To ADORN the gospel by Christ-like living! **(3)** To live lives of loving one another! **(4)** In addition, Jesus, in Revelation 2-3, reveals that which He commends, that which He commands; and that which He rejects if a church is to be truly effective.

The Acts of the Apostles overflows with WONDERFUL teaching and examples as to the methods of JESUS in building an EFFECTIVE CHURCH MINISTRY! *HERE ARE SOME*

OF THE METHODS JESUS HAS USED IN BUILDING HIS CHURCH:

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

(2) Sin by church members led to **severe chastening** [SUDDEN DEATH!] **with the end result being** another fresh advance of the kingdom of God— **Acts 5:1-14!**

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

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

SO, WHEN JESUS SAYS, ***“I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH!”***... HE **OFTEN DOES IT** through surprising ways and circumstances. In a New Testament Church, all believers have to do is to ***stick to the business of holy Christian living and boldly proclaiming the gospel to the world.*** **GOD will add to the church as He pleases!** (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 3:6-11)

(5) In the first century NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, when needs and problems came up, **THEY PRAYED!** "What did they do when Peter was locked up in jail?" **There was always an answer and the answer was always from the LORD—** normally 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?

SPECIFIC NEEDS in the congregation JESUS IS BUILDING:

1. There is a need to genuinely praise God corporately... 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 and holiness. (Eph. 4:1-16)

2. There is always an urgent need for laborers—
EXAMPLES: Laborers are needed for **the sometimes thankless, monotonous tasks** that make it possible for us to be a well-equipped, well-nourished, gospel army. There are many needs for laborers: - **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. **People to 'own' specific missionaries we support— so that each month those missionaries will receive** specific ministry from the assembly of saints at Southside. **PEOPLE TO evangelize.**

REALITY: No assembly of believers can function with power if it doesn't have an army of people COMMITTED 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!)

TWO BOTTOM LINE NEEDS: More praise! More laborers!
 The temptation is to sit down and map out a solution. HOWEVER, 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 WHAT you need IS to learn to worship and praise! **You go to**

the 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) **THIS IS AMAZING: (1) Going to God IN ONE ACCORD IN PRAYER brings forth PRAISE!** (Acts 4:23-33); **DEALING WITH SIN** in the church brings forth new laborers! (Acts 5:1-14)

And so these 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!

Jesus builds His church through the **intercession** of His saints! (Acts 4:23-33)

WITH GOD'S WAY of JESUS BUILDING HIS CHURCH— there are seasons of many (Acts 2) and there are seasons of few who remain, (John 6:63-66; Phil. 3:18-19) — BUT AT ALL TIMES, we must LOOK UNTO THE LORD!

MOREOVER, the true work of God can NEVER be judged by size, only by SORT! (1 Cor. 3:13)

"Lord, give us a spirit of true praise!"— BUT WHAT ARE WE ASKING? Well, 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) AND, 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)

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

GENUINE PRAISE is the offering up of our body as a living sacrifice, committing it gladly 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, beatings, imprisonments, labors, fasting ... 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 yield ourselves to a spirit of glad service in the everyday and in the thankless places and the cruddy jobs. We are really 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)

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!"

We might picture MORE people gathered for OUTREACH ministry ... more help in the nurseries ... help with various Classes ... 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.**

HOWEVER:

(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)

JESUS: "... **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 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!** [Additions and Edited from R.E. Bieber]

Grace and Peace in our LORD JESUS CHRIST! James Bell

www.southsidegallatin.org

NEWS NOTES:

EVERY Saturday, * 8:00am — Men's Bible Study: *THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS!*** (*Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!*)

***** NEXT Ladies Bible Study— Tuesday, May 4, 11:00am: Women of the Bible!**

SUNDAY SERVICES: April 25

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

April 25, 5:00pm - 6:00pm- Church Wide DISCIPLESHIP... Dealing with Difficult Problems, videos by R.C. Sproul

TUESDAYS: WEEKLY Youth Group Meeting, ages 12 and up ... Tuesdays a 7:15pm... at Jaden and Rhi's home...

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ SOUTHSIDE: 6:30pm—
Come in by the back ‘double doors’ under the Drive Thru
awning!

*** Adult Prayer Service ** Young FAMILIES Prayer Service**

IT IS A MATTER OF SAFETY for all:
NO UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN
ANY WHERE IN THE CHURCH BUILDING!

***** 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. WE CONTINUE to encourage FREEDOM... as to ‘social distancing’— give sensitivity and respect one to another. **NOTE: In addition to carefulness, good hydration, good nutrition, and sleep— ALSO: so as to SEEK TO HAVE A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM... I PERSONALLY TAKE ELDERBERRY, VITAMIN C, ZINC, GINGER, VITAMIN D, Quercetin, and a good multi-vitamin that includes fiber.**

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.**

***** FOR THOSE AT HOME: TO RECEIVE LIVE STREAMING FOR APRIL 25; OR to connect with our YouTube page,**

GO TO: www.southsidegallatin.org

******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>