

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.41, October 8, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), 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."**

GUARDING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT!

***** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the UNITY of the Spirit in the bond of peace!** (Ephesians 4:1-3, NKJV)

***** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in UNITY! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing— even Life for evermore!** (Psalm 133:1-3, NKJV)

***** Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, make a symphony together) about whatever [anything and everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven.** (Matthew 18:19, Amplified)

Over the last 38+ years I have been and I am very blessed to be a member of a congregation who has exhibited and who continues to exhibit **love, forgiveness, purity, unity, perseverance, and other manifestations of Christ!**

At various times during those same years there were attacks - even **vicious attacks** - against each of those manifestations of Christ. Sincere and precious people and possibly at sometimes very self willed people took their eyes off Jesus and spiraled down into various anti-Christ spirits, at times taking others with them. **(BE ON GUARD— any and all are**

capable of such!) **But amazingly, graciously,** God has enabled a core group of saints in Christ to simply and profoundly **keep on keeping their EYES ON JESUS!** VARIOUS ASPECTS of the following verses have been experienced over and again:

⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ⁸ *We are* hard-pressed on every side, **yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;** ⁹ persecuted, but **not forsaken;** struck down, but **not destroyed—** ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body... ¹⁵ For all things *are* for your sakes, **that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.**

¹⁶ **Therefore we do not lose heart.** Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ **For our light affliction,** which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more *exceeding and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ **while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.** — (2 Corinthians 4:6-18)

There is, by the grace of God, 'a sweet, sweet spirit' in the assembly of the saints at Southside! **Let us be careful to guard** this precious unity of the Spirit **and to press forward** in the work of 'adorning' (Titus 2:10) and making Christ visible!

WE MUST NEVER FORGET: Satan ever goes about as a roaring lion and is delighted **when Christians believe beautiful, doctrinal, Biblical truth but at the same time produce the ugliness of lovelessness** in their relationships and living— thus causing the Word of God to be blasphemed!

Here are 'Symphony' Foundations of Christian UNITY!

1. **When God's people dwell together in spiritual UNITY around JESUS CHRIST— GOD COMMANDS BLESSINGS!** (Psalm 133)

2. **REALITY:** When we are walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24) and not in the flesh (Gal. 5:19-22) and when we are walking in the love of God (1 Cor. 13:1-7) — **The Holy Spirit is UNGRIEVED, UNQUENCHED, and UNLEASHED!**

***** Here is a partial list of the DESTRUCTIVE works of the flesh. IF THESE are your ongoing, CONTINUING, DOMINANT lifestyle— question your spiritual birth certificate:**

Galatians 5:19-21: ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

TRAGIC REALITY: For GROWING multitudes in the grips of various ones of these 'works of the flesh'— these works of the flesh are but signals to go to a doctor, be given a non-scientific but world embraced 'tag' (such as bipolar), and a bottle of pills.

***** Thankfully, here is GOOD NEWS about the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which floods the heart of every Child of God: Romans 5:5 —**

Galatians 5:22-24: ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

THUS, for the GENUINE CHRISTIAN, the INDWELLING Holy Spirit ALWAYS stands ready to BURST FORTH UNGRIEVED, UNQUENCHED and UNLEASHED! What are paths that release Him to do so?

1. CONTINUALLY PREACH THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD TO YOURSELF AND STAY CLOSE TO JESUS AND HIS OTHER SHEEP!

Our sins are forgiven. We love Jesus because He first loved us and has flooded our hearts with His love! Jesus is no longer a mere historical figure— Jesus is our Saviour and Lord. BECAUSE OF BEING in Christ we now 'Symphonize' around the person, the reality of Jesus. We have been INVADED by the God of the universe by His Holy Spirit— we can no longer be as we once were!

REALITY: JESUS HIMSELF always has been and STILL IS THE GREAT ATTRACTION, DRAWING CARD and BONDING FACTOR OF GENUINE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY. Preaching the gospel to ourselves is great encouragement to a revival of 'symphonizing' around Jesus!

Early Church believers were rejected by society. However, by the Holy Spirit they were immersed/baptized into CHRIST and into local congregations of fellow believers. The Holy Spirit will lead us in the same paths!

Bible Study, Prayer, Worship, Coming to the LORD'S TABLE, ministry one to another, and witnessing to the lost are the result of being made alive in Christ and baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into a local congregation. (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12-13)

Reality: I don't have to be begged, babied, or pampered when I am rooted and grounded in and focused upon Christ!

2. Marks of the Early Christians, Christians through the centuries and Christians today are that they/we literally EMBRACE the teachings of Jesus! They were and we are looking for Second Coming of Jesus! They were and the Holy Spirit will move us to be united in a passion to tell others about JESUS!

3. The Early Christians were conscious of having been saved from ULTIMATE DISASTER— the eternal wrath of Holy God! thus, let us 'drink deeply': Eph. 2:1-10; Titus 2:11-3:8

BOTTOM LINES:

1. Being rightly related to Jesus overflows into right relationships one with another! It is by this reality of **LOVING ONE ANOTHER** that all men shall know that we are truly His disciples! (John 13:34-35)

2. THE AWESOME POWER OF JUST ONE: Even just ONE person in a home or even just one person in a church will be supernaturally EFFECTIVE when the Holy Spirit in them is unquenched, ungrieved and (thus) unleashed!

3. When a person is genuinely saved, they become the temple/the dwelling place/the home of the Holy Spirit! Indeed, they are FLOODED with the love of God, by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5) They are forgiven of all sin. Sin and satan's dominating power are broken; (Romans 6:1-14); and they experience CRUCIFIXION to the old works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21); and a new life of walking in the 9 fold fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25) Real

Christians are supernaturally empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. They are supernaturally joined into Christ and joined into a local assembly of saints. (1 Cor. 12:1-13)

4. Forgiven, they become forgivers. Loved, they become those who love— ALL THIS AND MORE IS THE CREATION OF GOD IN ALL OF HIS REDEEMED CHILDREN BY THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THUS, There is an AUTOMATIC and foundational UNITY among all who are truly saved by grace alone through faith in Christ alone. (Ephesians 4:1-7)

Nevertheless, we Christians have Serious Responsibility in the issues of the Holy Spirit empowered Symphony of love, forgiveness, purity, unity, perseverance and other manifestations of Christ!

"Be eager and strive earnestly to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)—

1. Holy Spirit produced HARMONY/SYMPHONY can be seriously DAMAGED— or else we would not be exhorted to guard it!
2. Holy Spirit HARMONY/SYMPHONY can only be kept by EFFORT. We must be eager and earnestly guarding/keeping the harmony produced by the Holy Spirit.
3. THE SYMPHONY of the Christian Church and Christian home has some deadly ENEMIES!

SERIOUS REALITY: WE MUST DAILY MORTIFY all the 'works of the flesh' (Galatians 5:19-21) and daily mortify our tongues which have the potential to be "a WORLD OF INIQUITY!" (James 3:1-18)

HOW? BY HEEDING THE WORD OF GOD IN THE FOLLOWING:

1. **NO BACKBITING**— (Prov. 25:23; Rom. 1:30; Psalm 15:1-3) NO speaking negatively against another when he/she/they are not present.
2. **NO SLANDER**— (Prov. 10:18; Numbers 14:34-37) Vines Dictionary of New Testament Words defines the slanderer as

"one who is given to fault-finding with the demeanor and conduct of others, sending their innuendo and criticism throughout the church."

It is the same word that is often used of satan in his role as the accuser of the brethren. In Numbers 14, spies were sent to check out the promise land. TEN of them came back with a slanderous report and infected the whole nation of Israel!

Countless homes, churches, mission organizations, and Christian ministries are paralyzed with murmuring, slandering spirits. In Old Testament days MILLIONS wandered for 40 years and then DIED in the desert because of MURMURING: 1 Corinthians 10:1-14

3. NO WHISPERING— (Psalm 64:1-4; Prov. 16:28) O the power of the whisperer to separate even the closest of friends, by evil reports whispered behind another's back!

4. NO GOSSIP— (Psalm 41:5-9) A Sportswriter wrote:

"I am more deadly than the screaming shell from a cannon. I tear down homes, break hearts and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me. No purity is pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice and no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea. I never forget. I don't forgive.

My name is GOSSIP!"

5. NO SOWING OF DISCORD— (Prov. 6:16-19) those who 'sow discord' go around dropping words and attitudes of unbelief, gossip, slander, faults and failings. Words have a way of germinating in folks minds. A harvest develops, all in accordance with what was sown!

Had words of hope, love, forgiveness, faith, earnest prayer and generous blessings been sown — A GRAND SYMPHONY of love and Christ-likeness would be the result!

6. NO TALEBEARERS— (Prov. 20:19; Lev. 19:16; Prov. 26:17-22) Many churches, ministries, work places, and homes are destroyed by Talebearers. **The talebearer is greatly loved by the Backbiter, the Gossip, and the Discord Sower.**

Why? Because talebearers get their kicks from being their *runners*; and talebearers never reveal their evil sources. They spill their evil reports and then, triumphantly declare, "I cannot tell you who told me— I would not want to break confidentially!"

NOTE: Talebearers tell the WRONG people! SYMPHONY LOVERS tell the RIGHT people! (Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 1:11)

GODLY WEAPONS to GUARD the SYMPHONY!

1. Walk in the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-23; Col. 3:16) and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh!

2. Keep a very still tongue! (James 1:26; 4:11; Titus 3:2)

3. SPEAK EVIL OF NO ONE! (Titus 3:2)

4. OBEY God's method of Direct Communication: Matt. 18:15 / Gal. 6:1

5. The Six Points of Methodism. The early Methodist Revival lasted a long time— Doubtless, because they GUARDED THE SYMPHONY!

Here is an edited version:

I will not listen to tale bearing/whispering/discord sowing/slander or willingly inquire after any ill concerning others.

If I do hear any such ill of other in the assembly, **I will not** be so forward to believe it.

Moreover, if I hear of such ill, I will as soon as possible communicate this matter directly to the person about whom the ill was spoken.

AND, until I have done this, I will not speak a syllable of it to any other person. After going directly to those concerned and/or to those who need to know because they are responsible before God to work for Godly solutions— **Neither will I** mention this/these matters to any other person whatsoever.

These are not matters to put on a prayer list, which all too often is but a way to try to gossip with God's approval! I will make no exception to these guidelines unless I am absolutely obliged by God's Word and God's Spirit to do so.

"Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (**harmonize together, make a symphony together**) about whatever [anything and everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven." (Matthew 18:19, Amplified)

Great Grace to All!

James Bell

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