

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No.10, March 11, 2014 / 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."***

IMPORTANT NOTE: A good portion of this is repeated from last week. Why? Because we need to receive and ACT UPON God's Word. Let us NOT be so foolish as to treat God's Word lightly!

When the Church Family GATHERS to Worship!

I. Real Congregational Christian Worship Takes Place When—

1. We gather as a church family **to ASCRIBE** worth to God.
2. We gather **to PROSTRATE** ourselves before God in **submission to** the truth of His Word.
3. We gather **to offer UNTO HIM** honor, praise, adoration and thanksgiving— REMEMBERING the redeeming love of God which births, sustains, and builds up worship!
4. We gather **to RECOGNIZE and REJOICE in** God's glory, greatness, power, victory, majesty, and rule.
5. We gather **to offer unto God most of all— ourselves;** and willing heart offerings!
6. We then **SCATTER** out into the world to **live and proclaim** the GOSPEL— this also is a part of our life of worshipping/serving the true and living God!

REMEMBER: *Worship may have full acceptance and praise from men; but if that worship is void of overflowing obedience to God it is but a vain, empty show! (Mark 7:1-13)*

The Result of a Genuine Worship Service will be that we go forth into OUR world living lives of love, purity, compassion, forgiveness, joy, peace, and more. **We will go forth on mission** to make Christ visible and known to the lost world around us.

GLORIOUS REALITY: *When we adapt ourselves to the True and Living, Almighty God and to His revealed will in worship, we will then receive what we truly need from worship— namely, (1) **JOY IN GOD**; (2) **Renewed power** to win daily spiritual battles; (3) **Fresh boldness** as witnesses for Christ! (Acts 4:23-33)*

II. Biblical Guidance to Encourage God-centered Worship— Exodus 20:1-10

1. Exodus 20:1-3— the exclusive object of our worship must be the one, the true and the living, triune God himself. In the worship of God, no room is allowed in the Bible for idols, icons, saints, angels, Mary, (the earthly Mother of Jesus), nor any object, nor any other being in the entire universe.

2. Exodus 20:4-6— the manner of true worship must be spiritual and not physical. **Thus, we are forbidden** by God in His Holy Word to attempt to worship God by means of visual representations. **All attempts, (INCLUDING MOVIES/DRAMA), to visually portray GOD the Father, Son or Holy Spirit obscure [HIDE, VEIL] God's glory.** (Deut. 4:15-16; Isaiah 40:18; 46:5-10; Rom. 1:22-23) Instead of man-made images, ACTORS, and/or 'paintings' supposedly portraying true DEITY— God reveals Himself **through the Word of God and by His Spirit** (Ps. 16:7-9; 2 Cor. 3:18; Isa. 53; Revelation 1:13-17); and He declares Himself through creation! (Ps. 19:1-6)

3. Exodus 20:7— the specific attitude for true worship is that of **reverence** for God and, thus, **reverence** for God's Name. The third commandment not only means that we do not CURSE; but also that we refrain from using God's name in our jokes or humor or in any cheap or insincere fashion. **Moreover,** as a Christian we are 'taking the name' of Jesus— His name is not to be taken in vain. His name is not to be taken in a mere empty show of religion— to be singing 'Praise the LORD' while secretly proceeding to love sin is to greatly misuse the holy name of Jesus.

4. Exodus 20:8-11— certainly all of our time is to be used in such a way as to glorify God. Nevertheless, the principles of Scripture call for the specific setting aside of one day in seven for rest, good deeds, and for corporate worship. **(Isaiah 58:13-14) Living, vibrant love relationships require and are inwardly motivated to give sacred, specific time!**

5. Jesus Unfolds the Nature of New Covenant Worship— John 4:19-21. Christian Worship is not a matter of a sacred, physical locality. Rather, it is the spiritual reality of communion with God that is of supreme importance. **In other words,**

**** True Worship must be in spirit! WORSHIP is not outward ceremony or fleshly incited emotions from high energy music and/or gyrations and/or rituals.** Rather, **worship in spirit** relates to being in accord with the Holy Spirit, aided by the Holy Spirit, and is a manifestation of sincerity in hearts which are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, **HE** is the **HOLY** Spirit and **He** is the Spirit of **TRUTH** and **His** master passion is to **Exalt Jesus!** (Matthew 15:18; John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:13) **THEREFORE: Worship that is "in the Spirit" will manifest and promote (1) Holiness, (2) Loyalty to Biblical Truth, and (3) Will exalt Jesus!**

Exuberance, various physical expressions, may or may not be the expressions of being "in the Spirit"— **they may only be a pumped up man-manufactured display of religious flesh that makes God sick, as in Isaiah 1:2-15; and/or that brings His wrath, as in Exodus 32.**

**** True Worship must be in truth!** Worship in truth is worship which is in agreement with God's Word. (John 17:17) True worship has God and God alone as the object of the worship being offered. (Ex. 20:3) **Moreover, worship 'in truth' yields forth** obedience to God! (Isa. 1:15-20) In the true worship of God we receive and heed: **"Preach the Word; ... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.** (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

SADLY, in our day there is a growing rejection as to preaching the **"Thus saith the LORD!"** Instead, many are seeking to 'grow churches' by means of foolish stories, by man-made fictions, by promoting temporal patriotism and/or by an abundance of so called fun! (2 Timothy 4:1-4) **Give the masses what they want and they love it!** (Jeremiah 5:30-31)

In many places folks are led to believe that they can continue to love the world and keep their sin and have the Savior also! **In reality, that IS how the Harlot Church is built!** However, those who know and follow the LAMB, (like Noah), will live and preach RIGHTEOUSNESS! (Heb. 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5)

III. Various Biblical Expressions in the Corporate Worship of God!

1. PREACHING/TEACHING (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-4): The **preaching/teaching of the Word of God** is critical and central in corporate worship. "To worship God we must know who God is, but we cannot know who God is unless God first chooses to reveal Himself to us. God has done this in the Bible, which is why the Bible and the teaching of the Bible need to be central in our worship." (J. M. Boice)

2. AMEN/HALLELUJAH/PRAISE THE LORD: In the worship of God **it is a good thing** for the whole congregation (in response to the preached/taught Word of God) to freely and expressively speak forth words of Praise to God; and to openly say, "**AMEN!**" **Saying 'AMEN' is saying "Yes!" to God! It is saying, "So be it LORD!"... "So be it in my life, LORD!"**

Nehemiah 8:6— "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, **and all the people** answered, **AMEN, AMEN...**" **1 Chronicles 16:8-36**— A great, God-centered Psalm was read before the people... "**And all the people said, AMEN,** and praised the LORD!"

Psalm 106:48— "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, AMEN, PRAISE YE THE LORD!

Revelation 7:9-12— All those in heaven are worshipping God and saying, "**AMEN!** Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, BE UNTO OUR GOD forever and ever. "**AMEN! AMEN! ALLELUIA!**"

3. SING/SPEAK PRAISE: In the worship of God **it is a good thing** for the congregation to freely and expressively **SING** and/or **SPEAK** praise unto the LORD!

Psalm 95:1— "O come, let US sing unto the LORD. **Let US** make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."

Ephesians 5:19— "**Speaking to YOURSELVES** in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD!" (Col. 3:16; Matt.26:30)

4. GIVE TESTIMONIES: It is a good thing to give TESTIMONIES in the midst of the congregation! Here are just a few Biblical examples: Psalm 22:22-25; 35:18; 66:13-16; 107:1-2; 107:31-32.

** Psalm 22:22, 25— I will declare thy name unto my brethren: **in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation:** I will pay my vows before them that fear him. **Psalm 35:18**— I will give thee thanks **in the great congregation:** I will praise thee among much people.

NOTE: Testifying of the LORD'S work in your life, (1) **not only gives** honor to God; (2) it not only **BUILDS UP/ENCOURAGES** fellow believers; (3) **but it is also a powerful witness** to the lost who may be present!

CONSIDER THE IMPACT THE FOLLOWING PRACTICE WILL MAKE... when before Sunday School, DURING and between Sunday School and the Worship hour, after the worship hour, during lunch, and/or DURING the Early Afternoon Service; AND in the neighborhood or when at work— testimonies like these are shared:

"This week ... or today ... or from Daily Bible reading, or from the Sunday School lesson or from the preached Word of God, etc.— GOD SPOKE TO ME from/through His Word!" ... convicting ... encouraging ... instructing ... rebuking/correcting ..." OR... **"GOD SPOKE TO ME TODAY and brought me from death to life BY THE GOSPEL!"**

SINCE SUCH POWERFUL OPPORTUNITIES ARE PRESENT— THEREFORE, when we READ/STUDY the Word of God and/or when we participate in a group Bible Study and/or when we sit under the sound of the preaching of the Word of God we must be asking ourselves questions like: Is there a sin to confess? Are there promises to claim?

Are there commands of God to obey? Are there examples to follow? Is there error to avoid? Is there truth to believe? Is there PRAISE and THANKSGIVING to give to God?

From what we glean, we have good news to TESTIFY in the midst of the Congregation:

Psalm 35:18— I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

Psalm 66:16— Come and hear, all you who fear God, *and **I will declare what He has done for my soul.***

5. The Awesome Power of Positive Testimonies!

The Psalmist said, "I will remember the works of the LORD... I will meditate also of all thy works, **and talk of** all thy doings." (Psalm 77:11-12)

The early disciples of Jesus said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)

The Woman at the Well, after her saving encounter with Jesus Christ, went into her town proclaiming, "**Come, see a man who** told me all the things I ever did...!" (John 4:29)

Positive, God-honoring testimonies are powerful instruments in the hands of God to,

(1) Encourage our own hearts, (2) Lift up the spirits of other saints and/or to

(3) Bring others to Christ!

REALITY: Our hearts and minds are continually filled with thoughts of some sort. Negative, doubting, unbelieving thoughts discourage us and can bring us down into pits of despair.

Psalm 73 is a powerful example of such, as well as showing the way out!

The Psalmist began to THINK about the prosperity of the wicked. The more he let his mind run with these thoughts, the more despondent he became. He was beginning to conclude that it was but a vain and useless thing to live for God's honor. But thankfully, he realized that if he opened his mouth and spoke all of his murmuring that many of God's children would be led astray! **So he kept his mouth shut!** (Ps. 73:15-16)

And he made a choice to go to the place designated for worship and hear the Word of God. (Ps. 73:17) **There he was reminded** of the present fears and of the dreadful later end of every person who is not saved. **He was also freshly envisioned** of the abundant blessings that he possessed as God's redeemed child.

Psalm 73, concludes with **a commitment to DECLARE God's works!**

Psalm 40 and Psalm 51 powerfully demonstrate that when we give testimonies of praise for God's Amazing Grace dealings with us— the lost and the saved will "... see it ... and shall trust in the LORD ... and sinners shall be converted unto God!" (Ps. 40:1-3; 51:12-15)

Truly one of the most effective tools God has given us for encouragement and for EVANGELISM is the power of godly, positive testimony.

***** It is very encouraging, faith-building and Kingdom-building...

- (1) **To speak well** of God! (This is for our own need and simply because HE is worthy!)
- (2) **To speak well** of one another in Christ,
- (3) And **to speak well** of the local church family to which God has joined you.

EXAMPLE: **HAS GOD GRACIOUSLY BLESSED YOU in some way through the ministry of Southside Baptist Church and/or through the ministry of Southside Christian School?**

If so, tell it! Speak it! Write it! Tell the Good news! Your story may be short and simple. It may be longer and more detailed. But only God knows just how powerful and how far will be the godly influence of your "SPEAKING WELL" TESTIMONY!

6. PHYSICAL POSTURES: In the worship of God it is a good thing for a congregation to stand, to kneel, to bow, etc. In the Word of God, we find various physical postures in worship conveying gratitude, reverence, submission, humility, and/or dependence, etc. **Yes, mere physical actions can become mechanical and/or hypocritical; and make God sick— Isaiah 1:2-15.**

Yes, we must come to God in worship with right heart attitudes. But also, among those right attitudes is the submissive, godly embracing of Biblical expressions in worship, such as the ones we are setting forth from Scripture in this study.

Note: The fact that there are those who "get in the flesh" and just put on a show, rather than truly worship God— DOES NOT GIVE US LIBERTY TO IGNORE OR REJECT STANDARD BIBLICAL PATTERNS!

7. HANDS and HEART in WORSHIP: In the worship of God it is a good thing for our hearts and hands to blend in worship to God.

"Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, *as I lift MY HANDS* toward your most holy place." (Psalm 28:2)

"The LORD is my strength and my shield; *My HEART* trusteth in Him, and I am helped. *MY HEART* leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song." (Psalm 28:7)

EXTENDED HANDS reveal the worshipper in a posture of faith, looking to God for mercy and grace. (Psalm 88:9b)

LIFTED UP HANDS are also in the context of praise to God for his greatness. "Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD... **Lift up your hands** in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD!" (Psalm 134:1-2)
"And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.

And all the people answered, **AMEN, AMEN, with lifting up their hands**, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground." (Neh. 8:6)

God inspired the Apostle Paul to write: "I will therefore that men PRAY everywhere, **LIFTING UP HOLY HANDS**, without wrath and doubting." (1 Timothy 2:8)

IV. Bottom Lines as to Genuine Worship!

"The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's church is common and tragic. It is the loss that brings us, sadly,

(1) to transform worship into entertainment, (2) gospel preaching into marketing,

(3) being and becoming Christ-like into feeling good about ourselves, and (4) faithfulness into being successful...

THE GREAT NEED OF THE HOUR:

We must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship;

we are not. Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success."

[As normal... a number of sources used in developing this article.]

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell /www.southsidegallatin.org

REMEMBER: "WORSHIP IS THE UPRISING OF A HEART THAT KNOWS (1) God the Father as the Great Giver; (2) God the Son as the Great Shepherd; (3) and God the Holy Spirit as the Indwelling resident in and President over our daily lives. **WORSHIP is** adoring contemplation of God Himself, as He has revealed Himself in Christ and in the Word of God. **Praise and Obedience** are given to God because of WHO HE IS and because of His great acts of Creation and Redemption.

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing with us every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Any questions contact Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

MARCH 20, 11:00AM— LADIES BIBLE STUDIES— led by Cindy Bell

***** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service.

YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith_

*****SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!*****

REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 16, 23, 30

1. 9:30am- Sunday School→ Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church

*****[LORD'S SUPPER, 3/16/14]*****

3. Noon: Fellowship 'covered-dish' Meal together!

4. 1:00pm- Early afternoon Service, in the Fellowship Hall

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!

Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>