

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 20, May 20, 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 is a weekly Bible Study, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It 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 and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

The School of Joyful Endurance

[FROM: <http://www.crossroad.to/Victory/articles/encouragement/endurance.htm>]

"O Love that will not let me go" "***...count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.***" (James 1:2-3) Over a century ago in Scotland, a blind preacher in "deep mental anguish" penned a hymn that would long outlive his own challenging life here on earth. As he wrote the words that God brought to mind, peace filled his heart. Perhaps you know that song and love its message as much as I do: *"O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee; I give Thee back the life I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be."*

"I was at that time alone," wrote Pastor George Matheson on June 6, 1882, "it was the day of my sister's marriage.... Something happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. **The hymn was the fruit of that suffering."**

From Anguish to Eternal Fruit

When we ask God for strength to endure suffering, He may use our saddest moments to fill us with a joy that can only come from Him! He knows well that when earthly answers are beyond reach, we can most readily "see" and receive His heavenly blessings. No one but Matheson

himself knew the reason for his anguish that day. He certainly didn't begrudge his sister's marriage. But she had been his personal helper day after day. She even learned Greek and Hebrew to support him in his ministry, and now she was gone.

Another possible reason for his pain might have been loneliness.

As a youth, he had been engaged to a young woman. But when he warned her that he would soon lose his sight, she broke the engagement. "**I cannot go through life with a blind man,**" she told him. Whatever caused that evening's distress, God used it to produce wonderful "fruit" -- first in Matheson's own life, and later to encourage Christians around the world! Listen carefully to the hope-filled words of the third verse: *"O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to Thee; I trace the rainbow through the rain, And feel the promise is not vain That morn shall tearless be."*

Blindness, personal loss, loneliness, a sense of inadequacy... Such a painful blend would distress most of us! But God gave George Matheson something far better than a visible solution to earthly difficulties; He gave him spiritual sight to see eternal treasures!

And with that revelation came the assurance of His Father's constant nearness and the lasting promise of divine strength, daily sufficiency, and eternal hope. Like the apostle Paul, Matheson could say, **"...we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."** (Romans 5:3-4)

Learning to Practice Endurance

Endurance is hardly a popular topic these days. Troubling times sow anxiety, not peace. But that's all the more reason to welcome God's training in victorious faith. For when we smile to Him -- even as we cry out in our deepest struggles -- He will surely provide the strength we need to follow Him. **"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls."** (Hebrews 12:3)

In this time of rapid change, such training in endurance is priceless. **America's trusted Constitutional "rights" and freedoms are fading away,** eroded by a corrupting quest for amoral license and unbiblical

unity. Missing are the old certainties: ethical laws, a moral education system grounded in facts rather than a feeling-based group consensus, and the Christian morality that once built safe communities.

No part of this transformation is more ominous than the shift in faith and values. Even in America, Christians are becoming targets in a global war against God, His Word and His followers. Yet, it shouldn't surprise us. Jesus warned us long ago that the world would hate us, just as it hated Him. (John 15:19-21)

If you doubt that this is happening, you may want to read some of our previous articles on this topic. They show the facts behind this transformation -- the spreading web of global rules and government restrictions designed to quench Christian hope, weaken our convictions, and silence the gospel: [Trading U.S. Rights for UN Rules; From Parental Rights to Global Control, Part 1: The UN Seizure of Parental Rights; Purging the Memory of Our Christian Roots; Global War on Christian Values - Part 1] [GO TO: <http://www.crossroad.to/>]

Essential Lessons in the School of Endurance!

1. To know and follow His Word. It reminds us that we "*have need of endurance*" (Hebrews 10:34-39), that He will provide it as we trust Him, and that the end of the journey is well worth the pain and perseverance.

*"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **For consider Him** who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, **lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls....**" (Hebrews 12:1-4)*

2. To seek and receive His strength and guidance each day.

"...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed... perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the

body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:7-10)

3. To resist any temptation to compromise God's Word and our convictions. Such a stand could cost us friends, but it will bring us to an ever closer walk with Jesus, our Shepherd.

Our training school is full of small temptations, which train us for the larger battles.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

4. To trust God and not "murmur" or complain when difficulties press, knowing that He will use each challenge to draw us closer to Himself.

"... we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God..." (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)

5. To follow His guidelines, not popular culture. Our Shepherd points us to His narrow way, where He prepares us to endure hostility, rejection, loneliness and separation.

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things... endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

6. To put on God's Armor each day.

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Ephesians 6:10-11)

7. To know the peace and joy of "abiding" (trusting, "resting") in His love moment by moment.

*"**The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures;***

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for YOU are with me; Your rod Your staff comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies:

***YOU anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. SURELY goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever!"** (Psalm 23:1-6)*

The Victory of Endurance!

After the crucifixion, the followers of Jesus faced hatred, persecution, torture and death -- and thus found ceaseless opportunities to demonstrate victorious faith to others. Unwilling to deny their Lord, they suffered unthinkable tortures -- and gained eternal treasures with Jesus. Counting it privilege to "share in His suffering," they now share in His heavenly glory.

Notice how Paul describes these tests in the school of endurance:

"...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed... perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:7-10)

George Matheson, too, was severely pressed but never crushed. Like the blind hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, he learned joyful endurance through

painful limitations. His light to "see" the wonders of God's love came through the power of the Holy Spirit, not through finite human sight.

“O Light that foll’west all my way, I yield my flick’ring torch to Thee; My heart restores its borrowed ray, That in Thy sunshine’s blaze its day May brighter, fairer be!”

Matheson was remembered, not for the 1,500 church members who came to hear his preaching, but for a profound hymn that still touches hearts and points us to God's victorious ways. **Its four verses remind us that--**

If we didn't suffer and surrender our lives to God, we wouldn't know His comforting love.

If we didn't face darkness, we wouldn't learn to walk by God's special Light.

If we didn't face pain and helplessness, we wouldn't appreciate God's comforting strength.

If God hadn't opened our "eyes" to see our sins, we wouldn't appreciate His victory through the cross.

“O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from Thee; I lay in dust life’s glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red Life that shall endless be!”

Our struggles differ, but God's school of endurance fits all our needs.

And each time we pass its tests, our faith grows ever stronger and His light of Truth shines brighter on His pathway for our lives.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 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 4:16-18)

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

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

*** **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

NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Thursday, May 29, 11:00AM, led by Cindy Bell

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

*** **SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR May 25** ***

1. **9:30am**- Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
2. **10:45am**- Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **NOON**- Covered-dish Fellowship Meal
4. **1:00pm**- Early afternoon Service

□ **A CHAIR/LIFT-elevator-type**, directly from the auditorium straight down to the Fellowship Hall. Total cost is about \$32-33 thousand for lift and installation. OVER \$23,000 already given! PLEASE Pray and give unto the LORD for the remaining.

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>

COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST!

From the start, (Acts 2:42-47), it is clear that those redeemed by Christ are placed by Christ into local congregations where **the Biblical,**

Holy Spirit empowered NORM is members committed to and **LOVING** one another— thus revealing **COMMITMENT** and **LOVE** to Christ.

QUOTE: “If my commitment to the health and well-being of my physical body and physical health was on the same level as my commitment to Christ and His church—**WOULD I BE HEALTHY, VERY SICK, or DEAD?**”

In the following, let each of us make the kinds of decisions and commitments which we will be glad we made when we stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of our stewardship!

***** OUTREACH MINISTRY— NEEDED:** 4 Teams with combinations of 2 couples; and/or a couple and 2 men; and/or a couple and two ladies. (We will ‘team up’ individual Outreach Ministry folk with others, as needed)

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE MINISTRY?

1. TO BE ON CALL for ministry... one week every month. In other words, seek to be **AVAILABLE** for ‘sudden, unexpected needs;

2. SET ASIDE ONE EVENING and/or one daytime segment of time to actually **MAKE VISITS** to widows; shut-ins, elderly, local hospital, a family who may have visited the church, and/or a church member needing encouragement; and/or **SOMEONE** with whom there may be an open door to share the gospel, etc.

3. RECORDS WILL BE KEPT in the Church office so that we can **KNOW** what has been done and what is yet to be done and/or if follow-up is needed on ministry done the previous week.

4. EACH WEEK’S TEAM will be listed in the Sunday Bulletin. **IF TEAMS NEED TO ‘change their week’ or whatever...** The teams ‘own the ministry’ enough to get their own replacements and/or to ‘switch’ weeks with another team.

*** VAN TRANSPORTATION for Sunday Mornings: Steve and Tim Head,
 Andrew _____ Jentes, Mike _____ Munday,
 [OTHERS _____]

*****SUMMER CAMP: July 6-11 // WORKERS/HELPERS**

SIGN UP... stating in what ways you can possibly help; and when you can help; and IF you are available to spend nights, etc.

***** INITIAL CAMP WORKERS/HELPERS MEETING, SUNDAY, MAY 25
 @2:30PM *****

***** MEN: Elders; Deacons; OTHERS: EQUIPPING and/or preparation for PRESENT and/or possible future ministry:**

1. **Commit to** specific studies;
2. **Engage in** various ministries;
3. **Cultivate** personal walk with God.

Tailored to each person's needs, gifts, time availability, sense of calling, etc. At the end of the way, **participants may or may not be led/called** to specifically serve as a deacon or as an elder; but ALL will be far better equipped for ministry unto the LORD through the local church.

******The New Testament calls us to church-wide prayer Meetings! WHO WILL SEEK TO BE FAITHFUL TO WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER SERVICE?**

***** FIFTH SUNDAY EVENINGS** filled with those from our local assembly SINGING (Individuals, families, duets, trios, quartets, families, Choir, etc.); Reading/Quoting SCRIPTURE; TESTIMONIES

THE FIRST ONE: JUNE 29, 6:00 pm

FINAL NOTE: Let each of us make the kinds of decisions and commitments which we will be glad we made when we stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of our stewardship!

Grace to all! James Bell