



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 51, December 23 , 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."***

GIVING LESSONS FROM GOD!

December 25 is upon us! In short order, once again, Mega BILLIONS of dollars of gifts will be given and/or exchanged. Sooner or later, most store-bought gifts lose their value. IN THE MIDST of it all many sincere Christians will valiantly seek to have a Christ-focus. MAY GRACE ABOUND to one and all!

ON THE SUBJECT OF GIVING THERE IS ONE 'MASTER TEACHER/EXAMPLE'— GOD HIMSELF! "God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son...!" When it comes to giving— NO ONE comes close to God the Father's gift of JESUS!

As we know, **JESUS, the GIFT** that God the Father gave was laid in an animal's stall and later nailed to a rugged cross. And as painful as the beatings, the crown of thorns, and the nails were— far more immeasurable pain was experienced by **God's GIFT!** **For on the Cross of Calvary, JESUS, God's GIFT—** in order to become the sinner's Saviour had to become the sinner's SIN BEARER and the sinner's SUBSTITUTE! But what about the **pain of God the Father** in those hours? And although in the sacred Scriptures we hear **JESUS** cry out, "**My**

God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"— We do not begin to understand the pain of experiencing the WRATH which we sinners deserved!

A hymn writer can help us with a PROPER RESPONSE to the giving of God:

Oh, teach me what it meaneth-- That cross uplifted high, With One-
the Man of Sorrows- Condemned to bleed and die! Oh, teach me what it
cost Thee to make a sinner whole; And teach me, Saviour, teach me The
Value of a soul!

Oh, teach me what it meaneth-- That sacred crimson tide-- The blood
and water flowing From Thine own wounded side. Teach me that if none
other had sinned, but I alone, Yet still, Thy blood, LORD Jesus, Thine alone
must atone.

Oh, teach me what it meaneth-- Thy love beyond compare, The love
that reacheth deeper Than the depths of self-despair! Yea, teach me, till
there gloweth in this cold heart of mine, Some feeble, pale reflection of
that pure love of Thine.

Oh, teach me what it meaneth-- For I am full of sin; and Grace alone
can reach me, and Love alone can win. Oh, teach me, for I need Thee-- I
have no hope beside, (For I am) The chief of all the sinners for whom the
Saviour died!

O Infinite Redeemer! I bring no other plea, Because Thou dost invite
me, I cast myself on Thee. Because Thou dost accept me, I love and I
adore; **Because Thy love constraineth, I'll (Love, Serve), praise
Thee evermore!** (by Lucy A. Bennett, slightly edited)

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR GIVING— Mine? Yours?

SADLY, even many Christians seem addicted to 'giving' the following—

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery,
fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred,

variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**" (Galatians 5:19-21)

NOTE: IF we continue to 'do'/'GIVE' such acts as sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; **hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions,** factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like— we are showing cause to question the genuineness of our claim of being saved! **To 'do' such deeds is to 'GIVE' these attitudes and actions to others; and such giving is NEVER justified in God's sight. These are *Anti-Christ gifts!***

Beware of 'giving' these additional *ANTICHRIST GIFTS:*

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife [is], there [is] confusion and every evil work. **Are WE givers of such anti-Christ gifts?**

In radical contrast, when our 'giving' is motivated by God and His grace, we give manifestations of the fruit of the Holy Spirit:

"... the fruit of the Spirit [**CHRIST GIFTS!**] is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. **And they that are Christ's** have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:19-22)

Moreover, ***CHRIST GIFTS* 'look like' this:**

But the wisdom that is from above

is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, [and] easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3:14-18)

Furthermore: Without the following 'CHRIST GIFTS' being given by us to others, we are ZEROS in God's sight!

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not **LOVE**, I am become [as] sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. **And though** I have [the gift of] prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; **and though** I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not **LOVE**, I am nothing. **And though** I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], **and though** I give my body to be burned, and have not **LOVE**, it profiteth me nothing.

LOVE suffereth long, [and] is kind; **LOVE** envieth not; **LOVE** vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. **LOVE** never faileth..." (1 Cor.13:1-8a)

SOME BOTTOM LINES ABOUT GIVING:

1. Our thoughts, words and deeds are either of CHRIST or they are ANTICHRIST!

2. Will there be those who read the words of this article who will sink down into ANTICHRIST responses and if so, how so? **Namely this:** You read and you start thinking of and ACCUSING someone else (A SPOUSE, A NEIGHBOR, CHURCH MEMBER, A CO-WORKER) of being eat up with words and actions in the ANTICHRIST LIST— **RATHER THAN** allowing the Word of God by the Spirit of God call you to personal repentance for your own failures!

REALITY: God does not call upon us to CONFESS the real or imagined sins/failings of others. HE CALLS UPON US TO CONFESS and REPENT of our own sins/failings!

3. From time to time, even growing Christians BOG DOWN into being **MIND-PIECES AND MOUTH-PIECES** for ANTICHRIST! Let us one and all take heed lest we fall! Let us STAY CLOSE TO JESUS and in His Word, **so as to keep from** thinking, speaking, doing, and 'giving' ANTICHRIST 'gifts'.

LET US RECEIVE INSTRUCTION FROM THE WORD OF GOD AS TO 'GIVING': "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. **And grieve not** the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. **Let all** bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, **be put away** from you, with all malice: **And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**" (Ephesians 4:29-32)

THE GIFT-GIVING MODEL OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

"**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory**; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, **he humbled himself**, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:3-8)

By the way, Philippians 2:3-8 not only reveals the MODEL of the giving of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; but it also models how the New Testament church CELEBRATED the birth of Christ! BE THAT AS IT MAY, the giving model of Jesus, (The same Jesus who now INDWELLS the Christian by the Holy Spirit), SHOUTS TO EVERY CHRISTIAN an irrefutable conclusion:

"I never have the right to harbor or to GIVE forth any spirit, attitude, words, or actions which are contrary to the 'GIVING' of Jesus!"

O what a battle this is because when difficult circumstances and people cross my path— I don't 'naturally' want to GIVE forth HUMILITY as Jesus did. I want to pay back, hit back, get even, etc... and then as I get beat up in the battles of 'flesh against flesh'— not only do I not want to MODEL the giving of Jesus, I don't want anyone calling upon me to deal with my faults. I want sympathy. I want support with justification and approval for my FLESH GIVING! **(Note: Of course, I would never be so overt as to literally say that I want those things!)**

In reality I need someone to come along side and remind me:

“You are HIS blood-bought holy temple; Jesus has a right to express His life and His spirit through His temple!”

SAD REALITY: There is no much heartache in Christian homes and churches because of defensive/OFFENDED SPIRITS— antichrist 'giving' is deadly to all!

WE EASILY GIVE FORTH **THESE DEADLY FUMES**: “So and so did so and so to me. They failed me. They wronged me. They made me angry, mad, FRUSTRATED, or upset. They hurt me— THEREFORE, I QUIT THE MARRIAGE, THE CHURCH, or THE FRIENDSHIP!” **Thus, we sink down into the deep dark prison cells of our own making. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OUT— I MUST** give like Jesus and give as JESUS!

BY THE WAY: If I am a Christian and I am NOT GIVING like Jesus it is wholly because of my choice! It is NEVER because of your sin! No one else ever makes me sin. No one can PUSH me away from being a channel of GIVING like Jesus. Yes, others may tempt, test, and/or seek to influence— but they have NO POWER to make me do it!

REALITY: A teacher drawing from the writings of Jonathan Edwards said something like this: **You and I always think or do the thing we MOST WANT TO at the given moment! Out of the abundance of our hearts, we speak, or act, or GIVE!** Life is all about CHOICES! Outside of Christ, our choices are slaves to sin, self, and satan. But in Christ, we are FREE IN CHRIST; and by the indwelling

power of the Holy Spirit, we can and must CHOOSE to be CHANNELS for giving forth gifts which manifest Jesus!

IF YOU OR I continually REFUSE CHRIST's path of humility, THEN we must hear this WORD found in 1 John 2:18-19— Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. **They went out from us, but they were not of us**; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

GOD IS CALLING FOR SPECIFIC 'CHRIST-GIFT-GIVING' AND 'CHRIST-GIFT-EXCHANGING' IN LOCAL CHURCHES AND IN CHRISTIAN HOMES! Anything less is sin and antichrist!

From yet additional Scriptures— here are powerful 'Christ Gifts' to give and exchange in December and all the year around! **Love** one another (John 13:34-35) **Accept** one another (Romans 15:7) **Greet** one another (Romans 16:16) **Care** for one another (1 Corinthians 12:24) **Submit** to one another (Ephesians 5:18-21) **Forbear** one another (Ephesians 4:1-3) **Confess** your sins to one another (James 5:16)

Forgive one another (Colossians 3:12-13) **Be kind** to one another (Ephesians 4:31-32) **Serve** one another (Galatians 5:13-14) **Bear** one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) **Be hospitable** to one another (1 Peter 4:9) **Pray** for one another (James 5:16) **Build up** one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11) **Teach** one another (Colossians 3:16) **Exhort** one another (Hebrews 3:12-13) **Admonish** one another (Col 3:16)

Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18) **Prefer** one another (Romans 12:9-10) **Do not** judge one another (Romans 14:13) **Do not** speak evil of one another (James 4:11) **Do no** murmur against one another (James 5:9)

Do not bite and devour one another (Galatians 5:14-15) **Do not** provoke one another (Galatians 5:25-26) **Do not** envy one another (Galatians 5:25-26) **Do not** lie to one another (Colossians 3:9-11)

RESPONDING TO THE GREATEST GIFT: If you have never personally and truly **received** Jesus Christ— the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation! COME TO JESUS NOW!

ARE YOU already a real Christian? All praise to God for His amazing grace: "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God**, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2) Poor, persecuted saints of long ago also model 'GIVING' for us: **They, "... first gave their ownelves to the LORD..."** (2 Cor. 8:5)

May the Grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be with one and all! James Bell

www.southsidegallatin.org

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; **IN Ladies Sunday School Room**

** **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

→ LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Resumes January 8, 11:00am, New Study: The Life of David! Cindy Bell, teaching

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

UPCOMING December Sundays:

***** SUNDAY, 12/28—**

1. 9:30am Sunday School
2. 10:45am Worship Service

No lunch or afternoon service

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY, 2015— 4, 11, 18, 25

1. 9:30am Sunday School
2. 10:45am Worship Service
3. Noon— Fellowship, Covered-dish lunch
4. 1:00pm— Early afternoon worship service

[THIRD SUNDAY: January 18: LORD'S SUPPER

NO LUNCH// HOME MEETINGS IN THE EVENING]

[[[Next Grow in Grace Newsletter is scheduled for 1/6/2015]]]