



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 8, February 24 , 2015 / 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."***

WHEN LIFE TUMBLES IN and YOUR 'ROPE BREAKS!

In a fallen world we have to deal with all kinds of 'stuff'... from multiple sources. It is easy to become 'diseased' with various strains of B.R.S. — Broken Rope Syndrome! (BRS) Let's explore this beginning with,

I. THE BAD NEWS (Job 3:23-26) — All is not right with the world. Long before we were born something bad took place called the Fall. Because of the Fall, we live in a physical world where something is terribly wrong. (Gen. 3:17b-19; Romans 8:20-22) Living in a fallen world, for example, we have to face the fact of **natural disasters**. As we know, **sin is a part** of a fallen world. (Jer. 17:9) Believe it or not, none of us are perfect. Thus, our own sin creates many a problem, as do the sins of others. Then, there is **the reality of death**. (Romans 5:12, I Corinthians 15:56) Death is not natural. We were not born to die. Disease and death are the result of sin. (This is true even though one's present disease may have no connection to any specific sin in the sick one.)

II. GOOD NEWS... but often we are not so sure — The good news is, you have been invited to a 'party'— BUT it isn't your party! However, once you understand the One for whom the party is given, all things considered, it isn't such a bad party after all. **This is GOD'S world** and we need to understand **the way the world works**. Probably all of us need a good dose of the lessons God gave Job! (See, Job 38-41) **God is working out HIS plan, not ours**. Our fallen nature is egocentric— in our hearts of hearts we believe that the world revolves around us. [Ego is at

the root of much of our anger, resentments, and bitterness toward people, circumstances, and even God— simply because something was said or done that did not please us!!] Peace is found here: The world was not created for us; it was created by and for God. (Isa. 40:25; Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1; Rev. 4:11) God has created the world for His reasons and not for ours. HIS CHILDREN who are focused in on LOVING HIM— Will EXPERIENCE GOD WORKING ALL THINGS for HIS GLORY and for OUR good!

More Reality: We feel, when the rope breaks and the tragedy follows... that something is out of control. WE MAY FEEL LIKE, (1) **This isn't really happening.** (2) Or we may feel like **All is vanity.** "Life is hard and then you die." **BUT here is where we need to stand: "God is everything!"** God created the world that He might be glorified— Breaking Ropes take on grand significance when we embrace the sovereign goodness of God! Life is about the King. It is not about His servants, or His lands, or His subjects. It is only about the King. In the midst of breaking ropes, our God reigns.

III. THE VERY, VERY GOOD NEWS — CHRISTIAN: God loves you a lot! Rom. 9:14-16; I John 3:1; I John 4:10. "But God demonstrates His own love (agape) for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). CHRISTIAN: God loves you. Broken Ropes still hurt, but God is at work for His glory and for your good— He says so: Romans 8:28-32. JESUS PROVED HIS LOVE for you at Calvary; and He knows what He's doing. AND... You will make it through. Tough times are only temporary. Suffering will end, you can get through it. His love assures that "bottom-line" fact. **MOREOVER, you are not alone.** (John 14:16-18) People are always saying, "Jesus is all I need." You will never know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you've got. And when Jesus is all you've got, then and only then, will you know that Jesus is all you need. Best of all, Jesus is a 'Fellow Sufferer!" (Heb. 4:15; I Peter 2:21)

THEREFORE: Feed Faith with Focus on JESUS and the Great Cloud of witnesses who have gone before us: (Heb, 11-12; Rev. 1-22) **Remember, you are becoming like Christ.** (2 Cor. 4:8-11; I Peter 4:12-13a; John 15:18-20) When your rope breaks it is never pleasant, but at that point you can begin to understand in a deeper way the sacrifice and suffering of Christ. Don't underestimate that gift. (Phil. 3:8, 10) **Your broken rope is redemptive.** (Col. 1:24; Acts 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:23-28) God does not waste suffering, If He plows, it is because He purposes a crop. Suffering can also be redemptive to the one who suffers. Suffering purifies us. Have you noticed that much of our Christian life is ego-oriented? There is a lot

of ego that needs God's refining fire. (I Cor. 3:11-15.) **FAITH ACTIONS to take, Means of Grace to embrace when the rope breaks:**

Honest prayer can really help when your rope has broken. (Ps. 69:1-3) If you are angry and hurt— be honest. Tell Him the truth. He is maybe the only person in the world Who can absorb everything you hand out, understand why you do it, and still love you. **Honest fellowship:** (Gal. 6:2) A Christian facing surgery. "Are you kidding? Of course I'm frightened," she exclaimed. "I'm scared to death. People die in this place!" "Guys, I want you to know that my business is falling apart and I'm scared." Stop putting up a front. Walk in the light! (1 John 1:7) **Honest Bible study:** In this kind of world - the world where it is common practice to lie- it's wonderful to go someplace where I know I'll hear the truth. That place is Scripture. The Bible presents great men and women of God doing very ungodly things. The more I read, the more I realized that God wanted us to see real people trying to deal with broken ropes. The Bible not only portrays the lives of people who, like us, dealt with broken ropes but also it shows us the best way to deal with broken ropes. Honest Bible Study will teach us doctrine, rebuke us, correct error, and train us in right living!

Honest action: Doing what needs doing. The Bible is not a passive book. Scripture challenges us to run the race, to fight the fight, to wrestle with angelic powers (I Cor. 9:24, 27; Eph. 6:17). When you place your hand on a hot stove, your hand doesn't hurt because you haven't prayed enough or been spiritual enough. Your hand hurts because it's on a hot stove. **Don't pray! Take your hand off the stove!** Don't blame others! Take your hand off the stove! Amazingly, the remedy for a broken rope is often an action of faith/obedience to the clear Word of God. **Honest relinquishment: Accepting what God gives you.** The book of Job gives illustration of relinquishment. (Job 1:20-21; Job 2:9-10) The principle is positive relinquishment: Whenever something comes into your life that you cannot change or avoid, accept it as coming from the hand of your loving Father. **Honest victory: Celebrating the good, the victories.** Because we are talking about broken ropes, we need to talk about the realities of failure, sin, tragedy, and relinquishment. However, I don't want you to think that's the whole story. God still answers prayer; He still mends broken ropes. He still rewards our heeding His voice. (Luke 22:31-32)

V. THE BANE (Deadly Poison) OF BITTERNESS — Listen to Job's words. Every rope that ever held him had broken, and he knew God. The bitterness with which he spoke was cutting: Job 9:14-18. You're caught with no place to go... You'd like to run away, to deny the reality you've

known, but that simply isn't a viable alternative. **The root of bitterness.** Hebrews 12:15; Deut. 29:18. Bitterness – characterized by feelings of hatred, envy, resentment, cynicism, and severity – begins when one turns from God, and it results in a disease that infects others. **The following lessons are hedges against the poison of bitterness: Prayer before you panic.** Daniel is a great example of someone who was faithful to God both before and after a crisis. (Daniel 6:6-7; Daniel 6:10) The story shows how a man of God should face lions. Because Daniel had prayed regularly long before he faced the lions, Daniel did not become bitter. Too many Christians pray only in storms. **Go forward with sound Biblical knowledge.** (Proverbs 18:15) Some feel that God is in the business of preventing tragedy and are devastated when their ropes break. They become bitter. (I Peter 1:13; I Peter 4:12) **Thanks before the tragedy.** (Ephesians 5:18-20) Understanding that everything comes from God and praising Him for it is an effective way to prevent bitterness. An attitude of praise will grant you power under pressure, but power without pressure is never promised by God. **Recognizing the effects of bitterness.** Many of us have our emotional “hall of injustice,” and we like to visit it often. We like to polish the statues of those who we say have hurt us... We may blame others to excuse or hide our own sin... and thus, deepen in bitterness.) **DOUBLE, DEADLY DANGER: If I take up an offence for another person— I will be enslaved by an even DEEPER BONDAGE TO BITTERNESS. Confessing the tendency toward bitterness.** To be perfectly honest, you can't turn bitterness on and off like a faucet. Bitterness is hard to destroy. God's Spirit must be given the freedom to act, and He is waiting for our humble obedience. (Ephesians 4:31) **Waiting for the light.** If God is sovereign (and He is) and if He loves you (and He does) and if you have done everything you can (and sometimes you have), then don't do anything more. Simply be still.

VI. WHERE DID I GO WRONG? — The point of the book of Job is that the explanations Job's friends offered attributing his problems to his sin were dead wrong. Job had done nothing wrong. He had not turned his back on God. He was not out of the will of God. He had not done anything stupid. **Have I done something wrong? Not necessarily.** In other words, there is no direct absolute correlation between breaking ropes and breaking God's law. **The chastening rope—** you need to know that broken ropes can sometimes be the result of God's chastening. God does sometimes allow us to experience broken ropes so that we can learn valuable lessons. I John 3:2. **A dumb failure—** ropes sometimes break because we do something stupid. Exodus 8:2-3; Exodus 8:9-10. **The**

natural consequences— some broken ropes occur because that's the way the world works. 2 Samuel 12:13-14. If we ignore God's laws, we do so at our own peril. **THERE MAY NOT BE ANY direct, absolute correlation between breaking ropes and our breaking God's laws.** Let's be humble and honest— **we deserve a lot worse.** (Romans 3:10-12) **Bad people do prosper.** Your broken rope might logically have something to do with your sin, but then the converse would also have to be true; that is, turkeys do quite well sometimes, thank you. (Psalm 10:3-5a) Someday when God balances the books, just rewards will be given, but only a fool would say that it works that way right now. **You are forgiven.** There is one other thing to think about if you believe you're hurting because you've done something wrong: **forgiveness. I John 1:9.**

V. WHERE DID THEY GO WRONG? (Things to understand if we are going to help others who have 'broken ropes.) — There is no direct, absolute correlation between other people's breaking ropes and their breaking God's law. (John 9:2-3) Christians must learn to relate to one another in tragedy as well as good times. God has given us to each other. (I Cor. 12:12-13; 26-27) **What Job's friends did right:** they were there. (Job 2:11) They were also quiet, at least at first. (Job 2:13) His friends didn't talk behind his back. They allowed him to express his bitterness and anger. (Job 3:3, 10-11) **What Job's friends did wrong:** They tried to have an intellectual discussion with Job while he was holding his broken rope in his hand. (Job 4:1-5a) Job's friends took a superior position. (Job 5:1-2, 8, 17; Job 12:1-3a) They presumed to speak for God. (Job 11:7, 10-11, 14-15) His friends assumed that what was happening to Job couldn't happen to them. Job's friends didn't do anything practical. They just talked. Job needed someone to bind up his wounds. He might have needed money; maybe he even needed a hug. All he got from his friends was words.

VI. DISCOURAGEMENT — One of the greatest problems with broken ropes is the inevitable discouragement which follows. One of the keys to dealing with discouragement is found in Hebrews 12:1-3. REMEMBER, we are surrounded by witnesses. (See Heb. 11:36-39) We are empowered to endure our broken ropes by "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith". (Hebrews 12:2; Matt. 14:28-32; Romans 8:28-31) **Remember the past.** (Job 8:8-10) When you look at the history of God's people you see God's faithfulness and love. When you look to your own past, you can see God's faithfulness and love. **Remember the facts.** (Eph. 6:13-14) Facts are the reality, not our feelings about the facts. "Never doubt in the dark what God has taught you in the light." **Remember the process.**

When your rope is broken and you are discouraged, don't forget that God works out His purpose in the process. (Ps. 37:23-24) **Finally**, when your rope has broken and you are discouraged, don't forget the future. (I Cor. 15:51-54; John 14:1ff.

VII. Could it be Satan? — (Job 1:9-12; Job 2:3-7) A discussion of broken ropes without a discussion of Satan would be **like discussing World War II without discussing Adolf Hitler**. The Holy Spirit breathed Bible calls Satan the liar, the accuser, the dragon, the serpent, and the ruler of the world. **When Jesus saw the unbelief of many so-called religious people, He said:** John 8:43-44; Mark 4:14-15; John 12:31; Luke 22:31-32. MOREOVER, not only do we learn from Job that Satan is alive, but we also learn that Satan is controlled. Furthermore, Satan is a defeated enemy (see Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:10). IF Satan has anything to do with your broken rope, he has done only what a sovereign God has either allowed or ordained. **Satan is learning, Job 1:8; Job 2:3.** What does that mean? I don't know. But whatever it means, the scriptures indicate that we are being viewed by supernatural beings that we might increase their knowledge and praise of God! (Ephesians 3:10) Alfred Martin wrote that this verse gave "further indication that heavenly beings are observing the Church and seeing in the Church the unfolding of God's wisdom. Both good and evil angels are evidently amazed at the working of God as seen in redeemed men and women." **If God wants to use my broken rope as a model to Satan of the sufficiency of God's grace, I don't like it, but I will accept it!!**

God is interested in showing an unbelieving world the difference in the way Christians deal with suffering and hurt and fear. If He is interested in showing the same thing to Satan, I'm glad to be a part of his education plan. Not only is Satan alive, controlled, and learning, but Satan also is, for all intents and purposes, defeated. (Col. 2:15) Satan is dead, he just doesn't know it. Finally, although I don't believe we should start looking for Satan under every bed and behind every corner, I do believe that we ought to be aware of his presence.

If Satan is involved in my broken rope, what can I do about it? Learn to use the truth. (Ephesians 6:14; 6:17). If you feel that God has deserted you, affirm the truth of His love for you. If you think that you will be destroyed, affirm the truth that God has given you eternal life in His Son. If you start believing that God is punishing you, affirm the truth that God has already defeated Satan. **Learn to resist Satan.** (I Peter 5:9; James 4:7) **Make prayer your hidden resource.** God's hand is not

shortened that He cannot save you (See Isa. 59:1). The other part of James's instruction for our dealings with Satan is submission to God. **Satan has incredible public relations. He is blamed for everything from dry cows to cancer. But he isn't as powerful as his public releases would suggest.** Only God has the kind of power Satan claims. Try to remember that. It helps. **BY ALL MEANS, check the SOURCE of the words you speak: James 3:13-18!**

VIII. MY HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS I'M HURTING — Sovereign God allows broken ropes because of His love. It is hard to bear the silence of God. But in that place, and sometimes only in that place, you meet God. (Job 42:2-3, 5) If you want to meet the living God, you almost always have to go to the place of broken ropes. After the silence, you will meet Him. And to meet God sometimes (if we were wiser, always) makes your visit to the place of broken ropes worth all the pain and suffering and hurt. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes." (Psalm 119:71) **When you meet God at the place of broken ropes, you will notice something else you didn't expect. God holds some broken ropes too. You will notice nail scars in His hands. You will see pain in His eyes, and you will know that the reason He speaks with authority is because the place of broken ropes is His place too.** (I Peter 4:1; Heb. 5:8; Heb. 4:15)

In the place of broken ropes you will either be drawn to God or you will walk farther and farther from Him. THE BROKEN ROPES DON'T CAUSE EITHER. As in Jesus' parable, you will find whether your house is built of rock or sand. **AND BROKEN ROPES REVEAL THE TRUE CONDITION OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.**

And you will notice separation between the group drawn to God and the group walking away. AM I WALKING AWAY... OR DRAWN TO GOD?

There is one final thing I want you to know about the plans of broken ropes. At that place you will find hope. (Job 19:25-27) Be still. Listen to the hope.

"THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM" (Hebrews 11:16).

[This article is edited from WHEN YOUR ROPE BREAKS, by Stephen Brown. NOTICE: The book is 184 pages long. The article is only 7 pages long! **But don't just read it— open your Bible and STUDY!]**

Grace, Joy, and Peace in Christ! James Bell

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; Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet 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— February 26, 11:00am**, The Life of David! – 1 Samuel 18 - Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

* **EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in 1 Thessalonians}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!}

SUNDAYS— MARCH 1, 8, __, 22, 29

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 15:

1. 9:30am - Sunday School

2. 10:45am - Worship Service and LORD'S SUPPER

No noon meal or Afternoon Service

Sunday Evening HOME FELLOWSHIP/BIBLE STUDY GROUPS