



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No.11, March 17 , 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."***

PREDESTINATION and Getting TURNED in the Right Direction!

I. THE PREDESTINATION WE MUST EMBRACE!

Tragically, there are many who argue and divide over the doctrine of predestination. Even worse, there are multitudes on all sides of the theological argument who seem ignorant of the practical and stated intent of predestination in the life of the true Christian. One would be hard pressed to find a book, article, or sermon focused upon the real Biblical emphasis of predestination! Nevertheless, the Bible is clear: "...He [GOD] chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, **having predestined us to adoption** as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will..." (Ephesians 1:4-5)— **predestined to be "adopted" as His own children** (Ephesians 1:5), **predestined according to His own purpose** (Eph. 1:11) **and predestined (fore-appointed) to the ultimate goal of Christ likeness!** (Romans 8:28-29)

This MOST critical aspect of predestination is not open for debate — we either make responses of obedience or rebellion! God clearly proclaims that all saints are predestined to be conformed into the image,

the likeness of Christ! **BUT HOW?** We are changed into Christ likeness by BEHOLDING Jesus! (2 Corinthians 3:18) Moreover, the obvious road of life where Christ likeness is developed is 'in the steps of Jesus' along the Calvary Road! Therefore, let us behold the 'steps' of Jesus! **Gaze Upon Our LORD JESUS CHRIST and See,**

1. There was no resentment. **2.** There were no plans for revenge. **3.** He had no bitterness. He held no grudges. **4.** There was no self-pity. **5.** He never demanded His rights. **6.** There was no anger, no depression. **7.** He never threatened to quit His calling because of the way He was treated! **8.** Stress had no power over him! **INSTEAD, Jesus Has Set Before Us An Extraordinary Example of, 1.** Silence in Suffering. **2.** Non-resistance. **3.** Returning Good for Evil. **4.** Love. **5.** Forgiveness. **6.** Abiding Trust in His Father. **7.** SUBMISSION to His Father. **8. Please under score:** His silence in suffering was not a SECRET PITY PARTY, nor a state of Passivity! He was anointed with the oil of GLADNESS above all others who have ever lived. **MY, WHAT AMAZING FOOT PRINTS JESUS LEFT FOR US! MOREOVER, He graces every saint with POWER to walk in His steps by the supernatural indwelling Holy Spirit!**

BUT BEWARE— The World's Road Looms before us in a Stark Contrast! A MULTITUDE OF VOICES BECKON: 1. Live for yourself. **2.** Pleasure, fame, fortune, food, PORN, ETC. --all for self. **3.** Glory and Honor for self. **4.** Justify self. **5.** Defend self. **6.** Blame others. Fill the air waves with Smokescreens. **7.** Yield to Revenge, Bitterness, Envy, Hate. **8.** Refuse to Forgive and to Sacrificially Love. **9.** Trust in self and in those who will encourage self. **10.** Rebel Against God-given Authority. **11.** Be a victim.

*** **WHAT ABOUT OUR FOOT PRINTS?** WHICH ROAD ARE THEY ON? ***

I MUST WALK IN THE STEPS OF JESUS!

1. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because that is the Real Essence of what it means to be a Genuine Christian! (John 10: 27-28) **2. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because** that is what God commands in His WORD! (Romans 12:19, 21; Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 2:18-21) **3. I MUST walk in the Steps of Jesus, less my actions and reactions** to circumstances and people CAUSE me to deny Jesus and Grieve the Holy Spirit; and rob me of a life of joy and amazing miracles! (Philippians 1-4)

4. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus, for God has not authorized me to take His Divine Prerogative! (Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 5:44-47) **5. I MUST walk in the Steps of Jesus**, remembering that God has personally designed my own Calvary Road for His glory and for my good! (Romans 8:28; Genesis 45:8; 50:19-20) **6. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus**, less I lose perspective! (Genesis 50:19-20; Philippians 1:12-14) **7. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because**, LOVE is better than hate! FORGIVENESS is better than bitterness! FAITH is better than unbelief! TRUST IN GOD is better than despair! OBEDIENCE TO GOD is better than rebellion! **8. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because** SUCH IS THE PATH where supernatural GRACE is found...Where POWER AND DESIRE to follow Jesus rises up within me...Where I experience anointing from God and CUPS RUNNING OVER! (**Ps 23!**)

IN THE STEPS OF JESUS!— IT'S OUR GOD ORDAINED PREDESTINATION! If you or I can live a lifestyle of successfully refusing this PREDESTINATED path— Well, such ones will spend eternity in hell as those who never knew JESUS! (Matt. 7:13-27) **AT THE SAME TIME**, REALITY IS THAT AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, MOST GENUINE CHRISTIANS STRUGGLE... AND TOO OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES [OURSELVES] OUT OF THE STEPS OF JESUS. The following is an instructive example:

II. Pushing Forward in the Wrong Direction— Needing to Turn Around!

This portion is edited from ***When You're Tired of Treating the Symptoms, and You're Ready For a Cure, Give Me a Call!*** By Henry Brandt, Ph.D.

Dr. Brandt tells his story: It was a beautiful day. All was friendly until we came to a cross-road leading on to the freeway. **I turned toward Detroit, our destination**, and my wife said, "Henry, you are going the wrong way." That remark burned me up. My caustic reply was, "Don't you think I know where Detroit is? Look! Do you want to drive this car, or do you want me to drive this car!?" And away we went in air-conditioned comfort. We still smelled good. We wore nice clothes, the scenery was beautiful, the car was running smoothly **and I was furious!** The very idea—her telling me that I was headed in the wrong direction! I knew the

right way to Detroit and I was headed to Detroit. After a while we came to the first exit; and there was a huge sign with an arrow pointing in the direction we were going. Above the arrow was the word: **CHICAGO**. My wife said nothing and I chose to ignore the sign! Miles more down the road there was another exit— yes, and another huge sign with an arrow pointing in the direction we were going and above the arrow: **CHICAGO**. **Now I was even angrier at my wife and decided to try one more exit— and away we went!** Can you believe that? You might be smiling or even laughing at my hard-headedness; but it is really a very sad story! What does it illustrate? For one thing, my having a Ph.D. was of no help. Education was not the cure. Secondly, in a fit of pride, anger and stubbornness— everything I knew that is good and right I cast aside. As we continued, there was a brittle silence inside the car. **Then**, another exit came into view. It also had an arrow pointing to **CHICAGO**.

Can you believe it? I decided to try yet one more exit! Why? In order to give me time to figure out how to get to Detroit without turning around! **Have you ever been wrong, but too proud to admit it?** [AGAIN] ... we all tend to underestimate the depth of our pride, the blinding power of anger and other sins. **How can you or I get TURNED AROUND RIGHT, when we are pushing forward in the wrong direction?**

GOOD NEWS: The good news is that if we will confess **our sin**, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness! (1 John 1:9)

BAD NEWS: Unless we are in Christ and walking with him, we will love darkness more than light. When we have done wrong— unless we are truly in Christ and walking with Him, we will hate the light and we will not come to the light because we do not want the reality of our dark hearts exposed. (John 3:20)

Ever notice how slithery we can be? Instead of confessing the truth, we say things like: I'm just unhappy. I'm hurt. I'm stressed. I'm misunderstood. I'm under extreme pressure. 'They' are to blame... etc. Or we just outright deny the truth. Remember how folks treated Jesus? They hated His message. So they slandered him. If we are not both in Christ and walking with Jesus, we will do similar! Moreover, we will seek to cover up reality by saying things like: I just blew up! I lost my head. I broke

down. He got under my skin. My blood is boiling. He made me mad. **Note:** These and many more **are culturally acceptable terms** to use to describe our dealings with situations and people. We focus on our feelings and on real or imagined words or actions of others— and we blame them. We will even lie and slander others as we seek to hide the stink of our own hearts.

However, such responses do not find acceptance with God. We must either judge our own sins or face chastisement from God: **“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”** (1 Cor. 11:31-32)

IT’S A WONDERFUL DAY! **Yes, it is a wonderful day when we confess our own sins and not the sins- real or imagined- of others! Here are grand freedom confessions:** I am sorry. I am wrong. Please forgive me. Cleanse me, O God. Empower me, O Holy Spirit! **(Psalm 32) PLEASE DO NOT DELAY— AS NEEDED, EMBRACE THE FOLLOWING FREEDOM CONFESSIONS TODAY!**

FREEDOM: “I am wrong; I have sinned.” I must realize that I am wrong because I have sinned against God’s holy standard. In my own case, the wrong turn on the freeway was not sin; but my words and emotional response to my wife were wrong and sin. As I was driving I was being stubborn, rebellious, impolite and angry. I knew it but did not want to humble myself and admit it. **Why do we have such a struggle with guilt? The answer of Jesus may be uncomfortable, but it is true:** *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”* (John 3:19-21)

Reality: When faced with the crisis of having our own frailty or sin exposed, it is common for us humans to put up a ‘smoke-screen’ or try to ‘blame-shift’... hoping that our sin or failure will be forgotten, pushed in the background or even excused. In pride we choose darkness over light, because our deeds were evil. Jesus exposed the Pharisees, and this is a huge warning to all of us: “You are those who justify your selves before

men, but God knows your hearts.” (Luke 16:15) **More Reality:** O the wickedness of our hearts! I can go so far as to confess that I have said or done something sinful and yet not be the least bit repentant! One sign of such is that we mix our confessions with excuses! However, if we are to be free, then in confessing our sin there is no place for excuses or alibis! **GODLY SORROW is the need!**

FREEDOM: O God, I have sinned against you! The Apostle Paul received a lot of criticism because he dared to confront the Corinthian saints with their many sins. It was painful. In the second letter, Paul rejoices in some of the fruit of his efforts: *“Now I am glad I sent it [the letter], not because it hurt you, but because **the pain caused you to repent and change your ways.** It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. **For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation [deliverance from the bondages of sin]. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow.** But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right.”* (2 Cor. 7:9-11, New Living Translation) *[Also mediate deeply upon Psalm 51!]*

Reality: It is common when confronted with sin that we put up smoke-screens: Look what they did to me. Did you hear what they said about me? Can’t you see that I am depressed? O, I hate myself. Why did I do it? **Beware: The flesh is willing to do anything to avoid the sentence of crucifixion!**

FREEDOM: Holy God, I not only own and confess my sins without excuse; but— O GOD, PLEASE FORGIVE ME! If I am already IN CHRIST, then with such a confession I am coming to the Throne of Grace as a child redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus; and I am coming to enter into forgiveness that is already my birthright! My sin has broken fellowship- not relationship- but fellowship. Thus, I flee to my heavenly Father in the name of JESUS and humbly own up to my rebellion and ask for restoration on the merits of my Saviour, Jesus Christ, for: *“... if we walk*

in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

IF I AM NOT YET A CHILD OF GOD— Conviction of my sin, a gracious work of the Holy Spirit, brings me to cry out, like the tax collector Jesus spoke about— “GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER!”

FREEDOM: LORD GOD, I not only come confessing and repenting and asking for forgiveness— PLEASE CLEANSE ME from my sin! Sin leaves a trail. Sin leaves areas of weakness, open to future failure in the same areas of life. Therefore, I must yield to the Holy Spirit’s revelations as to how sin got a stronghold in me in the first place. What ‘appearances’ of evil must I avoid? What ‘provisions’ for the flesh and sin must be closed down? What is the ‘secret leaven’ in my heart which must be ruthlessly removed? (Acts 19:18-20)

FREEDOM: LORD GOD, please Empower me! When we are truly in Christ, we have an ever present and inexhaustible resource: “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19) And again, the good news is that if we will confess **our sin**, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness! (1 John 1:9)

Finally, driving down the freeway in the wrong direction, Dr. Brandt cried out to God: I asked God to forgive me, for I had sinned against Him first and foremost. I asked Him to cleanse my heart, to restore His love and peace, and joy in my heart, and help me face the truth. Guess what? He did! Just as He promised!

Up until that point you could not have dragged me off that freeway! But now, having come to God in humility and without excuse and confessing my sin— I was forgiven and free in my heart. I turned to my dear wife and said, “Eva, we are headed in the wrong direction” (as if she did not know!) “I am sorry. Please forgive me.” God had and she did! I turned the car around and got on the right way to Detroit! More importantly, by the grace of God, I was now on FREEDOM ROAD! **Are you?**

Over and again in life we find ourselves needing a FRESH START. IT’S A WONDERFUL DAY! Yes, it is a wonderful day when we confess our own sins and not the sins- real or imagined- of others! Here are grand freedom confessions:

I am sorry. I am wrong. Please forgive me. Cleanse me, O God. Empower me, O Holy Spirit! (Psalm 32) There is no other way to turn around and start fresh and clean! **THE WAY HOME— the first FORWARD STEP must be one of repentance!**

As I repent of GOING MY OWN WAY, LEANING TO MY OWN UNDERSTANDING, DRINKING IN COUNSEL THAT HAS JUSTIFIED MY FLESH; and as I repent of finding fault with others and repent of CONDEMNING OTHERS— **THEN** Floodgates of MERCY and GRACE will come open! (Proverbs 28:13) **2. Next, I must announce to myself a Proclamation of Reception of my DIVINELY designed Calvary Road.** As a miracle of mercy and grace, every real Christian is predestined to adoption (Ephesians 1:5), so as to be moulded into the image, the likeness of Jesus Christ! (Romans 8;28-29). Thus, it is the Divine design of God that we follow in the steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:19-23) **3. Jesus walked the Calvary Road to CALVARY!** We get on the Calvary Road **at Calvary**, when we savingly come to Christ. And then for all the days of our lives, we walk in the power of His resurrection and with the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, step by step....**Till we get home!**

May grace abound to 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; 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. **DUE TO A.C.E. STUDENT CONVENTION... YOUTH GROUP WILL NOT MEET THIS WEDNESDAY!**

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— March 26, 11:00am, The Life of David! – 1 Samuel 19-20 - 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 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