



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No.12, March 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."***

FINDING What You SEEK! GIVING THANKS for Encouraging Testimonies!

Out of the abundance of my heart I look, I seek, I desire, I love, I.....

I. Finding That For Which I was Looking...

Jim Smith went to church one Sunday morning. He heard the organist miss a note during the prelude, and he winced. He saw a teenager talking when everybody was supposed to be bowed in prayer. He felt like the usher was watching to see what he placed in the offering plate and it made him boil. He caught the preacher making a slip of the tongue, 5 ...times during the sermon. Jim Smith slipped out the side door during the closing hymn and muttered to himself, "I'll never be back to that church... they don't know how to worship... they are amateurs..." **Ron Jones went to church one Sunday morning;** and he heard the organist play *A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD*... and it thrilled his soul. He was glad the church was taking a special offering for missions. The Biblically based sermon convicted him of sin he had long excused... and he had opportunity to have someone pray with him and promise to stay with him through the upcoming battles... He walked out of that service blessed, refreshed, and revived... **Jim Smith and Ron Jones, actually** went to the same church on the same Sunday morning— **EACH FOUND WHAT**

HE WAS LOOKING FOR— revealing the 'bent' of their hearts. So it is with us all!

1. 'Jim' came and sat as a SPECTATOR, CRITIC, and FOUND FAULT. He went home worse than he came. (This is very easy to do... and all too common!)

2. 'Ron' came with a HUNGRY, TEACHABLE HEART. He went home Revived, Equipped, and Motivated for Ministry! (*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled!"* (Matthew 5:6))

And how shall it be for me this coming LORD'S DAY?

BY THE WAY, in Biblical reality— 'Church' is not something you can attend! You can attend a ball game, but not church!

CHURCH IS WHAT THOSE IN CHRIST ARE— we are, by grace, CALLED OUT ones! Thus, as a congregation we GATHER for Worship and for Edification; and we are to SCATTER back into the world, ON MISSION with the gospel— **GATHER** to Worship God and help build up one another in the faith; **SCATTER** out into the world to make Christ VISIBLE, to live and proclaim the gospel to a lost world!

In the above 'story'— Jim Smith 'went to church'... while Ron Jones gathered with others for worship and edification. AGAIN, WHAT SHALL I DO?

II. GIVING THANKS for Encouraging 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 Psalmist said,** *"Come ye and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul."* (Psalm 66:16)

***** 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 [JESUS!]** 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) Honor** God! **(2) Encourage** our own hearts! **(3) Lift up** the spirits of other saints! **(4) Help bring** others to Christ!

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

Psalm 73 is a powerful example:

The Psalmist began to THINK about the apparent 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! However, he did not stop at that!

He made a choice to go to go to God's sanctuary to hear the Word of God. There he was reminded of the present fears and of the dreadful later end of every person who is not saved.

[**Note: for us**, we could as Believer Priests go to a quiet place and Meditate upon the Word of God; **and/or** gather with other saints and sit under the teaching/preaching of the Word of God!]

From meditation upon the Word of God, the Psalmist was freshly envisioned of the abundant blessings that he possessed as God's redeemed child. Thankfully, Psalm 73, concludes with a powerful testimony of praise to God.

By the way, as Psalm 40 and Psalm 51 so powerfully demonstrate, 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!**"

Truly one of the very effective tools God has given us for encouragement and for seeing the Kingdom of God built up is the power of godly, positive testimonies.

It is very GOD-honoring, encouraging, faith-building, and Kingdom-building

(1) To speak well of God;

(2) To speak well of one another in Christ, and

(3) To speak well of the local church [Assembly of saints!] to which God has joined us.

(Suggestion: If you are not directly involved in the following ministries, then Personalize the following to the local church to which you are joined!)

QUESTION: Presently and/or in the past— HAS GOD GRACIOUSLY BLESSED YOU in some way through the ministry of Southside Baptist Church; or through Southside Christian School; or through Southside Counseling; and/or through the Grow in Grace Newsletter?

If so, please 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!

PLEASE write and share your own "Speaking Well" Testimony! Please email it to me! And/or please post it on FB! To God Be the GLORY! The desire is in no way to exalt ourselves... but simply to REJOICE in what the LORD has done and/or is doing! Here is a sampling of encouragement— to God be the glory!

1. Johnna Carroll: I (and every member of my family) am thrilled to be at Southside and am very excited about what God is doing among His people! The Lord has done so much for me . . . maybe I will write a book

one day about it! But for now I have written something below. Thanks, again!

For a few years, Scotty and I had been longing for a church home. We had worked in ministry for several years, were worn, and needed encouragement. We had visited many places but had not found the right one for us. We visited Southside last year right before [Resurrection Sunday] and loved it right away. First and foremost, we were looking for Biblical preaching from the pulpit! And thankfully we found that...! That means so much to me. So many pulpits today don't preach the Word, and it breaks my heart. I can't sit under it. In addition to that we found sweet and friendly folks, some we already had great relationships with, and music that is done beautifully and in a conscientious way! All these things made us desire to become a part of Southside and we have been so happy with our decision! And then there is one more thing that really put the icing on the cake for me. I had a desire to be a part of a ladies' Bible study . . . one that digs deep for truth and that I could get fed from. Cindy Bell's Bible studies are JUST THAT and mean SO MUCH to me! I never want to miss! Every time I head to Bible study, I remember this desire of my heart and thank the Lord for granting it! I praise the Lord for these blessings and look forward to what the Lord is doing in my church and community!"

Here is one more testimony that I feel led to share, and you are welcome to use it now or some other time: "**I have sung solos my whole life, and this particular Sunday was like many others, except I was preoccupied.** I was giving a surprise party right after church for my husband, who had finished his four years in the military and we wanted to celebrate this milestone. I was so concerned about the party, that I felt the need to sing my song and leave the service early! I look back now and see my youthfulness in that decision!

However, something happened after I left that I could not have imagined. The pastor got up, tears streaming down his face. He told the people that he had been contemplating getting out of the ministry. The song that I sang that day was one of the songs that had been sung at his ordination service! He felt the Lord speak to him through this and was encouraged to press on. I was shocked! My mind had been

going a dozen directions that day. But the Lord had purposed my song. Needless to say, I was very humbled by this experience and could only thank the Lord for using me and declare how great He is!!! ~~~ Johnna Carroll

2. Jaden Allen: God has used Southside Baptist Church mightily in my life. When my family started to regularly attend Southside I was fifteen years old. At that time I had major struggles with sin in my life and I had a lot of doubts about Christianity. I knew I was saved, but (as awful as it sounds) I wished I was not.

I wanted to live my life MY way, not God's way. I was far from God and I had no desire to change. Two years later I was sitting on a bench on a hallway on the campus of Western Kentucky University. Southside Christian School was up there for the ACE Regional Convention. My teacher, Mrs. Williams, had just told me that I would have the opportunity to preach in the evening rally before nearly 400 students and sponsors. I remember sitting there, shocked, and thinking, **"What has God done?"** When I looked back over those two years and recalled all that God had done to change my life, Bro. Bell, Mrs. Bell, and the staff at Southside Christian School stood out along side of my parents as major influences God used to bring me back on track and to a place where He could use me.

That fall I enrolled in Pensacola Christian College as a Business Management major. I knew God was calling me to some form of ministry and I considered going to a Christian college like PCC as a good way to compromise with God. I excelled in all my business classes, but I had no peace. I knew God wanted something else for me. By the end of that first semester I had switched my major to Pastoral Ministries.

Two and a half years later I sat on a platform looking out over a crowd of over 6,000 people. In just a few minutes I would stand before this group of people and have the opportunity to open God's Word with them and preach. Once again, I found myself looking back and asking, **"What has God done?"** Once again, as I looked back over my life, Southside Baptist Church stood out as a major influence God used to continue to grow me spiritually and prepare me to serve.

To this day, faithful teaching, preaching, and discipleship continue to bless me in my Christian walk. I am so thankful for how God has used Southside Baptist church in my life.

3. Frank and Mary Baron: Pastor, I wanted to write to express Mary's and my appreciation of your Pastoral Ministry at Southside Baptist Church. We have been attending since about mid-August and have been blessed by your sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit and your dedication to sharing the Word of God. When we were seeking a Church we wanted only two things; A Pastor who preached the Word and a church body that was friendly. God answered our prayers; we got both... doubly blessed. These days it is difficult to find a Pastor who is willing to really communicate God's Word to their charges. It has been my experience that while many people read the Bible and think they know what it teaches they never really believe its message. They lack understanding. You, Pastor, help to bring understanding and you do it every Sunday. Mary and I thank God that he has directed us to Southside and that through the Holy Spirit he has gifted you with the ability to communicate and illuminate His clear Word of instruction. Thank you for your service and your steadfastness.

ALSO... just a quick note to thank you for the "Grow in Grace Newsletter" sent out weekly. I really enjoy working through the teaching. I share copies (with redactions) of the teaching with the detainees I write in the Cook County Dept. of Corrections (CCDOC) and the in-mates who are serving time in Illinois prison system. Many of these men are leaders on their decks and they use the material for their Bible studies. The newsletters are a great blessing to us all. ~~ Frank and Mary Baron

4. John Mackay, Creation Research: Thanks mate for the blessing of your email ministry. James... always blessed by your timely spiritual reminders about Jesus and the eternal things of life. Men like you are needed by men like me to keep us in the One Team for Jesus. Keep up the blessed work. Your ministry to us is really appreciated. (John's thoughts compiled from several notes he sent)

"Lord, I my vows to Thee renew; Disperse my sins as morning dew. Guard my first springs of thought and will, And with Thyself my spirit fill. Direct, control, suggest, this day, All I design, or do, or say, That all my powers, with all their might, In Thy sole glory may unite. **PRAISE GOD, from Whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.**" (Words: Thomas Ken, *Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Scholars of Winchester College*, 1674)

Grace 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 **Children**, during Prayer Service. **YOUTH MEETING, 6:30pm led by Chris and Rachel Beth Estep.**

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!

SUNDAY March 29

1. 9:30am Sunday School

2. 10:45am Worship Service

3. No Lunch or Early afternoon service

4. 5:00pm— Fifth Sunday EVENING OF PRAISE! Come prepared to SING UNTO THE LORD, SHARE SCRIPTURES, SHARE TESTIMONIES! "THE LORD INHABITS THE PRAISE OF HIS PEOPLE!"

SUNDAYS IN APRIL:

1. April 5— RESURRECTION SUNDAY: 9:30am— **Church-wide BRUNCH** in Fellowship hall. 10:45am— MORNING WORSHIP, concluded with the LORD'S SUPPER!

2. April 12— 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am— Worship Service; NOON- Fellowship, Covered-dish meal; 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service

3. April 19— 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am- Worship Service & LORD'S SUPPER; NO noon meal. **HOME GROUPS @ 5:00pm**

4. April 26— 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am- Worship Service; NOON- Fellowship, Covered-dish meal; 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service