



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 28, July 14 , 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."***

YES, GOD HAS BLESSED AMERICA! HOWEVER, IT IS NOW MORAL and SPIRITUAL MID-NIGHT— WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

I don't know if America is in her SUNSET or if she is on the verge of MID-NIGHT! REGARDLESS, AS A NATION, WE ARE IN TROUBLE. But the question for individual Christians and for us a local CHURCH is— **WHAT CAN/WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING? Many have a quick and easy answer:** Just vote out all the liberals from the President on down. They are the problem.

Response: They are 'a' serious problem! **HOWEVER:** Have we considered that there is abundant evidence that we are already under a serious judgment of God:

1. The judgment of God RELEASING RESTRAINTS— thus, Americans and the government they have freely chosen are rushing into sin: Roman 1:18-32.

2. The rising threat of Islam and/or domination by China, etc... could be an expression of the judgment of God that is coming on America— and ESPECIALLY UPON CHURCHES who are not RICH TOWARD GOD and whose moral lifestyle is all too similar to that of the culture! **JESUS has already warned us that 'saltless salt' will be trampled underfoot,** (Matthew

5:13); and He repeated warns His churches— 'REPENT or ELSE! (Revelation 2-3)

Under the Old Covenant, Israel was entrusted with the call **to show the world what a people would be like whose God was the true and living God!** (Deut. 7:6-10; Ex. 19:4-6) In advance, God warned Israel what would happen if they turned away from God: "When you do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that you shall surely perish quickly from the land ... **You shall not live long on it, but shall be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the nations, where the Lord shall drive you.**" (Deut. 4:25-27)

"...If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law ... **you shall be torn from the land** where you are entering to possess it. Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples." (See... Deut. 28:63-68)

When ISRAEL REJECTED THEIR CALL, God used [And I believe, He still uses!] cruel and wicked nations to chasten: Isaiah 10:5-6; Habakkuk 5-12.

**** IN TODAY'S NEW COVENANT ERA, CHRISTIANS HAVE A UNIQUE CALLING:**

"**YOU ARE** a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, AN HOLY NATION, a peculiar people [A people claimed by God for His own, comprised of 'Jew and Gentile']; **that ye should show forth the praises of Him who called you OUT OF DARKNESS into His marvelous light;...**" (1 Peter 2:9-10)

REMINDER: Every born again Christian, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, is motivated, empowered, and under orders to BE HIS WITNESSES, to GO TO ALL NATIONS making, marking, and maturing Disciples of Jesus. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:42-47)

This supreme global enterprise will proceed, (regardless of whatever else is or is not happening on earth), **until the return of Christ!** (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20)

AS WE NOTED in last week's Grow in Grace article: To be an American Christian is to be abundantly blessed! We have received:

(1) The glorious gospel of grace; **(2)** In an earthly setting of Wealth, Power, Freedom, and Gospel Opportunity. **(3) BUT LET US REMEMBER: To whom much is given, much is required!** (Luke 12:48; 1 Corinthians 4:2)

(4) MOREOVER, LET US AWAKE TO REALITY:

God's agenda, as unveiled in the New Testament, is NOT the continual building up of nor the perseveration of any earthly nation or kingdom— for they are all awaiting a judgment of fire: 2 Peter 3:9-14!

NOTE: It is common for the more conservative Christians of America to be very Patriotic and to have strong feelings about the CHRISTIAN ORIENTED ROOTS of America— THAT'S FINE.

HOWEVER, WHEN WE 'MIX' American patriotism with Christianity, all too often Biblical Christianity gets second place.

REALITY: As Christians, our chief loyalty is not to America; nor to the historic, American way of life.

Our chief loyalty is to DIFFERENT NATION: "**YOU ARE** a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, AN HOLY NATION, a peculiar people [A people claimed by God for His own, comprised of 'Jew and Gentile']; **that ye should show forth the praises of Him who called you OUT OF DARKNESS into His marvelous light;...**" (1 Peter 2:9-10)

OUR PRESENT WORLD: THE WHOLE WORLD, INCLUDING AMERICA, LIES IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS... **AND, TRAGICALLY, IN THE MIDST OF AMERICA** MULTITUDES OF CHRISTIANS ARE ALSO GOING WITH THE FLOW INTO DEEPENING DARKNESS.

WHAT CAN, WHAT SHOULD BIBLE-BELIEVING, CHRIST-HONORING CHRISTIANS BE DOING?

QUESTION: Have we considered the POWERFUL, potential impact of JUST 10 RIGHTEOUS ONES? (Genesis 18:32) **WE SHOULD!**

Question: WILL we receive and act upon the reality that the WORD OF JESUS to Christians is all **focused upon us** being/becoming righteous, holy, pure, loving, forgiving... and BOLD with the Gospel? (Revelation 2-3)

WE MUST MOVE FORWARD in serious CHRIST-LIKENESS! We must allow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to PLOW DEEP!

"I think the greatest miracle that God can do is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that unholy man holy and put him back in an unholy world and keep him holy. But we are more afraid of holiness today in the church than we are of sinfulness." (Leonard Ravenhill)

"A holy life will produce the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine." (Dwight Moody)

SPIRITUAL MID-NIGHT IS ALL AROUND US— WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

FIRST, 2 Corinthians 13:5 reads: "**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.** Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" *If I don't have a yearning in my heart to live a holy life, I need to question whether my faith in Christ is genuine.*

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the following Scriptures and questions can lead us as Christians to **identify and confess sins which often grieve and quench the Holy Spirit.**

The Scriptures are set forth in the spirit of the cry of the Psalmist: "**Search me, O God and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting** (Psalm 139:23-24).

They are designed to lead us Christians to act upon 1 John 1:9: "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**"

MOREOVER, acting upon the following Scriptures and questions will help us obey the command: **"Be filled with the Holy Spirit"** (Eph. 5:8). Biblically when I confess a sin or sins, I should mean this:

"My sin is wrong, against God, and got to go!" "O LORD, I was wrong... I repent... I THANK YOU, FOR FORGIVENESS, WHICH WAS WON AT CALVARY — THANK YOU JESUS!"

SUCH GODLY ACTIONS will give us a new song! We will freely tell others of Jesus! (Psalm 51:1-13) And we will be used to bring the lost to Christ! (Psalm 40:1-3)

1. Matthew 6:12, 14-15 - "*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ... for if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.*" Is there anyone against whom you hold a grudge? Anyone you haven't forgiven? Anyone you hate? Anyone you do not love? Are there any misunderstandings that you are unwilling to forget? Is there any person against whom you are harboring bitterness, resentment, or jealousy? Anyone you dislike to hear praised or well-spoken of? Do you allow anything to justify a wrong attitude toward another?

2. Matthew 6:33 - "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ...*" Is there anything in which you have failed to put God first? Have your decisions been made after your own wisdom and desires rather than by seeking and following God's will? Do any of the following in any way interfere with your surrender and service to God: Ambition, pleasures, loved ones, friendships, desire for recognition, money, or your own plans?

3. Mark 16:15 - "*... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*" Have you failed to witness consistently for the Lord Jesus Christ? Has your life failed to show the Lord Jesus to lost people? Have your lips been sealed and you have failed to give the Gospel to others?

4. John 13:35 - "**By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**" Are you secretly pleased over the misfortunes of another? Are you secretly annoyed over the accomplishments or advancements of another? Are you guilty of any contention or strife? Do you quarrel, argue or engage in heated discussions? Are you a partaker in any division or party spirit? Are there people whom you deliberately slight?

5. Acts 20:35 - " **... ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.**" Have you robbed God by withholding His due of time, talents, and money?

6. 1 Cor. 4:2 - "**Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**" Are you irresponsible so that you cannot be trusted with responsibilities in the Lord's work? Are you allowing your emotions to be stirred for things of the Lord but doing nothing about it?

7. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 - "**What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**" Are you in any way careless with your body? Do you fail to care for it as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Are you guilty of intemperance in eating? Do you have any habits which are defiling to the body?

8. 1 Cor. 10:31 - "**Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.**" Do you take the slightest credit for anything good about you, rather than give all the glory to God? Do you talk of what you have done rather than of what Christ has done? Are your statements mainly about "I"? Are your feelings easily hurt? Have you made a pretense of being something you are not?

9. Eph. 3:20 - " **... Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.**" Are you self-conscious rather than Christ-conscious? Do you allow feelings of inferiority to keep you from attempting challenging goals in serving God?

10. Eph. 4:28 - "**Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that needeth.**" Do you underpay? Do you do very little in your work? Have you been careless in the payment of your debts? Have you sought to evade payment of your debts? Do you waste time? Do you waste time for others?

11. Eph. 4:31 - "**Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice.**" Do you complain? Do you find fault? Do you have a critical attitude toward any person? Are you irritable or cranky? Do you ever carry hidden anger? Do you get angry? Do you become impatient with others? Are you ever harsh or unkind?

12. Eph. 5:16 - "**Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**" Do you watch/listen to unedifying radio, TV programs, videos, DVDs, movies, etc? Do you read unworthy magazines? Do you partake in worldly amusements? Do you find it necessary to seek satisfaction from any questionable source? Are you doing certain things that indicate you are not satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ?

13. Eph. 5:20 - "**Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" Have you neglected to thank Him for all things, the seemingly bad as well as the good? Have you virtually called God a liar by doubting His Word? Is your spiritual temperature based on your feelings instead of the facts of God's Word?

14. Phil. 1:21 - "**For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**" Are you taken up with the cares of this life? Is your conversation primarily about "things" rather than the Lord and His word? Does anything mean more to you than living for and pleasing Christ?

15. Phil. 2:14 - "**Do all things without murmurings and disputings.**" Do you ever by word or deed seek to hurt someone? Do you gossip? Do you speak unkindly concerning people when they are not present? Are you prejudiced against others because of their race, social status, or beliefs?

16. Phil. 4:4 - "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*"

Do you carry any bitterness toward God? Have you complained against Him in any way? Have you been dissatisfied with His provision for you? Is there in your heart any unwillingness to obey God fully? Do you have any reservations as to what you would or would not do concerning anything that might be His will? Have you disobeyed any direct leading from the Holy Spirit?

17. Col. 3:9 - "*Lie not to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*" Do you engage in empty and unprofitable conversation? Do you ever lie? Do you ever exaggerate? Cheat? Steal? Do you overcharge?

18. 11 Tim. 2:22 - "*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, -- with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" Do you have any personal habits that are not pure? Do you allow impure thoughts about the opposite sex to stay in your mind? Do you read that which is impure or suggests unholy things? Do you indulge in any unclean entertainment? Are you guilty of the lustful look?

19. Heb. 10:25 - "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ...*" Do you whisper or think about other things while God's Word is being read or preached? Are you irregular in attendance at worship services?

Do you neglect to attend or participate in prayer meetings? Have you neglected private prayer? Have you neglected God's Word? Do you find the Bible and prayer uninteresting? Have you neglected thanksgiving at meals? Have you neglected daily family devotions?

20. Heb. 13:17 - "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*" Do you hesitate to submit to leaders in the church or elsewhere? Are you lazy? Do you rebel at requests to help in the work of the Lord? Do you in any way have a stubborn or unteachable spirit?

21. James 1:27 - "**Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this ... to keep ... unspotted from the world.**" Have you allowed yourself to become "spotted" by the world? Do you spend beyond what is pleasing to God on anything? Do you neglect to pray about things that you buy? Are your deeds displeasing to God?

22. James 4:6 - "**... God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.**" Do you feel that you are doing quite well as a Christian? That you are not so bad? That you are good enough? Are you stubborn? Do you insist on having your own way? Do you insist on your "rights"?

23. James 4:11 - "**Speak not evil one of another, brethren,...**" Have you dishonored Him and hindered His work by criticizing His servants? Have you failed to pray regularly for your pastor or other spiritual leaders? Do you find it hard to be corrected? Is there rebellion toward one who wants to restore you? Are you more concerned about what people will think than about what will be pleasing to God?

Conclusion: [GENUINE CONFESSION of sin, sins— They are wrong, against God, not the fault of anyone else, and they 'gotta go'] IF WE ARE honest in admitting, confessing, AND repenting of our sins— then let us REJOICE in God's forgiveness right now. RECEIVE and rest in His promise to forgive and remove your sins "**as far as the east is from the west**" (Psalm 103:12).

Remember: (1) Every sin is against God **so we confess** our sins to Him and make things right with Him. **(2)** If our sin is also against another person, we must make things right with that person. **(3)** If my sin is against a group, make it right with the group.

SAY to God, a business associate, a classmate, a member of your family, a fellow Christian, a Sunday School class, or anyone else against whom you have sinned, "I was wrong when I said or did _____ - Please forgive me!" PROPER RESPONSE: "Yes, I do forgive you!"

BOTTOM LINE:

In a world of deepening darkness, I am not called upon the curse the darkness, debate the darkness, or to point my finger at others in darkness.

I AM CALLED UPON TO CONFESS AND REPENT OF MY OWN SIN; AND TO GO FORTH SERVING CHRIST IN HOLINESS AND LOVE!

WE must walk in these paths! (Various sources used in developing this article)

MAY GRACE ABOUND! 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.

** THIS WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 6:30PM— EVERYONE IN THE AUDITORIUM... AS MISSIONARIES STEVE AND JULIA GRIFFIN WILL BE WITH US!

NORMAL WEDNESDAYS: ☐ **6:30pm— Children** Ministry/activities, led by Jody Allen ☐ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— led by Chris and Rachel Beth Estep (**For both of these... enter via double doors by gym**) ☐ **6:30pm— CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— July 16, 11:00am, The Life of David! - 2 Samuel 7; - 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 ROMANS}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!

SUNDAY SERVICES, JULY 19, 26

☐ **July 19— 9:30am, Sunday School**

10:45am, Worship Service & the LORD’S SUPPER

No meal or afternoon service

HOME FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS in the evening

☐ **July 26— 9:30am, Sunday School / 10:45am, Worship Service**

Noon— Covered dish Meal / 1:00pm, Early Afternoon Service

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**SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! Call— 615-452-5951**