



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 37, September 15 , 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."***

THE FOCUS OF SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES— PART TWO!

True Christian worship is all about what God receives, rather than about what we get! **True Christian worship** is not an issue of our likes, preferences, imaginations, and/or creativity. **True Christian worship is not about** pleasing/impressing folks so that they will be attracted to our church or so that they will come back. IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP, WE GATHER as a church **to offer unto GOD** honor, praise, adoration, OURSELVES, and love offerings. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-8) **WE GATHER** as a church **to recognize and rejoice in** God's glory, greatness, power, victory, majesty, and rule! **WE GATHER** as a church **to prostrate** ourselves before God in submission to His Word!

THANKFULLY WE ARE NOT LEFT TO GUESSWORK OR TO MAN'S OPINION— FOR the Word of God gives us models/examples of worship which are focused on the preaching of the Word of God, bringing conviction and repentance of sin; and OVERFLOWING in praise and worship. Such worship brings worshippers into fresh encounters with Almighty God, sending them/us forth in AWE of God and in glad obedience to God. Moreover, an overflow result is that we are built up, edified in the faith! In this article we hope to address several aspects of worship and seek to measure it all by the sure Word of God.

Hand Clapping/Applause is very popular in modern worship services.

The historic place for such is the theater, the sports arena, the social gathering, political speeches, and etc. The honest reality is that applause, during a worship service, tends to spotlight human talent and performance while making God and His truth secondary. Hand Clapping/Applause — we witness this again and again — the greater the talent/performance, the more applause is given! **Moreover, it is a tragic fact** that a number of talented young people who win the APPLAUSE and PRAISE of congregations **become addicted to the RUSH that applause gives!** **NOW THEY themselves** are WORSHIPPED as rock, rap, country, and/or 'Christian' musicians. **Likewise**, a growing number of pastors are 'worshipped' similar to rock stars.

BIBLE REFERENCES TO HAND CLAPPING

I found 9 references in the Bible to Hand Clapping and all are in the Old Testament: Psalm 98:8; Isaiah 55:12; Ezekiel 25:6; 2 Kings 11:12; Job 34:37; Lamentations 2:15; Job 27:23; Psalm 47:1; Nahum 3:19. **In these 9 references** there are 4 Hebrew words used to express the action of clapping. When used in conjunction with the Hebrew word for *HAND*, then hand clapping or "the striking of hands" is the literal action the word reveals.

Depending on the context, these words were used for,

(1) **An expression of joy** as when Joash ascended the throne. (2) **An expression of disgust or anger** as with Balak being angry with Balaam. (3) **An expression of malicious glee** as from those who rejoiced over Niveveh's impending judgment from God; or as from those who rejoiced over the ruins of Jerusalem. (4) **An expression of joyful worship to God as found in Psalm 47.**

INTERESTING REALITY: In Biblical worship scenes, (of either Old Testament or New Testament congregational worship, or of WORSHIP IN HEAVEN), there is no clear evidence of hand clapping. The ONE possible EXCEPTION is Psalm 47:1. **Psalm 47:1-3** *"O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most*

high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.” Psalm 98:8-9 calls for all creatures and creation to praise God; and even the floods (rivers) are to "CLAP THEIR HANDS!"

NOTICE: In Psalm 47:1, the action **clearly is** one in connection with worship to God. It **clearly is not** the applause of a congregation's pleasure from a religious performance OR applause to encourage or praise a performer!

**** HERE IS A POWERFUL Old Testament Worship Scene—** Nehemiah 8 and 9.

Nehemiah 8:1-8 — “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street...; **and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses**, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding,... **And he read** therein... **from the morning until midday**, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. **And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood**, which they had made for the purpose;... **And Ezra opened the book** in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, **all the people stood up**: And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.”

***** CLEARLY**, the focus of this congregational worship is all **upon God!** **Moreover, it is focused on God's Word which pointed them, (And us!) in the path of being/getting RIGHT WITH GOD;** and leads to the worship of God.

The congregational worship response to the Word of God is 'AMEN' ... or "So be it LORD!" **** Without submission to God's Word there is NO REAL WORSHIP—** Let us FILL THE AIR with genuine 'AMENS!' in worship services!

**** NEW CHRISTIANS, A New Testament Worship Scene! (Acts 2:41-47)** “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. **And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.** And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, **Praising God**, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

~~~~~

**AGAIN, we see that true New Testament worship is all about God and His agenda!** Also notice that the New Birth brings about AUTOMATIC DISCIPLESHIP. There is no need to seek to motivate by appealing to the carnal flesh. **For with new hearts**, new Christians have an awesome **indwelling compelling** for sitting at the feet of Jesus in the Word of God! They are drawn to fellowship with other believers; and they are drawn to worship at the LORD'S TABLE; and they are drawn to prayer with other saints; and they are drawn to ministries of doing good one to another. **THEY ARE DRAWN TO PRAISE to God!** In other words, they are led by the Holy Spirit! (Romans 8:14)

**\*\* One of the Many Wonderful Worship Scenes in the Revelation! Revelation 19:1-6** — “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, **Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:** For true and righteous are his judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. **And again they said, Alleluia** And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts **fell down and worshipped** God that sat on the throne, saying,

**Amen; Alleluia.** And a voice came out of the throne, saying, **Praise our God**, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many

waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, **Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.**”

**\*\* FROM THESE SCRIPTURES the following is Crystal Clear:**

**(1)** The total **GOD FOCUS** of true worship. **(2)** The emotion, intensity, and VERBAL nature of God-focused congregational worship! The Biblical Models of Worship Services are NEITHER PUMPED UP BY CARNAL FLESH, NOR BORING AND DRAB, NOR PASSIVE! **(3)** Various POSTURES are used in true worship— Kneeling, Standing, Bowing, and the LIFTING UP OF HANDS. AGAIN, IN CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP praise is prominent— **“AMEN! ALLELUIA!”** **(4)** EVERYONE IS PARTICIPATING— there are no spectators: **“AMEN! ALLELUIA!”** **“Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the LAMB!”** (Revelation 7:10) In Christian worship, since GOD is the focus— responses of SUBMISSION (**AMEN, SO BE IT IN MY LIFE!**) and PRAISE (**Hallelujah or Alleluia!**) are proper responses and they should come forth like glorious THUNDER!

**(5) MOREOVER:** In all of the congregational worship scenes recorded in the Bible, **Hand Clapping/Applause is absent!** This is not to say that there is NO SITUATION where Hand Clapping would be appropriate. HOWEVER, whatever God has made prominent— well, shouldn't we get in step!? **“AMEN! ALLELUIA!”**

**NOW, OF THE NINE references in the Bible to Hand Clapping— Only Psalm 47:1** directly relates to the worship of God: "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph." **HOWEVER, one verse from the Word of God is enough to make a valid point! WHAT'S THE POINT:** In Psalm 47:1 the hand clapping is focused on the worship of God. **It clearly is not the applause of a congregation praising a performer or expressing pleasure for a religious performance.** There is no connection between this verse and most of the hand clapping/applause that goes on in churches today.

**\*\*\* Nehemiah 8:1-6; Acts 2:41-47; Revelation 19:1-6— FROM THESE VERSES we found the following focus:**

The true worship of the true God is totally focused on praise, worship, honor, submission, and adoration of God Himself. **Such worship is EXPRESSIVE— There are AMENS! There are HALLELUJAHS!** There are repeated calls to PRAISE THE LORD! There are various POSTURES which convey various heart attitudes. There are LIFTED HANDS! (Nehemiah 8:6; 1 Chronicles 16:8-36; Psalm 108:48; Revelation 7:9-12; Psalm 95:1; Ephesians 5:19; Psalms 28:2; Psalm 88:9b; Psalm 134:1-2; Nehemiah 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:8)

**MOREOVER, PLEASE CONSIDER CAREFULLY:** Hand Clapping/Applause for a truth presented in a sermon is a poor substitute for **an open response of 'AMEN!'— IN OTHER WORDS, "So be it in my life O LORD!"** **REALITY:** There is no clear commitment to godly repentance and submission with hand clapping!"

**\*\* [Exodus 20:1-10; John 4:19-21] When it comes to the true worship of the Living God, He tells us how to worship Him.** Acceptable worship to God is exclusive, no visual representations of God are allowed, reverence is the foundational heart attitude, and such worship requires that we give vital time. **AGAIN, the true worship of God does not focus on man and his needs, preferences, cultural likes, or dislikes.** Rather, the exclusive focus is upon God. He alone is worthy to be worshipped and praised.

TRUE WORSHIP is not about outward ceremony. **TRUE WORSHIP is not pumped up emotions from** gospel boogie, religious ragtime, 'christian' rock, rap, country gospel, etc. **Seeking and/or desiring religious entertainment is radically different from worship—** The first is about PLEASING MAN. The latter is all about PLEASING GOD!

**\*\*\* The true worship of God is IN SPIRIT.** It is in accordance with the Holy Spirit, quickened by the Holy Spirit. **REMEMBER, THE SPIRIT OF GOD is—**

**(1) The HOLY Spirit!** The true worship of God is always HOLY WORSHIP— it is never sensuous, always encourages HOLINESS.

**(2) The HOLY Spirit is the Spirit of TRUTH!** The true worship of God is always TRUTH FOCUSED— for **He is** the Spirit of Truth. Jesus is the Living Truth. The Bible is Divine Written Truth, without mixture of error. **God's words are Spirit and Life!** (John 6:63)

**(3) The Holy Spirit's mission to Believers is to EXALT JESUS** and to BRING to REMEMBRANCE the things that Jesus taught.

Sadly, for many, what the Bible says or models is of little or of no authority— certainly of no absolute authority. Subjectivity reigns, as everyone does what is right in their own eyes!

**NEVERTHELESS, LET US GO FORTH, SEEKING TO GROW IN EMBRACING THE MODELS OF WORSHIP WHICH ARE SET FORTH IN THE HOLY WORD OF GOD!**

Great Grace to all! James Bell [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:**

**MONDAYS: Jail Ministry—** Every other Monday at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

**TUESDAYS:** Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions? Contact Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

## **WEDNESDAYS:**

**6:30pm— Children** Ministry/activities;

☐ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— **(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—** **NEXT, SEPTEMBER 24, 11:00am**, The Life of David! 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!

## **Schedule for Third Sunday, September 20:**

- 1. 9:30am, Sunday School**
- 2. 10:45am, Worship Service/LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE**
- 3. NO meal & NO afternoon service**

**[SOME HOME GROUPS MEET IN THE EVENING— INQUIRE FOR DETAILS]**

## **SUNDAY SERVICES, September 27:**

- 1. 9:30am, Sunday School**
- 2. 10:45am, Worship Service**
- 3. NOON 'Covered-Dish' meal**
- 4. 1:00pm afternoon service.**

~~~~~

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL— *Uniting Church, Home, and School in CHRIST!* For the 2015-2016 school term we are offering **Second through Twelfth grades.** Children need the Home, the Church, and the School to model and teach the same basic philosophy of life. ***Children are like young plants in a garden— they must be protected.***

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>

SPECIAL NEWS NOTE: In years past... on occasions we would 'contract' with a company and have a Pictorial Church Directory made. It was always a hassle and the photos they sold were expensive. **NOW... WE WILL DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT:**

- 1. Our church website has a private *MEMBERS ONLY SECTION* that only Southsiders with the 'code' can open and get to. We will place our List of 'Members and those Attending' on the website, in the members only section. WE WILL ADD PHOTOS of each family. Adam and Bethany Troutt will be working with our secretary, Kristina Davis, to make this happen.**
- 2. We will also add photos to our PRINTED 'Members and those Attending' list.**
- 3. THEREFORE, Adam and/or Bethany are taking photos.**
- 4. (Note if anyone does not want their photo in the PRIVATE MEMBERS ONLY section... no problem)**