



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 45, November 10 , 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***

PREDESTINATION— GOD’S GOOD PURPOSE!

ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST ALREADY have God-given, fundamental, essential, foundational UNITY. Resting in this Holy Spirit given and empowered unity, all Christians are COMMANDED to strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit. (Ephesians 4:1-6) SUCH God-given UNITY does not require UNIFORMITY on matters about which one may be wrong and still get to heaven! **MOREOVER, LET US REMEMBER:** All understanding of Biblical truth comes to us by gracious revelation from God. **THEREFORE, let us** continue to heed the call of God to LOVE ONE ANOTHER; **let us** continue to benefit from *iron sharpening iron*; **and let us** wait patiently for Biblical revelation to grip both ourselves and others.

IN ADDITION: As we seek to understand and embrace what the BIBLE TEACHES about salvation let us embrace this reality— there is no Biblical basis for using words like **Calvinism, Arminianism, Calvinist,** and/or **Arminian. There are NO ‘Arminian’ or ‘Calvinistic’ verses in the Bible— N O N E!**

After quoting Jesus in John 6:44, I heard a preacher triumphantly proclaim, ***"Jesus was a Calvinist!"*** No matter how well intended, that statement is false. Likewise, if someone says that *Jesus was an Arminian* that would also be 100% false. Yes, many use such expressions; nevertheless, to

equate the LORD OF GLORY with any man is wrong and degrading to our LORD JESUS CHRIST!

MOREOVER, it is impossible to have serious Bible study on the Biblical doctrine of salvation if we practice setting forth and defending mere men; and/or if when a Bible verse or passage is quoted, **all we do is pigeon-hole the verses and slander those verses as being either Arminian or Calvinistic.**

BIBLICAL SALVATION!

[JESUS CHRIST] “In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being PREDESTINATED according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will...” (Eph. 1:11, NKJV) “And here is the staggering thing— that in all which will on day belong to Him, we have been promised a share, since **we were long ago destined for this by the One who achieves His purpose by His sovereign will...**” (Phillips paraphrase)

I FIND that there are many Scriptures which set forth the ‘GOD-SIDE’ of salvation; and there are many other Scriptures which set forth the responsibility of man in salvation— sometimes in the same set of verses BOTH are set forth.

I FIND that there is a common tendency among us **to lean** to one side or the other. WHY? Maybe it is because we just cannot grasp how both can be true simultaneously. Personally, I do not claim perfect balance or perfect understanding— however, **I am committed to** receiving all the verses!

TO THE LOST SINNER: I do not hesitate to proclaim to one and all and/or to anyone— “*JESUS DIED FOR SINNERS! God so loved the world that He gave... O Sinner! REPENT, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and THOU SHALT BE SAVED! The blood of Jesus is sufficient for **whosoever will!***” (John 3:14-21; 3:36; 5:24; Acts 8:35-39; Romans 10:9-13)

As to salvation, FAITH is centrally important! Therefore, let’s take a look at several verses **relating to ‘OUR’ faith**— verses which should be encouraging to sinner or saint:

“And He said to the woman, **Thy faith** hath saved thee; go in peace.” (Luke 7:50) “When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found **so great faith**, no, not in Israel” (Matt. 8:10). “Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, **great is thy faith**: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour” (Matt. 15:28). “But Jesus turned him about, and when He saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; **thy faith** hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour” (Mark 9:22). “And He said unto her, Daughter, **thy faith** hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague” (Mark 5:34). “And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; **thy faith** hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (Mark 10:52). “And He said to the woman, **Thy faith** hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:50). “And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: **thy faith** hath made thee whole; go in peace” (Luke 8:48). “And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: **thy faith** hath saved thee” (Luke 18:42).

THESE ARE PRECIOUS VERSES which speak of ONE’S OWN FAITH. **YET, faith is also stated in the New Testament to be GOD’S GIFT. So, let’s dig deeper!**

ANOTHER has well said: “Faith in Christ is not a notion, or a doctrine, or a principle. It is the heart confidence of every needy sinner who looks to Christ as his only Saviour that causes him to confess, “*My Lord, and my God*” (John 20:28). Yet, it is also God’s gift and God’s operation in us. (Ephesians 2:8-10) Moreover, faith is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

Yet, it is OUR faith. If God gave it to me, that makes it mine. The breath in my lungs is God’s gift. He enables me to breathe. Yet, it is my breath and my breathing that is the evidence that God still gives me life. And the breathing of my body is as necessary to my living as God’s gift of life. The two cannot be separated. If you doubt that, try putting a plastic bag over your face and see if you can live without breathing! **So it is with faith.** We “are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). The Holy Spirit tells us plainly that the faith you have by His grace is “*your faith in Christ*” (Eph. 1:15; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2:5).

It is God's gift; and because God gave it to you, it is "your faith" and "your redemption, and the Holy Spirit's effectual call. — *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"* (Heb. 11:6).

Two Questions: 1. Do you, like the Philippian jailer of old, ask, **"What must I do to be saved?"** I do not hesitate to answer with Paul and Silas, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:30-31). Do not allow anyone to put you looking to yourself, and/or your experience. ***"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,"*** and salvation is yours.

2. Do you ask, "How can I know that I am saved?" Answer this one question — ***"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"*** (John 9:35) It does not matter whether you can answer "What did you know when you first professed faith in Christ?"... or "When did you believe?" Those questions are totally irrelevant. This is the only question to be answered — ***"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"*** If you now trust the Lord Jesus Christ, salvation is yours." [Long quote is from:

http://www.donfortner.com/bulletin_articles/42_luke/luk%2007v50%20Saving%20Faith.htm]

So, saving faith is not MERE human initiated belief apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Rather, MY faith, my saving faith in Jesus is rooted in the gracious gift of God! (Ephesians 2:8-10) How could it be otherwise— ***for GOD IS both the Author and the Completer of OUR faith!*** (Hebrews 12:2)

TO THE CHRISTIAN: I ALSO rejoice **in the verses which tell believers** that we were **chosen** in Christ **before** the foundation of the world, (Ephesians 1:3-13). Indeed, 2 Timothy 1:9 tells Christians: [GOD] Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose and grace, which was GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.**"

What a wonderful word to Christians: God saves; God calls; God calls according to His own purpose and grace. Moreover, the verse tells us that all this was purposed, decided, by God in Christ **before the world began**. That is, before anything that was made was made; and therefore, even before I could do anything good or evil, God decided to

save me and to call me according to His good pleasure and purpose.
AMAZING GRACE!

MOREOVER, we are **specifically GIVEN** by the Father to the Son, (John 17:1-6). We love Him **because He first** loved us, (1 John 4:19). GOD proclaims all of the above in the Bible. **All the verses are true.** They are all needed and none of them needs to be explained away. **I do not pretend to understand the mind of God** as to how all of the above verses to sinners and to saints are simultaneously true. **On one occasion, Charles H. Spurgeon had a young man come to him** with a great text of Scripture on God's sovereign predestination and another on the free offer of the gospel, with the promise of life to "whosoever will" come. He asked Mr. Spurgeon, "Can you reconcile these two things?" Spurgeon's answer was, "I never need to reconcile friends."

There is no contradiction in the Word of God. The Scripture is never at odds with itself. It presents one God and one salvation without any contradiction. LET US BE HUMBLE and teach all the Word of God. May we go forth with a simple faith: **"God said it; that settles it!"... and "I believe Him!"**

MOREOVER, AS TO SALVATION— ACCORDING TO the Word of God, all those who are ALREADY IN CHRIST have the awesome responsibility to be laborers together with God: **We plant. We water. GOD gives the increase.** (1 Cor. 3:6-7) **We are commissioned** to take the Gospel to the whole world. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) WE GO FORTH WITH CONFIDENCE for God's gracious and sovereign election DOES NOT KEEP ANYONE OUT OF HEAVEN; but rather secures a numberless multitude out of every kindred, tongue, tribe and people who will be saved. (Rev. 7:1-17) THUS, what a high calling it is to live and proclaim the gospel of Christ to any and to all throughout the world!

LET US NOT FORGET THIS— All humans start out as sinners by nature and ALREADY under the wrath of God. (Ephesians 2:1-3) The numberless MULTITUDE of those who are given by the Father to the Son, (John 17:1-6) get what they could have never deserved or earned— mercy and grace and thus, HEAVEN. Thus, I confess Ephesians 2:1-10 and in

Titus 3:2-7. INDEED, ALL WHO get to heaven **get there solely** by the AMAZING GRACE OF GOD.

Moreover, all who will one day spend eternity in hell will do so ONLY because they were rebels who hated God and refused whatever light God gave them, and thus, they get holy justice. GOD'S WORD IS CLEAR that they are without excuse: Romans 1:18-32; 3:10-19.

THEREFORE, let us teach, embrace, and REJOICE IN, 1. All of Romans 8-11. In those chapters, **Romans 8:28-39** — (especially, verses 29, 30) — the Holy Spirit **presents glorious predestination.** It is plain. And while those verses focus on the Divine side of salvation— **keep in mind, the Bible only speaks about predestination to those who are ALREADY saved.** There is ZERO Biblical use of the word 'predestination' in relation to the lost in any shape, form, or fashion— God's Word does not, so neither should I!

Furthermore, it would be foolish to claim that God predestines some to be lost— when in reality, ALL FALLEN HUMANS are ALREADY dead in sin and UNDER the just wrath of God. Being sinners by nature and sinners by choice— all are automatically LOST and under the wrath of God. They do not need nor does the Bible prescribe to them any sort of predestination in order to be lost.

Reality: the wonder is not that there will be those who die in their sin and experience holy JUSTICE. **The wonder is that ANYONE is saved! What a wideness in God's mercy and grace— He is saving a numberless multitude!**

Moreover, in the midst of strong God-focused verses in Romans 8-11, as to calling and election — AS THE BIBLE SO OFTEN DOES, **in the same section of Scripture, the Holy Spirit has Paul to pen verses that focus on MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY to believe:** Romans 10: 9-13. I believe those verses just as strongly and often quote verse 13.

2. Ephesians 1:3-14, (verse 5 & 11) is the only other passage in the Bible that has the word 'predestinate'.... But again, this is precious truth to those who are already saved. I cannot add to it. I cannot deny it. However, it is NOT written to the unsaved.

3. REALITY: There are those who focus on Bible verses that speak of God's predestination, calling, and election; **and they minimize or deny the verses that focus on man's responsibility and the free offer of the gospel!** The New Testament is unashamed to set forth truth such as, **'repent, believe, and thou shalt be saved!'** There are others, (as I was taught) who focus on man's side and deny or minimize the Divine side. My encouragement is that we accept, believe, and rejoice in all the verses.

Moreover, my encouragement is that we hold tight to our supreme witness: **"By this shall all know that you are my disciples, IF you have love one for another!"** (John 13:34-35) Without God's love flowing among us— we are zeros in God's sight! (1 Cor. 13) AND ALSO THAT WE TAKE SERIOUSLY our God-given assignment: **GO! MAKE! MARK! MATURE DISCIPLES!** (Matthew 28:19-20)

FINALLY, TO THOSE OUTSIDE OF CHRIST WHO MIGHT BE READING THIS: There is NO PARDON for the sinner who dies without Jesus Christ as their LORD and SAVIOR. There is no purgatory from which one can ever be delivered— there are only eternal flames of torment.

Moreover, if you will not believe the Gospel in the Word of God and/or if you will not believe upon hearing the Gospel of Christ preached, you would not believe if one came back from Hell to warn you! **PLEASE READ ALL OF Luke 16:19-31.**

ALSO, one day Jesus WEPT over Jerusalem, (Luke 19: 41-44). Why? Because they had missed their day of OPPORTUNITY! **TODAY is the day of salvation!** FLEE TO CHRIST TODAY!

There is an unseen line between God's mercy and God's wrath. For over 100 years God's mercy continued in Noah's day. Noah was busy building an ark of safety and preaching righteousness. From Genesis 6 we learn that wickedness was great as masses of folk worked overtime to think up and to do evil. They were wicked; but there were respectable folk among them also.

According to Jesus, in Matthew 24:37-39, they were simply busy buying and selling and eating and drinking, etc. I suspect they were horrified about the really wicked crowd who were a bad influence in their fair cities.

BUT THEY WERE ALL BLIND TO COMING JUDGMENT. THEY "KNEW NOT"... AND THE FLOOD CAME AND DESTROYED THEM ALL!

FLEE TO CHRIST TODAY FOR MERCY! All who come to Him He will in no wise cast out! (John 6:37; Matthew 11:28-30)

BOTTOM LINE: **One of God's most fearful judgments** is that God simply removes His restraining hands and lets humans have even unrestricted and unrestrained passions to go downward deeper and deeper into the paths of sin.

Nowhere is God's present tense wrath of abandonment more revealed than in Romans 1:18-32. In this passage, the first line of application is most likely, Noah's generation. **But also, RIGHT NOW, the wrath of God is being continuously revealed** from heaven against ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNES. "HOW LONG may men go on in sin, How long will God forbear?"

ONE ANSWER from the sky is sent: Ye, who from God live apart, while it is called TODAY, Repent and Harden not your heart! REPENT! BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; AND YOU SHALL BE SAVED!"

Grace to one and all! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month 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. 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, November 12, 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!

SUNDAY SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER:

November 15- 9:30am- Sunday School // **10:45am-** Worship/**LORD'S SUPPER.** (No meal, no early afternoon service) EVENING HOME GROUPS

Sundays, November 22, 29: 9:30am- Sunday School // **10:45am-** Worship // Noon Covered Dish Meal // **1:00pm-** Early Afternoon Service

[NOTE— NO 5TH SUNDAY EVENING SINGING SERVICE THIS MONTH]