



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 46, November 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***

THANKSGIVING... But WHERE is GOD When the Bottom Falls Out?

Many folk do not like to consider TOUGH QUESTIONS! BUT IF the Biblical truth of this article is not SEALED IN YOUR MIND AND HEART, **you will likely join the multitudes who are or who will be ANGRY AT GOD**— PLEASE don't let that happen!

Historian Philip Friedman tells **the tragic story of Zosia**, a young Jewish girl, daughter of a physician who was living in Warsaw, Poland, during Nazi occupation. One day some German soldiers decided to have some fun. With demonic glee, they held her and cut out Zosia's big, beautiful brown eyes. Screaming and laughter mingled. All of this was in the presence of the child's mother. Bloodied, blind, and faint... now Zosia lay on the floor. Finally, the soldiers took her away and brutally murdered her! For Zosia, her mother, for millions of Jews, and for millions of others— **life on planet earth was or is a horrifying nightmare with unspeakable pain!** **"WHERE WAS GOD?"**

Such evil suffering brings on a huge crisis of faith for many people because human reasoning says that **(1) If God** is all knowing, all-loving, and perfectly good— He must have WANTED to protect Zosia. **(2) And if**

God is really sovereign and all powerful— He must have been FULLY ABLE to protect Zosia.

BUT Zosia suffered! WHERE WAS GOD? Millions more have suffered and millions more do horribly suffer! Therefore, a growing number of theologians, pastors, and just folks are openly asking— **“What kind of a monstrous god would allow Zosia and millions more to suffer as they do?”** Baptist Pastor Gregory Boyd, in his book ***GOD OF THE POSSIBLE*** states,

“... If God foreknew that Adolph Hitler would send six million Jews to their death, why did He go ahead and create a man like that? **How is God not responsible for the behavior of evil people He “unleashes” on the world**— if, in fact, He is absolutely certain of what they will do once “unleashed”? Moreover, if God is eternally certain that various individuals will end up being eternally damned, why does He go ahead and create them? If hell is worse than never being born, as Jesus suggests (Matt. 26:24), wouldn’t an all-loving God refrain from creating people He is certain will end up there?”

Because of such thoughts and questions as these, more and more people are concluding that,

(1) God must not be all loving, all good, and all powerful! **(2) Or if** God is all loving and good, God must not be all powerful! GOD means well. He would like to deliver Zosia and those of this world like her; but He is just not able to pull it off! **(3)** Or maybe there are lots of events that **God simply does not know about until they happen!** God is, as Gregory Boyd clearly implies, only and merely “The God of the POSSIBLE” who may or may not be able to carry out His will!

INDEED, it was out of the grief of his own suffering, Jewish Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a best seller which has similar conclusions as Boyd. The Nashville Tennessean, November 26, 2000, stated that Kushner, (in ***When Bad Things Happen to Good People***), “made the case that God is **all-loving but not always all powerful** to stop suffering.

Kushner’s book has been strongly embraced by Christian ministers, making his perhaps the most widely accepted Jewish book by Christian

leaders in the last half-century. It helped change the way religious professionals approach the subject of grief and suffering!”

HOWEVER, maybe like me, you can't swallow Kushner's or Boyd's views! **YET when life tumbles in with pain and suffering— is it not true that many of us quickly question the goodness, love, wisdom, power, and/or the sovereignty of God? And we certainly** do not want anyone to quote the Scripture, *“IN EVERYTHING give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus!* Moreover, like Gregory Boyd and others, it is fact that many of us tend to forget, or deny, or minimize, and/or refuse to receive and apply BIBLICAL REVELATION! **What follows are some statements along with many Scripture references, which — if we receive them — will tear down ROADBLOCKS to THANKSGIVING to God and move us to peace in the midst of the storms of life.**

1. TRUTH: Biblical revelation NEVER EVEN HINTS that satan's rebellion, or man's Fall into sin, or anything that satan and/or man has ever done has ever caught God by surprise. God is not wringing his hands in fear or frustration that He will not be able to accomplish all of His good and perfect pleasure. **We may not presently understand how these things can be— but here's critical truth about the true and living God who accomplishes all of His GOOD PLEASURE and perfect will:**

Psalm 103:19- *The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all.* **Psalm 115:3-** *But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.* **Psalm 135:6-** *Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

Proverbs 19:21- *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.* **Proverbs 21:1-** *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.*

Isaiah 43:13- *Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall let it?*

Lamentations 3:37- *Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?*

Daniel 2:20-21- *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

Daniel 4:17- *This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. **Daniel 4:35-** *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?**

THESE and many other verses reveal the grand sovereignty of God who accomplishes all of His good pleasure!

2. TRUTH: EVEN AS GOD WARNED— SIN BROUGHT and continues to bring many tragic repercussions! Adam and Eve disobeyed God's instructions in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2 & 3) From the Beginning, God revealed to Adam and Eve that they were RESPONSIBLE BEINGS who would face repercussions for disobedience: Genesis 2: 16-17. After their sin, God said: Genesis 3:16-19. **As a result of that rebellion and choice to sin— we all must face a number of harsh realities!**

3. TRUTH: Indeed, in a fallen world not only people, but **the entire creation suffers and groans:** Romans 8:20-22! Hurricanes, Tsunamis, Tornadoes, Earthquakes, Drought, '911', atrocities of war, disease, and more are all repercussions of man's rebellion— and they HIT both saint and sinner!

4. TRUTH: In our fallen world we witness the AWFUL DEPTHS of man's depravity. The Bible speaks plainly about the WICKEDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART. (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18) **In our fallen world, God has**

decreed SOWING AND REAPING! CONSEQUENCES! SIN PAYS WAGES! We suffer for our own sin. We suffer consequences from the sins of others, such as— the drunk, the Child abuser, the Evil Politician, the specter of Terrorism!

5. TRUTH: In reality, the SORROW, SUFFERING, and EVIL of our world point the FINGER of guilt at us and not at any sort of supposed mismanagement, or lovelessness, or powerlessness on the part of Almighty God! **When we experience or witness some of the HORRORS of this world, WE SHOULD BE CRYING OUT:**

“Look at the consequences of sin and rebellion! Look at the awesome evil potential of my own heart. Therefore: “O sinner flee to Christ before it is everlastingly too late!” Therefore, “O saved sinner, be amazed at grace that saved a wicked sinner like me who only deserved eternity in hell!”

MOREOVER REMEMBER THE STORY OF JOB: (1) God initiated the conversation with satan about Job. **(2) Job rightly responded** in worship — *“God gave. God took away. Blessed be God!”* **(3) God used satan** to accomplish God’s purposes. **(4) JOB and his friends** missed TRUTH as they ‘went at it’ in deep and often confusing philosophical and theological discussions! **(5) During these discussions**, in spite of his wrong perceptions, Job continued to hold on to a genuine faith in God. **(6) FINALLY, GOD COMES TO JOB** and asks a series of mind blowing questions! (Job 38-41). **(7) As God asks all these questions, Job begins to realize something—** the world does not revolve around me, my plans, my wants and wishes! Then, in Job 42:5-6, Job gives the proper response of repentance to and humility before God!

6. TRUTH: The world was not created for me, for us; or for our pleasure! The world and all that is in it was created by God, and for God, and for His purposes, and for His good pleasure. (Rev. 4:11) Indeed, flowing out of the setting of satan’s temptations, man’s sin, and God’s redemption **grand demonstrations of God’s attributes are revealed—** as the Almighty God, the Master Potter, does ALL of His good pleasure! (Rom 9:13-23)

HERE ARE BOTTOM LINE REALITIES:

1. Yes, there are multitudes like Zosia in our world— non Christian and Christian!

2. Were it not for the restraining mercies of Almighty God, there would be more HITLERS, more Columbine shooters, more '911's'... etc... And we among them ... producing more like Zosia!

**Why? Because of the exceeding wickedness of our hearts
Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:22-23; Matthew 24:21-22.**

3. The great mystery we have to face **IS NOT all of the atrocities to be found in our world!** For every groan and all the agony on the earth — coming from man or beast — SHOUTS, “O, the awfulness and the consequences of sin... O, THE DEPTH OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY!”

4. Here is the supreme grand mystery of planet earth— the reality that there are countless Trophies of Grace! The redeemed— hell deserving as all others, yet redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, coming right out of the midst of a world of sin and suffering— This is the great mystery!
Amazing Grace!

5. The redeemed have often suffered and have often been slaughtered by God haters. **The redeemed** have NOT been shielded from the diseases and other sufferings found in our fallen world. **However,** for all eternity, **the redeemed** have no complaints or regrets! (Rev. 7:14-17)

6. From Genesis right through the Revelation, God reveals that He holds men responsible and accountable. Throughout time, God demonstrates His patience. **But the day of vengeance against unrepentant rebels is coming:** Romans 1:18-32; Revelation 16:4-11; 21:8.

Moreover, for carrying out His holy and just wrath, **God will be rightfully worshipped! (Rev. 19:1-2)**

7. ABOVE ALL ELSE God's ultimate purpose of a Bride for His Son, out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and people is now being and will be totally fulfilled: Rev. 21:9 - Rev. 22:5.

Finally, let us not be surprised that we do not understand all of these revelations from God, even though they are clearly stated in His holy Word— for HIS ways are not our ways! (Isa. 55:8-11)

Nevertheless, let us HUMBLE ourselves and rejoice! ALMIGHTY GOD who is love, who is all powerful, who is holy, who is faithful, who is merciful, and so much more— **HE REIGNS IN GRAND AND HOLY SOVEREIGNTY!**

REJOICE! FOR,

“Sovereignty means that God is free to be God! It's the truth that enables me to say **THANK YOU** to the One who allowed whatever it is that's the cause of my anxiety and to know that He could have controlled it if He had wished.

Since He did not, then I accept the fact that INFINITE WISDOM and UNCHANGING LOVE conspired with ALMIGHTY POWER to cause something that's ultimately for my good and God's glory!”

Who am I that I should question God on what He brings and/or what He allows? Who am I, a piece of clay, to argue with God, the Master Potter?

“THANKSGIVING to God [Giving THANKS in the midst of a world like ours] is not a psychological tool intended to change circumstances. It's purpose is to change our attitudes, to lift our gaze from what we do not fully understand, to a focus of trust in and worship of the Almighty God of Calvary love and proclaim,

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to WHOM BE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN!” (Rom. 11:33, 36) (The above Sovereignty quote edited from Don Baker's book, Thank-You Therapy)

And let us not forget: An amazing result of such THANKSGIVING and PRAISE to God is that **we begin to experience the peace of God that surpasses all understanding!** (Phil. 4:6-7)

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, planned for early 2016

* **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!

REMAINING SUNDAY SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER:

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]

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>