



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 47, November 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***

"We Give THANKS to God!" LET US ALL GIVE THANKS!

In the sports world, we elevate those who win the top prizes! They are the ones who have put their whole heart into the game. They have refused to quit. They played hurt. They trained most diligently. They understood and paid the price of serious preparation for the next battle (game), etc. We love to read about them. Other players model after them... etc. **Following is the account of some who received a GREAT DISTINCTION of honor in their field!**

Surely, those who battle in the same arena will want to read about them, learn from them, take lessons from them, model after them, etc.!!

Twelve Early Martyrs in ancient Carthage, 180 AD, GAVE THANKS!

Their crime? They were Christians who refused to compromise or recant. They would rather die than deny their faith and betray the LORD they loved! These seven men and five women were brought before the Roman proconsul Saturninus in Carthage, North Africa (Tunisia) on July 17, 180AD. He gave them an opportunity to recant: "You can win the indulgence of our lord the Emperor, if you **return to a sound mind.**"

Speratus, the apparent leader of the small group of faithful disciples, answered, 'We have never done ill, we have not lent ourselves to wrong,

we have never spoken ill, but when ill-treated we have given thanks...."

"We too are religious," answered the proconsul, "and our religion is simple, and we swear by the genius of our lord the Emperor, and pray for his welfare, as you also ought to do."

"The empire of this world I know not," explained Speratus, "but rather I serve that God, whom no man has seen, nor with these eyes can see. I have committed no theft; but if I have bought anything, I pay the tax; because **I know my Lord, the King of kings and Emperor of all nations.**"

"Be not partakers of this folly," said the proconsul. **Cittinus, one of the faithful, said,** "We have none other to fear, save only our Lord God, who is in heaven."...

"Do you persist in being a Christian?" asked the proconsul. "I am a Christian," he answered. All the others agreed...

The proconsul Saturninus then read the decree [their sentence] from a tablet: "Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Donata, Vestia, Secunda and the rest having confessed that they live according to the Christian rite, since after opportunity offered them of **returning to the custom of the Romans they have obstinately persisted,** it is determined that they be put to the sword."

"WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD," said Speratus. **"Today we are martyrs in heaven; thanks be to God,"** added Nartzalus.

The proconsul then gave the order that their sentence be publicly announced by the herald: "Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Veturius, Felix, Aquilinus, Lætantius, Januaria, Generosa, Vestia, Donata and Secunda, I have ordered to be executed."

They all said: **"THANKS BE TO GOD."**

"And so they all together were crowned with martyrdom; and they reign with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen!" (<http://www.shepherd.to/Persecution/martyr/early-church/twelve-martyrs.htm>)

LET US ALL GIVE THANKS!

*“Be anxious for nothing, but **in everything** by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6-7)

** GIVING THANKS IS AN ACT OF FAITH!

The ultimate objective of our Heavenly Father is to bring us to a place of unwavering trust and confidence in Him. A promise from God **is** reality. It need not be visible or tangible. The promise need only to be from God to be real! **Giving Thanks** is acting on the Word of God, in faith! **Giving Thanks** is anchored in one or more of God’s promises, appropriate for the situation, and then praising Him in advance for the coming fulfillment! **Thanks giving is Giving Thanks** to God for the answer before it is received! **Giving Thanks** is most powerful when we do it on the basis of God’s promise rather than on the basis of the fulfillment of a petition.

** GIVING THANKS IS AN ACT OF FAITH IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD!

God in His good sovereignty **has the total freedom to do all of His good pleasure**. He does as He pleases and with whom He pleases and when He pleases. He ordains “sowing and reaping.” He even grants satan permission to “sift” us as he did Peter; or to torture us as He did Job. Often we do not have any idea what is going on— the deformity of a baby, the earthquake, the hurricane, the tornado, the gunman and the drunk... and the list goes on and on. **BUT IN EVERYTHING WE Give Thanks**, resting on God’s good sovereignty.

Resting in God’s SOVEREIGNTY enables us to **Give ‘Thanks’ to the One who has brought and/or allowed** whatever it is that’s the cause of our anxiety; and to know that He could have controlled or stopped it if He had so wished. And since He did not stop “it”...or since He allowed “it”— we rest in the reality that, **“Infinite Wisdom and Unchanging Love conspired with Almighty Power to cause something that’s for His great glory and our ultimate good!”**

Giving Thanks is not, “Praise God, the child is deformed...or Praise God, I have terminal cancer!” BUT RATHER:

I Give Thanks, O Good and Sovereign God that all things have a divine

reason; and are ordered by You to work for good. **Giving Thanks** is not a psychological ploy or tool designed to lessen the impact of life's problems that may rush in like a flood in this fallen world.

BUT RATHER, as **I Give Thanks**, I find my mind's focus put in order—

“Shall the clay say to the Potter, ‘What doest Thou?’”

Giving Thanks is not intended to change circumstances. Its purpose is to transform my attitudes, keeping me free from resentment and bitterness and bringing me back to humility and to valuing the soul!

Giving Thanks is to be given in everything but not necessarily for everything. For at the very least, I am humbled and moved to live by faith in the good, sovereign wisdom of God.

Giving Thanks lifts the gaze of my heart from self and circumstances and people to Almighty God, so that now I cry out,

“O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Romans 11:33)

**** GIVING THANKS IS “STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD!”**

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) Thus, **Giving Thanks** for the reality of these truths is faith in the forgiving grace of God. In fact, how often I have confessed my sin and asked God to forgive me... but there was still a dark cloud of awareness of guilt and feelings of “God won't forgive me this time!”

SO, IN SPITE OF THESE FEELINGS, **I GIVE THANKS** to God for forgiving me! Such is the ongoing power of the blood of Jesus! Such is the reality of Holy God's total satisfaction with what Christ accomplished on the Cross!

Giving Thanks causes the heavy burden of guilt to fall off! Moreover, it is for these very reasons that I totally reject the “I must learn to forgive myself” false teaching! NOTE: There are an uncountable number of objective truths in the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit will bring before us...but we only experience them by active faith and trust. **Giving Thanks** is powerful, active trust in God and His Word!

**** GIVING THANKS for THE UNKNOWN!**

Giving Thanks is an act of faith in God's ability to guide His children with supreme wisdom, unfailing love, and unconquerable power. **Giving Thanks** empowers us to walk into the unknown and stand in the presence of the unfamiliar, because **Giving Thanks** is faith that God is capable of showing His children what He wants us to do and where He wants us to go; and that He has the power to make sure that we get home safe! *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you" (Ps. 32:8).*

Giving Thanks is thanking God in the midst of the problem— not for the problem, but for the outcome! (Heb. 12:11) **Giving Thanks** says, "Thank you, Father, that even though all discipline seems not to be joyful but sorrowful, yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." **Giving Thanks** focuses on what we know to be true based on God's Holy Word, in spite of what we may see or feel! We are **Giving Thanks** to God for triumph even though present circumstances suggest defeat!

**** GIVING THANKS AND ANXIETY ABOUT GOD'S PROVISION!**

Giving Thanks is not a means of getting what we want; rather, it rests in the promise of God to provide us with what we need. It is not a plea for provision; it's a response to a promise. **Giving Thanks** is not only for what God has given; but also for what God is going to give! **Giving Thanks** is relaxing in the promises of the sustaining grace of God and enjoying His peace as we trust in His good providential care!

Giving Thanks is most powerful when focused on expressing gratitude over the incredible attributes of Almighty God! Faith is fueled by prayerfully musing upon the attributes of God!

**** GIVING THANKS and OVERCOMING ANXIETY ABOUT GOD'S TIMING!**

Giving Thanks is not designed to change God's timetable or speed up the divine program. Rather, it helps me adjust myself and my schedule to His! **Giving Thanks** does not get my wishes granted quicker... it helps me to patiently wait... to **Thank Him** for His infinite wisdom that controls all His decisions and His perfect timing.

**** GIVING THANKS and OVERCOMING ANXIETY ABOUT PRAYER!**

Giving Thanks and Praise to God is the primary form of prayer in Scripture! **Giving Thanks** to God for who He is focuses our confidence, not in the act of prayer, but in the Living God who solicits prayer, hears prayer, and answers prayer. We do not always know how to pray, but the Holy Spirit enables and empowers our **Thanks Giving**.

**** GIVING THANKS and OVERCOMING ANXIETY ABOUT DEATH!**

THANK YOU, FATHER, for the promise of the resurrection...that I will be with You forever! (1 Thess. 4:13-18) **THANK YOU, FATHER,** that you have already prepared a place for me (John 14:1-2); that You designed it (Heb. 11:10); that You have even described it and that it will be my eternal home (Rev. 21-22).

[This article edited from *Thank-You Therapy: The Cure For Anxiety*, by Don Baker]

“THANK YOU, FATHER for plentiful mercy, plentiful pardon, plentiful peace, plentiful redemption, plentiful forgiveness, plentiful grace and abundant love. **“Thanksgiving is the vibration of the soul’s heartstrings under the soft touch of God’s bountiful benevolence!”**

[I give thanks for you all! James]

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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 SERVICE FOR NOVEMBER:

Sunday, November 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]

SUNDAY SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2015:

NOTE: This year we will NOT have a 'Brunch' during the Sunday School hour on any of the Sundays of December.

We started the 'Brunch' TWICE A YEAR tradition back in the day of only 'once a month' fellowship meals. However, for years now, each month we have multiple opportunities for fellowship meals. **So, this year when some of our folk DID NOT WANT to miss Sunday School Bible Study in exchange for the brunch—** it seemed to be a good thing to honor and follow their zeal!

Sunday School Bible Study and fellowship are super important— and in all the hubbub and hullabaloo of December we need ALL the sacred

times of SMALL GROUP fellowship and Bible Study we can have. SO, HOPE TO SEE YOU IN SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL FOUR SUNDAYS OF DECEMBER!)

SUNDAY SERVICES IN DECEMBER:

Sundays, December 6 and 13:

9:30am- Sunday School

10:45am- Worship

Noon Covered Dish Meal // 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service

NOTE: DURING THE MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE OF DECEMBER 13, PRIOR TO A MESSAGE FROM GOD'S WORD,

***** THE CHOIR WILL LEAD US IN SPECIAL SONGS/HYMNS OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE AS TO THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

Sunday, December 20:

9:30am- Sunday School

10:45am- Worship— We will lift up our hearts and voices in PRAISE and THANKSGIVING as to the WONDER OF CHRIST COMING TO EARTH for sinners; the WORD OF GOD will be preached; **and we shall come to the LORD'S TABLE!**

(**No meal or** afternoon service... **IF there are** 'Home Groups' meeting in December... the leaders will let you know)

Sunday, December 27:

9:30am- Sunday School

10:45am- Worship

(No meal or 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>