



**GROW  
IN  
GRACE**  
NEWSLETTER

**Volume 43, No. 46, November 22 , 2016** / 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."***

[**WHY SEND OUT 'LONG' ARTICLES** when we live in a sound bite, twitter tweet world that, it is widely believed, will only tolerate short 'pithy' statements? **ANSWER:** Because mere tweets and **SOUND-BITES** are not sufficient for the instruction and/or for the **MAJOR SURGERY** required in the war-zone in which we live; nor will such give us full revelation of **GOD**, who is worthy of worship and worthy of praise!]

## **FACING and OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS to THANKSGIVING!**

**IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE something big or horrifying that dampens all desire to GIVE THANKS.** I suspect that each one of us has at least one 'SOMETHING' on our 'plate' which we allow to ignite at least a secret questioning of the goodness of God! This article faces 'HEAD ON' the harsh realities of living in a fallen world and sets forth the call of Giving Thanks unto God! **MOREOVER, AS WE READ THIS, REMEMBER:** The deep fall of humans into the **DESTRUCTIVE, DOMINATING, and ENSLAVING SINS OF ROMANS 1:21B - 32**, ARE ALL BIRTHED from the two primary sins stated in ROMANS 1:21a: **(1)** A refusal to honor and submit to **GOD** as **GOD OF OUR LIVES**; and **(2)** a **REFUSAL TO BE THANKFUL!**

**Historian Philip Friedman has written of Zosia**, a young Jewish girl, daughter of a physician who lived in Warsaw, Poland, during Nazi occupation. One day the Germans decided to have some fun. With demonic glee and in her mother's presence they held Zosia and cut out her big, beautiful brown eyes. Screaming and laughter mingled. Bloodied,

blind, and faint— Zosia lay on the floor. Later, the soldiers took her away and brutally murdered her! **For Zosia, her mother, millions of Jews, and for millions of others, INCLUDING Christians— life on planet earth was and is TODAY a horrifying nightmare with unspeakable pain, suffering, and cruel death! For many, such suffering and such evil** bring on a huge crisis of faith! Why? Because human reasoning says that,

**(1) IF GOD IS** all knowing, **and** all-loving, **and** perfectly good— He must have WANTED to protect Zosia! **(2) IF GOD IS** really sovereign and all powerful— He must have been FULLY ABLE to protect Zosia! **(3) BUT Zosia suffered!** Millions more have suffered and millions more still horribly suffer! Therefore, a growing number of theologians and pastors are openly asking— **“What kind of a monstrous god would allow Zosia and millions more to suffer as they do?”**

**EXAMPLE:** Baptist Pastor Gregory Boyd, in ***GOD OF THE POSSIBLE*** asks, “...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 questions as these— more and more people are concluding that, (1)** God must not be all loving and all good! **(2)** Or if God is all loving, God must not be all powerful! He 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)** Besides, 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!

**EXAMPLE:** **Out of the grief of 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!” I hope you are like me and can’t swallow Kushner’s or Boyd’s views! **However, when life tumbles in on us with pain, suffering, injustice, etc. — is it not true that many of us (All of us?) quickly question the goodness, love, wisdom, power, and/or the sovereignty of God?** Moreover, like Gregory Boyd and others, **many of us** tend to forget, or deny, or minimize, and/or refuse to receive and apply clear 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 help move us to peace in the midst of the storms of life.**

**BIBLICAL TRUTH:** Biblical revelation NEVER 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 is a sampling of critical truth about the true and living God. Let us read and worship and GIVE THANKS for the true and living God:**

**Psalms 103:19-***The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.* **Psalms 115:3-***But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.* **Psalms 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?*

**BIBLICAL TRUTH:** Adam and Eve disobeyed God's instructions in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2 & 3) **As a result of that rebellion and choice to sin, we all must face a number of PAINFUL realities, CONSEQUENCES!**

**BIBLICAL TRUTH:** 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 'touch' both saint and sinner!

**BIBLICAL TRUTH:** 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.

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

**BIBLICAL TRUTH:** 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!

**THEREFORE, 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 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. **Thus,** “O sinner flee to Christ before it is everlastingly too late!” And, “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 proclaimed: **God gave. God took away. Blessed be God!** (3) God used satan to accomplish God’s purposes. (Rebellious satan is on a Divine leash!) (4) JOB and his friends ‘go at it’ in deep and often confusing philosophical and theological discussions! During these discussions, in spite of his wrong perceptions, Job continued to hold on to a genuine faith in God.

**Ultimately,** GOD COMES TO JOB and asks a series of mind blowing questions! (Job 38-41). **As God asks all these questions, Job begins to realize something which we need to see—** *The world does not revolve around me, my plans, my wants and wishes! This is GOD’S world and He does all of His GOOD pleasure!* **Finally,** (Job 42:5-6), **Job gives the proper response of repentance to God and humility before God! LET IT BE SO IN MY LIFE AND IN YOURS!**

**BIBLICAL 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 His purposes and 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)

**BIBLICAL TRUTH: For the redeemed, God always works all things to bring about ultimate good and the glorifying of His name.**

**Read of Joseph, who practiced ‘Romans 8:28’ long before the Holy Spirit moved Paul’s pen to write it!** (Genesis 45:3-5; 50:18-21; Ps. 105:17-19; Romans 8:28-39)

**THEREFORE, 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 who suffer like Zosia! **Why? Because of the exceeding wickedness of our hearts: Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:22-23; Matthew 24:21-22.**

THUS, 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!*”

**IN REALITY, here is the supreme grand mystery of planet earth—** the reality that there are countless Trophies of Grace— the redeemed, what a glorious wonder! 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!** (Ephesians 2:1-10)

**MORE REALITY:** 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) DEAR SUFFERING SAINT— RIGHT NOW IS IMPORTANT; BUT RIGHT NOW IS NOT ALL THERE IS! LOOK UP, REDEMPTION DRAWS NEAR! (Luke 21:25-28)

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

**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)

LET US BE HUMBLE 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, HOLY, ALL-WISE, and ALL POWERFUL SOVEREIGNTY!**

**“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 didn't, then I accept the fact that **INFINITE WISDOM and UNCHANGING LOVE** conspired with **ALMIGHTY POWER** to cause something that's ultimately **for the Christian's 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. RATHER,** 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 to** 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!** Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**WITH THANKSGIVING!** / James Bell / [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://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 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— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

**LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Studies in the Gospel of Luke! TAKING A BREAK...**

**NEXT MEETING: January 3, 2017 @ 11:00am;** Cindy Bell teaching. [Front door open at 10:45 till 11:05am; or come in Iron Steps side entrance!]

**MEN: 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 and biscuits!

**SUNDAY SERVICES: NOVEMBER 27:**

**9:30am-** Sunday School

**10:45am-** Worship Service // **NOON** 'Covered-dish' Lunch

**5:30pm-7:30pm—** FAITHFUL MEN'S FELLOWSHIP/STUDY/EQUIPPING