

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 34, August 21, 2018 / Southside Baptist Church / 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; and 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 Savior JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

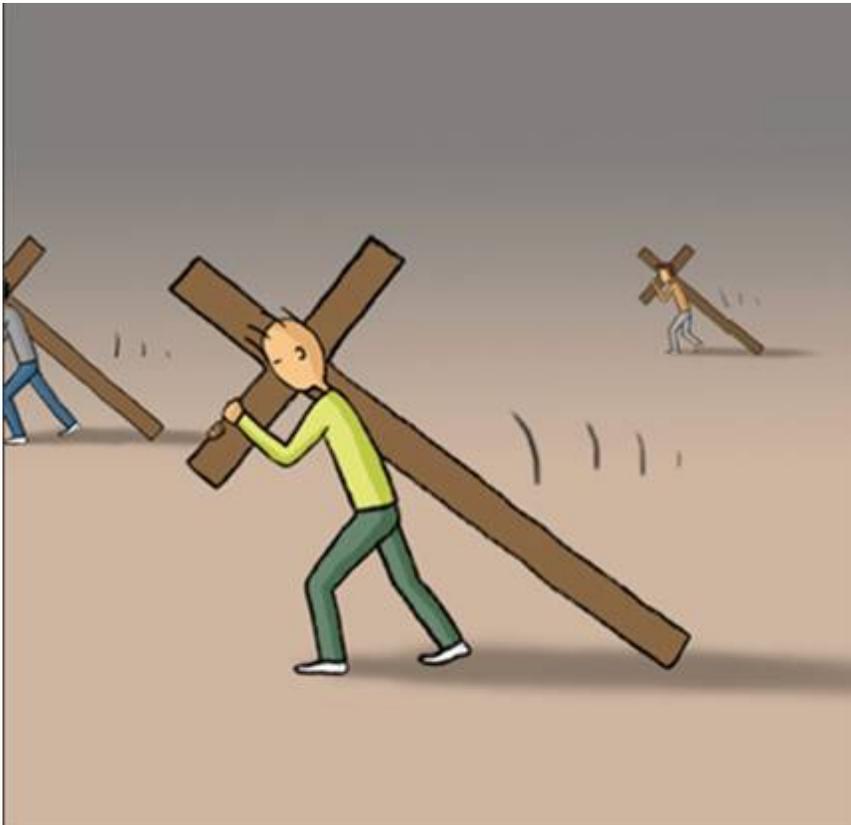
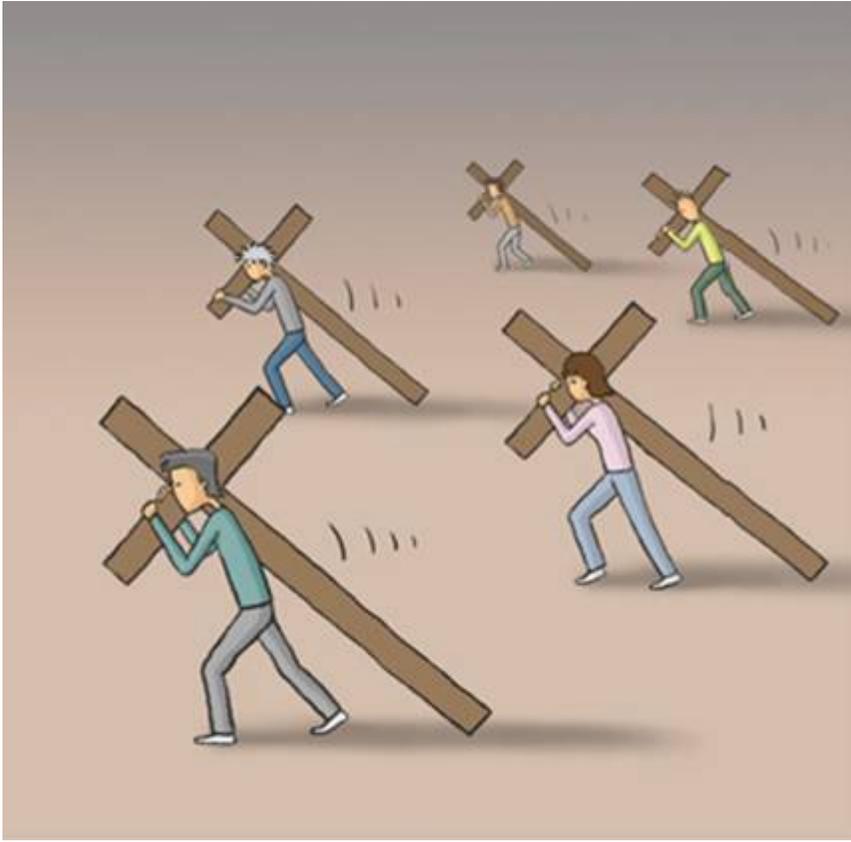
[IF YOU are receiving BOTH a paper copy of the Newsletter and an EMAIL copy... and ONLY want the EMAIL copy... please let the Secretary know!]

What does "Take Up Our Cross" mean?

Below is a presentation that is reported to be both simple and profound. It starts with drawings and concludes with brief commentary. Look. Read. Study. **Discern!**

The email began with these words and pics:

Every once in a while, a seemingly-simple email comes around that ends up being quite profound. This is one of them.

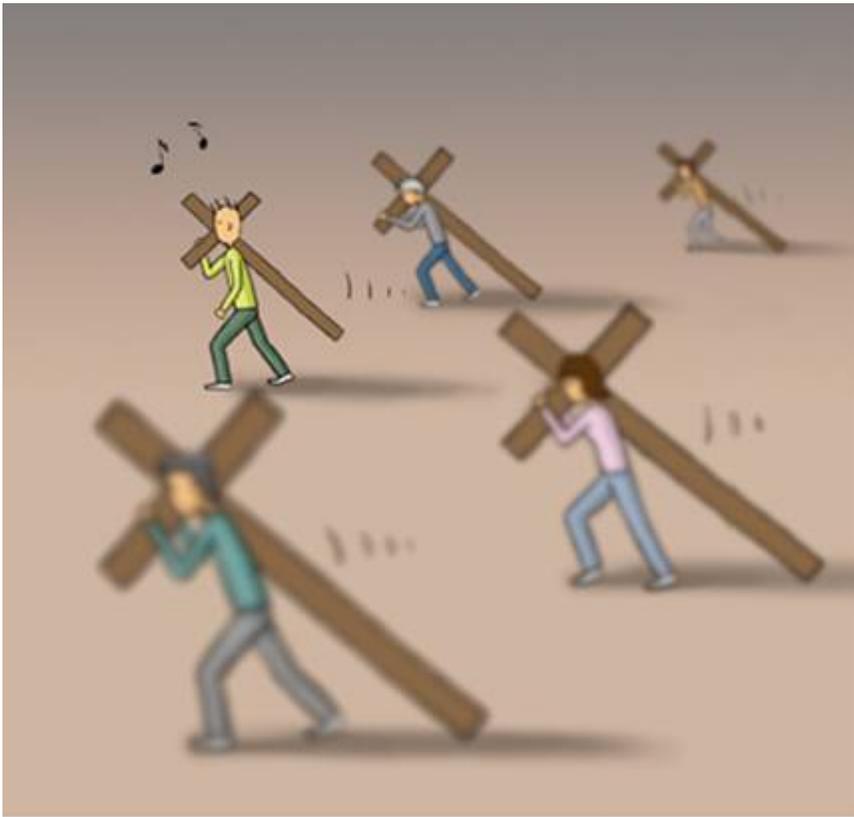


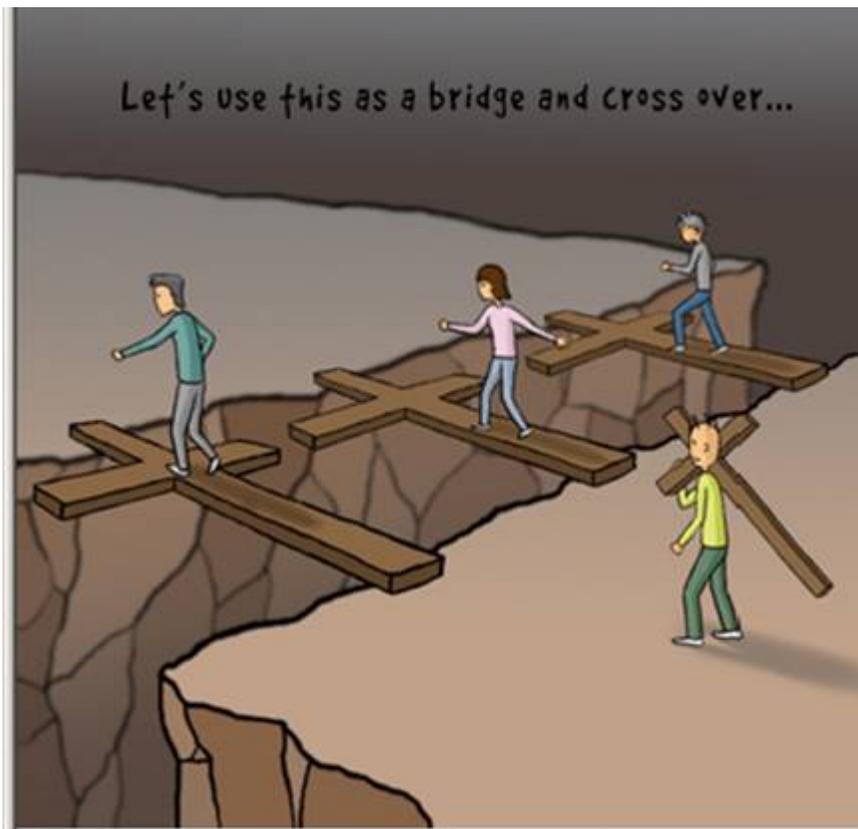
Lord, it's too heavy...
Please cut it down a little...



Lord, please cut it down a little more...
I'll be able to carry it better...









[The email continued] “Awesome!! We complain about the cross we bear but don't realize it is preparing us for the dip in the road that God can see and we cannot. Whatever your cross, whatever your pain, there will always be sunshine, after the rain... Perhaps you may stumble, perhaps even fall; But God's always ready, to answer your call. He knows every heartache. He sees every tear, a word from His lips, can calm every fear... Your sorrows may linger, throughout the night, But suddenly vanish, by dawn's early light... The Savior is waiting somewhere above to give you His grace and send you His love.”

RESPONSE and Scriptures on the Above:

1. Many will like the drawings, because they leave the MEANING or the MESSAGE wide open to personal interpretation. **There is no "Thus saith the LORD!"** One can look at the drawings and have it 'say' whatever it means to you. Genuine Christianity requires

and DESIRES, “Thus, saith the LORD!”... Requires and desires the Holy Spirit breathed out WORD OF GOD!

2. I do not know if the brief commentary below the drawings is that of the artist or not. **Assuming that it is not**, then we really have no idea what the Artist wanted to say. **On the other hand**, whoever penned the words which follow the drawings—their words reveal clearly his or her understanding of the message of the drawings, as well as his or her understanding of the Christian's Cross. The author's words may be 'warm and fuzzy' but what is presented is **a woefully false understanding of the Christian's Cross**. (I am calling it the 'Christian's Cross because the drawings picture folks **who have already 'taken up their cross'** and are going forward in daily life).

True, in presenting the 'claims of Christ' in a gospel message to the unsaved, one may say or preach as did Jesus: *"If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me."* The evangelistic invitation to the sinner is one of 'Coming to the Cross'... or Coming to Christ! In other words, the gospel call is a call to repentance and faith. **But what is the deep reality of the call of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to the unsaved? It is a call to DEATH to slavery to sin, self, society, and satan. It is 'good bye world!'** It is a call to and a call that results in personal crucifixion! (Romans 6:1-6)

This is why Paul's testimony was, **'I am crucified** with Christ, nevertheless I live....' (Galatians 2:20) 'And they that are Christ's **have crucified** the flesh...' (Galatians 5:24) **Moreover, the way of the cross is ongoing** in the life of the Christian— So much so, that we cry out with Paul: *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, **by which I am crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me!**"*(Galatians 6:14)

THUS: All true Christianity involves TRIPLE CRUCIFIXION!

1. Christ, once and for all, was crucified in the place of sinners! Thus, we preach, 'Christ crucified! (Gal. 6:14a; 1 Cor.

1:17, 23) We have peace with God and peace in our souls by the blood of the Cross! (Col. 1:20) **Therefore, God forbid that I should boast about anything or anybody, EXCEPT the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

2. The world is crucified unto me! (Gal. 6:14b) Now that I am in Christ, I have a NEW HEART with new desires. The world system of greed, get, and lusts is now decaying/rotten filth and unfit for a Child of the King. As a genuine Christian it is **in the WAR AGAINST** THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL **that I take up my cross! I IDENTIFY with Christ.**

THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN is unique to the Christian. To take up our cross is to take up our DYING to sin, self, society, and satan!

A sign at an ole time Shoe shop: "I live to dye and dye to live and the more I dye the more I live!" Christian, our testimony is to be: "I live to die and die to live and the more I die the more I live!"

Romans 6:6-16 (KJV) "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom

ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

3. The third aspect of Crucifixion in Galatians 6:14: I AM A 'DEAD MAN' UNTO THE WORLD! They don't like the Christian so much, because the real Christian does not 'run with' the world anymore. In fact, his/her life CONVICTS the world! **SO, what does "take up our cross" mean? The *Amplified Bible* renders Matthew 16:24-25 as follows:**

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests] and take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and if need be, in dying, also]. "For whoever is bent on saving his [temporal] life [his comfort and security here] shall lose it [eternal life]; and whoever loses his life [his comfort and security here] for MY sake shall find it [life everlasting]."

BOTTOM LINES: WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT has breathed forth in the Holy Word of God IS ALL VERY DIFFERENT from what the email sets forth!

1. The email sets forth BEARING OUR CROSS as the stuff that, in reality, happens to any human being in the world... saved or unsaved. Every human has troubles and trials and heartaches and pain, etc.

2. None of these things/situations— NOR your spouses, nor the 'jerk' you have to put up with at work, nor the disease that may strike you, nor the storm that destroys all you own— NONE of these are your crosses.

3. Now, it is true that these situations and/or people give us opportunities to take up our cross! In other words, life tumbles in and we must make a choice to DENY OURSELVES, TAKE UP OUR CROSS, and FOLLOW JESUS! We

say, must say, "NO!" to our screaming, protesting carnal nature that wants to respond with resentment, anger, bitterness, or retaliation; **and instead, we WALK IN THE STEPS OF JESUS,** loving, blessing, doing good, praying, and PRAISING JESUS!

4. Also: To deny myself, take up my cross and follow Jesus will most assuredly mean, as we saw in Galatians 6:14, that (1) my love of the world is crucified and/or being crucified; and (2) those addicted to the world of lust and greed will no longer care for me!

5. The email was correct in stating that God sees what we do not and cannot see. However, as for '**there always being sunshine after the rain**'— THAT DEPENDS ON what you mean by that phrase! **For many of God's saints, the glorious 'sunshine after the rain' is immediately being in the presence of Jesus after being martyred for Christ's sake!**

6. As for the 'sweet sounding'- "**Your sorrows may linger, throughout the night, But suddenly vanish, by dawn's early light...**"

(1) **Tell that to Joni Eareckson Tada**, a quadriplegic in a wheelchair since 1967.... **and to millions more suffering folk** who have prayed and who believe and who genuinely know and love the LORD JESUS CHRIST— but who are still not healed!

(2) **AND YET, through the real truth of the way of the Cross, multitudes... and Joni have come to experience a life of 'supernatural' 'sunshine!'** (Go to the website for her Christ-honoring **testimony:**
<http://www.joniearecksonstadastory.com/>

7. And what about this statement from the email? - "**The Savior is waiting, somewhere above to give you His grace and send you His love.**" **RESPONSE: When life tumbles in, we need something more than mere words of human opinion.** Example: In the first century, the Church of our LORD JESUS CHRIST was in severe persecution. Christians were being killed or exiled to hard labor on an island by the thousands because they WOULD NOT submit to

confessing, 'CAESAR IS LORD!' The Apostle John was one of the exiled ones.

In the midst of such horror it would have been natural for these Christians to have been wondering— DOES GOD LOVE US? We KNOW they were wondering just that! God does not say things just to fill space in the Bible. He gave to the church, THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST, the last book of the Bible. And right up front, the Holy Spirit breathes out this glorious reality:

Revelation 1:4-6 (KJV) “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

GOD HAS ALREADY SENT US HIS LOVE! HE PROVED HIS LOVE AT CALVARY! His love is not lacking nor are you waiting for His love based on your life circumstances!

Romans 5:8-10 (drawn from Amplified Bible) DEAR CHRISTIAN: “But God shows and clearly proves His [own] love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for us. Therefore, since we are now justified (made righteous, and brought into right relationship with God) by Christ's blood, how much more [certain is it that] we shall be saved by Him from the indignation and wrath of God.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more [certain], now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily

delivered from sin's dominion) through His [resurrection] life

THE TRUE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS— HOW GLORIOUS!

Grace to all in Christ!

James Bell

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? Call the church office at 615-452-5951

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at **5:15PM**.

WEDNESDAYS: → 6:30pm— Children Ministry/activities; → 6:30pm— **Youth** Activities and Bible Study— → **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** (Enter via IRON STEPS; or double doors by gym)

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 28 @ 11:00am; Continuing in LUKE.** ENTER at the back of the church building, [*Doors open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am*]

***** MEN: EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am:** Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! (**STUDY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN!**) ENTER AT THE back of Church building... under the drive-thru awning. **FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits, & Donuts WAITING, starting at 7:30am!**

WATCH and SHARE the Preaching of the Word of God!

http://www.southsidegallatin.org/Listen_to_other_sermons_on_sermonaudio/

SUNDAY SERVICES: August 2018— 26

Sunday School at 9:30am & Worship at 10:45am

SPECIAL NOTE:

***August 26, 6:00PM... Monthly Evening Service,
(Present focus: Shepherding the Heart of a Child!)***