

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 38, September 18, 2018 / South side 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."***

WINNING OVER THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL!

C. H. Spurgeon: "I am the subject of depression so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to. But I always get back again by this— I know that I trust Christ. I have no reliance but in Him, and if He falls, I shall fall with Him. But if He does not, I shall not. Because He lives, I shall live also, and I spring to my legs again and fight with my depressions of spirit and get the victory through it. And so may you do, and so you must, for there is no other way of escaping from it."

BUT WHAT ABOUT A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE? What is Psychology? The word psychology comes from the ancient Greek ψυχή **psyche** ("soul," "mind") and -λογία, **-ology**, "study"). Properly speaking, **Psychology is the study of the soul.** (Some view man as Body, Soul, and Spirit... others say, Body and Soul, with the latter including the Spirit.)

Before Wilhelm Wundt opened the first experimental psychology laboratory in 1879 there was no academic discipline of psychology separate from philosophy and biology."

However, Wundt declared anything other than the body as being 'unscientific'... and thus, he dismissed it saying, "The soul can no longer exist in the face of our present-day physiological knowledge."

Wundt boasted that they had developed a 'science without a soul.' MOREOVER, men like Ivan Pavlov and his 'salivating dogs' relegated man to the level of a mere beast.

There is no conscience, there is no higher law, no God, no law in the heart from God, no morality— none of these govern the way we act... we act the way we do merely because of physical brain impulse. Again, man is merely a biological animal! [O by the way: SUCH BELIEFS ARE CLEAR DENIAL OF ROMANS 1-3... and all of the Word of God!]

In 2011, I attended lectures by Paul Ragan, M.D. and Carrie Jones, PhD. At that time Dr. Ragan, a professor of Psychiatry, and Dr. Jones, a brain Scientist and professor of Pharmacology, were connected with the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. In listening to Dr. Jones and viewing all of her charts, etc... I could not but be in awe of the human brain! HOWEVER, even though physiological wonders of the human brain were set before us— **neither speaker hinted or wondered— ‘Could there be a MASTER DESIGNER?’** The evening was a perfect example of SURPRESSING the truth! (Romans 1:18-22)

I was not surprised but yet I was amazed that these two highly intelligent humans lectured for 2 hours on subjects dealing with the BRAIN, the center of our MIND, which also includes our emotions and will. **BUT NEVER ONCE did they utter any of the following words:** hope, forgiveness, love, peace, joy, 3 faith, or conscience, or the SOUL, and/or SPIRIT of man, or GOD... or even Higher Power.

It was clear that their philosophy of life, their world view as to mankind, is that ***there is no higher law, no God, no law in the heart from God, no morality— none of these govern the way we act... We act the way we do merely because of physical brain impulse.*** Man is merely a biological animal!

BE ALL OF THAT AS IT MAY, NEVERTHELESS, LONG BEFORE THE PSYCHOLOGIZERS CAME ALONG — THE GOSPEL WAS AND IS POWERFUL AND TRANSFORMING!

Christians have long faced the difficult issues of life by responding to them with a Biblical perspective; and by responding to them with faith in Christ and with faith is the SUFFICIENCY of Christ and His Word.

Charles H. Spurgeon told his students, "Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy." Yes, he rightly understood that depression is not necessarily traceable to personal sin. He wrote, "Spiritual darkness of any sort is to be avoided, and not desired."

He also wrote, "I note that some whom I greatly love and esteem, who are, in my judgment, among the very choicest of God's people, nevertheless, travel most of the way to heaven by night."

COMMENT: INDEED, in a fallen world, there are many 'SPIRITUAL NIGHTS!' **Job had a few!!** And we know that they were not rooted in any sin in his life. However, to win those battles he needed communion with God and to be teachable in the presence of God. He did not need humanistic Christian or secular counseling and/or drugs.

Be it Job, or Elijah, or Jonah, or Joseph, or Daniel, or Jeremiah, or Paul— the solution to depression was found in FELLOWSHIP with and in humility before God. On the other hand, Cain, who was angry and depressed— his problem WAS A SIN problem. He rejected repentance and things got worse! (Gen. 4:5-7)

The Prodigal son had a sin problem. He repented, and things got exceedingly better, to put it mildly, Luke 15:11-24.]

Being well taught in the Word and ways of God, Spurgeon was clear that SUFFERING is a normal part of life in a fallen world:

"Even under the economy of redemption it is most clear that we are to endure infirmities, otherwise there were no need of the promised Spirit to help us in them. It is of need be that we are sometimes in heaviness. Good men are promised tribulation in this world."

Moreover, Spurgeon knew that one of the benefits of our various sufferings is that we "may learn sympathy with the Lord's suffering people." **As we know, God moved the Apostle Paul's pen to tell us that God "comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."** (2 Corinthians 1:4)

THUS, LET US ONE AND ALL: 1. Go to God. 2. Receive comfort. 3. Become a comforter!

Spurgeon had to deal with very severe physical pain from gout. It is known that he might be WEEKS AT A TIME in bed agonizing with excruciating pain. On one such occasion he wrote the church family he served,

"I have been brought very low... My flesh has been tortured with pain and my spirit has been prostrate with depression. With some

difficulty I write these lines in my bed, mingling them with the groans of pain and the songs of hope."

NOTICE: His testimony is encouraging and faith building!

He had severe physical sufferings and he had 'dark nights of the soul' or depression/burnout. IN THE MIDST of the darkness and groaning he looked to the LORD and PRAISED HIM, regardless. Thus, he was NEVER CONSUMED or destroyed by the pain, the depression, or the trials.

Moreover, he did not allow these 'circumstances and situations' to become EXCUSES— not for himself nor for his students.

To the students he said, "These infirmities may be no detriment to a man's career of special usefulness," "They may even have been imposed upon him by divine wisdom as necessary qualifications for his peculiar course of service. Some plants owe their medicinal qualities to the marsh in which they grow; others to the shades in which alone they flourish."

COMMENT: In recent times as I looked back upon the difficult, painful circumstances of my youth — to which my responses in those days flung me into deep dungeons of depression, rage, and more — those times ultimately proved to be the best training for God's calling upon my life. This reality astounds me.

LET US NOT UNDER ESTIMATE PRACTICAL HELPS!

IN SPURGEON'S CASE, he needed to learn to give his physical body rest. WEEKLY: He often preached ten times a week, answered a multitude of letters, taught in the pastor training school, administered an orphanage, did personal counseling, wrote for publications, entertained guests at his home, shepherded a church plus his own family; and ministered to his bedridden wife!! **Thankfully, the church finally insisted on him taking vacations. Thus, Spurgeon wisely taught his students,**

"The bow cannot be always bent without fear of breaking. Repose is as needful to the mind as sleep to the body. . . **Rest time is not waste time.** It is economy to gather fresh strength."

On October 19, 1856, when Spurgeon was only 22 years old, he was preaching for the first time in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall in London. Literally thousands had gathered. Suddenly FIRE broke out. Seven people were killed and many injured. Spurgeon wrote,

"I was pressed beyond measure and out of bounds with an enormous weight of misery. The tumult, the panic, the deaths were day and night before me, and made life a burden."

AGAIN, BAD THINGS happen in a fallen world. The crushing blows can be beyond words. As to Spurgeon, because he was a man in Christ who would always turn to Christ for refuge, **he was able to give testimony of HOPE:**

"The fact that Jesus is still great, let his servants suffer as they may, piloted me back to calm reason and peace. Should so terrible a calamity overtake any of my brethren, let them both patiently hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God."

"The lesson from wisdom is, be not dismayed by soul trouble." YES, the circumstances of life can be as varied as the seasons of a year. Over them or other people we generally have no control. We have various temperaments/personalities, as well as various physical ailments and/or limitations; along with emotional scars.

We have consequences from our own failings. And sometimes, along come 'mysteries'... situations and stuff which we do not understand. Then there is the significant issue of the maturity of our faith. And what of the 'trying of our faith' which is much more precious than the 'trying' of gold!!?

Spurgeon said, “Any simpleton can follow the narrow path in the light: faith’s rare wisdom enables us to march on in the dark with 8 infallible accuracy, since she places her hand in that of her Great Guide.”

BEWARE: In responding to mysteries, failures, trials, troubles, tribulations, and dark nights of the soul— many are ready to excuse all manner of behaviors and point us to drugs. I am thankful for C. H. Spurgeon modeling the freeing power of the GOSPEL. Let us follow, as he followed the LORD

WINNING OVER THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL— THE PLACE AND POWER OF PRAISE TO GOD!

Praise to God empowers mental, emotional, spiritual STABILITY and EFFECTIVENESS!

1. Stephen, unashamedly preached the gospel, giving PRAISE TO GOD AS HE RECOUNTED GOD’S FAITHFUL DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL... (ACTS 7:1-50).

As a result the crowd greatly loved him! NO! They were angry and they began to rail on him with their angry words... and GOD SHOWED UP!

He’s always present; but He manifests Himself when Christians praise Him in the hour of trial... ACTS 7:55-56!

NOW THE CROWD REALLY LOVES HIM! NO! Acts 7:57-58a...59a
And STEPHEN: ACTS 7: 59-60.

O... IT’S AMAZING WHAT PRAISING CAN DO!

STEPHEN’S PRAISE DID NOT CHANGE THE CROWD THAT DAY.

BUT IT SURE DID EMPOWER STEPHEN.....SUPERNATURALLY!

2. Paul and Silas lay beaten, bleeding, and bound in a dark prison— SO MUCH FOR THE VISION OF TAKING THE GOSPEL TO

MACEDONIA! But at midnight they sang and MIRACLES UNFOLDED!

“O, IT’S AMAZING WHAT PRAISING CAN DO!”

3. AND WHAT ABOUT FAMILY LIFE? In families bad or difficult situations become destructive and even deadly— SO LONG AS WE FOCUS ON SELF!

WHY?

BECAUSE, WHEN SELF IS CENTRAL... ONLY THE WORKS OF THE FLESH WILL FOLLOW: Gal. 6:19-21

HOWEVER, WHEN GOD IS CENTRAL AND PRAISE TO GOD IS THE NON-NEGOTIABLE... YES, there may be suffering for Christ’s sake...

BUT MIRACLES HAPPEN!

PRAISE TO GOD is absolutely vital to winning over the dark night of the soul!

The option is SELF FOCUS....AND TO BE SELF-CENTERED is to be self-destructive and destructive of others. Again, WHEN SELF IS CENTRAL....ONLY THE WORKS OF THE FLESH WILL FOLLOW!

Again, in glorious reality:

1. AN UNMOVING FOCUS AND PASSION ON GIVING PRAISE

AND HONOR TO GOD IS ABSOLUTLY VITAL TO MIRACLES OF LOVE, FORGIVENESS, and SANITY IN THE HOME and in the CHURCH!

2. AND IS A MOST NECESSARY AND POWERFUL WITNESSING TOOL TO A LOST WORLD!

Grace to all in Christ! James 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, September, 25 @ 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!**

SHARE the Preaching of the Word of God!

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

SUNDAY SERVICES: September 2018— 23, 30

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

SPECIAL NOTES:

1. September 23— 6:00pm, monthly, church-wide equipping hour... presently SHEPHERDING A CHILD'S HEART

2. September 30— 6:00pm, an Evening of Praise and Scriptures

A landscape photograph of a canyon with a blue sky and a quote by Charles Spurgeon. The sky is a deep, vibrant blue with wispy white clouds. The canyon walls are reddish-brown and layered, with a wide, flat valley floor in the distance. The foreground shows rocky, reddish-brown terrain.

The most important daily
habit we can process is to
remind ourselves of the
Gospel.

CHARLES SPURGEON DAILY/FACEBOOK