

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 42, October 16, 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.”***

TWO GIFTS FROM GOD to Christians— 1. “BELIEVING on JESUS! 2. SUFFERING for His Name’s sake!”

Jesus calls out to His church and says, (Revelation 2:10), ***“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life!”*** And the Holy Spirit moves the Apostle Paul to write, ***“UNTO YOU IT IS GIVEN, [You have had the privilege granted unto you on behalf of Christ!], NOT ONLY to believe on Him; BUT ALSO to suffer for HIS SAKE!”*** (Phil. 1:29)

THEREFORE, IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT **throughout history, Christians have been persecuted—** they have had trials of cruel mocking, scourging, and imprisonment. They have been stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth.

From God’s view these were and are among those **of whom the world was not worthy.** They have even died, (and still do!), at

the hands of Christ-haters for whose salvation they prayed. (Heb. 12:32-40)

LET'S TRACE NEW TESTAMENT REVELATION as to persecution:

I. * The Gospels Anticipate Persecution:** Time and again Jesus disclosed that both He and His Disciples would suffer persecution. At first Peter could not comprehend that suffering and death for Jesus was a part of the divine plan (Matthew 16:16-22). But as we know, Jesus cruelly suffered, bled, and died. Jesus often spoke to His disciples of both the blessedness of persecution and of the absolute certainty of it: Please open your Bibles and look up these: **Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; 16:1-4; 16:33**. The passages from John's Gospel reveal **at least three reasons why true Disciples of Jesus are persecuted:**

1. We do not belong to the present world-system.
2. We have been chosen out of this world-system by Christ.
3. The world's hatred of believers is really an expression of their hatred of Jesus Christ.

II. * The Book of Acts Gives Historical Accounts of Persecution and reveals various forms of persecution:**

Please read Acts, marking all references to persecution. Take special note of the fact that persecution **was received with "rejoicing that** they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' name!" (Acts 5:41).

Look for the following four forms of persecution:

1. Intense Verbal Abuse:

In Acts 4:3-30, Christians were interrogated, commanded to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, and threatened. Stephen was maligned and misrepresented by false witnesses, (Acts 6:9-14).

2. Physical Violence:

Acts 5:40; 7:54-60; 8:3; 9:1; 26:10-11, these and other verses record that beatings, stonings, and prisons were the lot of early Christians.

3. Political Power was used against Christians:

Acts 13:50; 16:19-20, and Acts 18 show God's saints being accused by political powers... as the enemies of Christ sought to silence the saints.

4. Loss of Civil Rights:

Acts 16— after a mock trial, Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned.

Throughout the centuries, many of God's Saints have faced (and now face) scorn, violent verbal abuse, inquisitions, fines, prisons, church buildings locked up, freedoms restricted, physical and psychological tortures, ridicule, rejection, etc.

Not every country has the same types of persecution. But even in America a saint cannot live a godly Christian life without facing ridicule, scorn, slander, rejection, etc.

III. * The Epistles Give Us an Analysis of Persecution:** It is amazing to see how much space is given in the Epistles to fortify the faith of suffering Saints.

ANALYSIS: What persecution cannot accomplish:

1. Persecution **cannot** destroy the spirit of a Saint (2 Timothy 4:16-18).

2. Persecution **cannot** stop the progress of the Gospel (Philippians 1:12-18; Ephesians 6:20; Acts 16:19-34).

3. Persecution **cannot** separate us from the precious love of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:35-37).

ANALYSIS: What persecution can accomplish:

1. Persecution provides assurance that we are saved, (Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12; John 15:19-20).

2. Persecution announces God's judgment that will come on those who oppose the Gospel, (2 Thessalonians 1:4-6).

3. Persecution sharpens our vision of heavenly realities, (Heb 10:32-34).

4. Persecution purifies our faith, (1 Peter 1:7).

5. Persecution brings a sense of blessedness, (1 Peter 3:14; 4:13-14).

6. Persecution builds up a deepening spirit of love and remembrance of Saints in other places, (Hebrews 13:3).

7. Persecution separates the pretenders out of the flock of God's true sheep, (Matt. 13:20-21).

IV. * The Book of Revelation and the Age of Persecution:**

The books of Thessalonians, Peter, and the Revelation ESPECIALLY encourage and direct persecuted Christians. **REALITY:** Be they those who lived during the last 2000 years of Church History, or in Islamic countries today, or in America tomorrow, or in the climatic last years before the return of Jesus Christ— **any who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb are subject to persecution and tribulation.**

1. The REDEEMED in the past, now or in the future — (including during what is called the Great Tribulation) — WILL NOT suffer God's wrath.

2. However, the redeemed have been, are, and will suffer satan's and man's wrath.

3. **There is zero Biblical revelation that** men, satan and/or demons will be able to do **anything any more destructive** to 'great tribulation saints' than they have always done and/or that they presently do in some countries to Christians.

REALITY: Every disciple of Jesus is always a candidate for suffering, persecution, and even martyrdom!

Let us be prepared to courageously stand for the faith; and if called upon to be gracious in the hour of any Christian's highest privilege—

JESUS SAYS: "Be thou faithful unto death...!" (Revelation 2:10).

V. * When Facing Suffering for the Gospel's Sake:**

1. **Stephen, the first New Testament Christian martyr, while dying offered two prayers. One was** for himself: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." **The other** was for his foes: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

2. **The Apostle Paul said:** "The Holy Ghost witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and imprisonments await me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, **so that I might finish my course with joy!**"

3. **A Persecuted one said:**

"Do they cast us out of the city? They cannot cast us out of that which is in the heavens. If they who hate us could do this, they would do something real against us.

The only thing we have really to be afraid of is fearing anything more than God.”

4. A Persecuted one to an earthly king said:

“Sire, it belongs truly to God’s church rather to suffer blows than to strike them; but let it be your pleasure to remember that the church is an anvil which hath worn out many a hammer.”

5. Another persecuted one said: “The church has sometimes been brought so low and obscure a point that if you can follow her in history it is by the track of her blood, and if you would see her, it is by the light of those fires in which her martyrs have been burnt.”

6. Another one remarked: “To banish, imprison, plunder, starve, hang, and burn men for religion is not the Gospel of Christ, but the gospel of the devil. Where persecution begins, Christianity ends.

Christ never used anything like force or violence, except once; and that was to drive bad men out of the temple, and not to drive them in.”

7. Still another persecuted one said: “Persecution often does in this life what the last day will do completely— **separate the wheat from the tares.**”

JESUS TELLS US: “You shall have tribulation: but be loyally faithful unto death. For though you may be killed, I will give you the crown of life! Be not afraid says our Lord, my help is nigh! Indeed! Rejoice!” (Revelation 2:2:10-11).

Praise God for the ultimate witness and most effective soul-winning strategy: namely, that when we who are alive in Christ are delivered unto death for Jesus sake, the

resurrection life of Christ is mightily manifest! (2 Corinthians 4:7-12).

VI. * Preparation Starts Today— Watchwords to confess... NOW!**

1. NOW... Every time difficulties and impossible situations arise, I will believe in the omnipotence of God. I will not give place to worry, but completely trust in the Father's tender, loving care and means to help. **THEN... if or when...** persecution breaks out, I shall be 'practiced in faith'.

2. NOW... I will bear my small bodily ailments — pain, weakness; and renew my strength. THEN I shall have practice for the future when the physical suffering may be far greater.

3. NOW... Every time I am faced with hardship and meaninglessness, I will surrender my will, and when I am chastened, I will humble myself even more beneath the mighty hand of God. **I will look to Jesus ever anew, turning to Him with all my heart.** THEN as I behold the Man of Sorrows, who was full of grief and affliction, a willingness to suffer for His sake is implanted in my soul. I will look to Him, the mighty Victor, who has vanquished Satan and sin.

4. NOW... In faith I will surrender to JESUS in my daily battle against my spirit of criticism, pride, stinginess, envy, self-will, egoism, anger, the desires of the flesh, and bondage to people and things. THEN such sin will be less able to weaken me in the future; and EVEN if I should be taken to a concentration camp, I can be a witness for Jesus when living together with others, by radiating His love and peace.

5. NOW... I will bear every hardship, great or small, out of love for Jesus, so that THEN, when I have to undergo pain and

torment in persecution, by grace, my reaction will be, **“I will bear it for YOUR sake, JESUS!”**

6. NOW... LORD JESUS, by your grace I will live in close fellowship with YOU and fellow saints of a local Bible-believing church, conversing with YOU at all times and SEEKING to DAILY CULTIVATE LOVE FOR YOU, LORD JESUS..., so that THEN love, which is the strongest power of all, will give me the strength to bear the suffering in the time of persecution.

[URGENT... ALL OF THIS IS Not just preparation for the persecution of the future which might or might not come to me— but the persecution that comes today to all who live Godly in Christ Jesus!!!]

7. NOW... I will lead a life of prayer now, so that THEN I shall be able to pray. Prayer will be my deliverance in times of loneliness, temptation, suffering, torment, and/or when I am forsaken.

8. NOW... I will fight resolutely against my fear of others and my desire to win their favor, love, respect, and approval ABOVE or INSTEAD OF GOD’S! ... **SO THAT THEN** I can overcome cowardice. I commit myself to making an uncompromising stand for the LORD! I want to seek only God’s approval in all matters. NOW— SO THAT LATER during persecution, I shall be willing to pay the price.

9. NOW... I will do good now to those who hurt me and treat me unjustly by blessing them and showing them love in thought, word, and deed; SO THAT THEN I shall be able to meet my persecutors the right way, not judging them, but humbled because of my own sin and meek like a lamb, full of mercy towards them.

10. NOW... Every time I am at a loss as to what to say in some situation or conversation, I will trust the Holy Spirit implicitly to guide me and give me His words; SO THAT THEN... at the future trials and cross-examinations, I WILL BE WELL EXPERIENCED in trusting my SAVIOR!

11. NOW, TODAY... I will count on the reality of heaven, which Jesus brings into our lives, and abide in this hope, SO THAT THEN during persecution I can rejoice, saying,

**“Suffering will come to an end,
and everlasting glory will follow!”**

LORD JESUS, TODAY, WITH MUCH TREMBLING...

AND NO CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF... I EMBRACE YOUR GIFT:

“Unto you it is given (as a free gift) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake!”
(Philippians 1:29)

Abundant Grace to 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, October 23 @ 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: October 21, 28

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

SPECIAL NOTES:

1. October 21— LORD'S SUPPER at conclusion of the Morning Worship Service

HOME GROUPS MEET at 5:00pm

2. October 28 — 6:00pm... Church-wide EQUIPPING HOUR, presently: SHEPHERDING A CHILD'S HEA'T!

***3. NOVEMBER 4 — 6:00PM... John MacKay,
the 'Creation Guy' from DownUnder!***

THEME: 'How marvelous are Thy works O LORD!'

***(A look at how powerful and clever the Lord Jesus
is...***

in Creation, Flood, and Salvation!)

***— 6-7pm and Great Q & A till 7:30pm — Suits all
ages!***