

# GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 44b, No. 16, April 23, 2019 / 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.”***

## **PREPARATION FOR PERSECUTION!**

FROM HIS JAIL CELL, the Holy Spirit had the Apostle Paul to write to the LORD’S church: ***“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) 2 Timothy 3:12 reminds us — ***“... all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*** Church history reveals that **from Cain’s slaughter of Abel until the second coming of Jesus Christ—** God’s redeemed people have been, are, and will be subject to all manner of persecution. [This is true, REGARDLESS of the timing of the rapture!]

**Hebrews 12:32-40, unveils that throughout history, the righteous have been persecuted—** they have had trial of cruel mocking, scourging, and imprisonment. They have been stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, and 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. **This is the true history of many of the people of whom the world was not worthy.** They have died,

(and still do!), at the hands of those for whose salvation they labored and prayed!

**MOREOVER, our Lord Jesus PLAINLY told His disciples** that they would be hated of all men for His name's sake; and that the time would come when those who kill them would be so filled with rage and blindness that they would believe they were doing God service. (Matthew 10:21-39; John 16:1-3) **Let none therefore be offended because** of malice, slander, and persecution for Christ's sake— for those who hate Christ Jesus will not love those who would lay down their lives for the Son of God!

**Christian Martyrs— who are they?** The Greek word from which we get our word *martyr* occurs more than thirty times in the New Testament, and is commonly rendered *witness*, in the plural witnesses— ... and thrice *martyr* or *martyrs*. It is applied (1) to judicial witnesses in Matthew 18:16; (2) to one who testifies to the truth of what he sees, hears, or knows, Luke 24:48; Acts 1:88,22; (3) **and to one who not only testifies to the truth, but lays down his life for the truth, Acts 22:20; Revelation 2:13; 17:6.**

All Christian witnesses are not martyrs for Christ— in the New Testament Church there were those who “had hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:26)... but they were not called upon to become martyrs. ALL Christian martyrs are Christian witnesses who LIVE and GIVE the gospel of Christ and for such testimony they are killed. **Thus, a Christian martyr is one who by his/her death bears witness to the truth of Christ and His gospel of grace.**

**THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US HAVE LONG TESTIFIED THAT,**

***“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church!”***

The faith and constancy of even one sufferer for the truth has been used to win many to faith in Christ.

**Every True Christian should live with the ‘Heart a Martyr!’— That is,** a real child of God is called to yield his/her life to follow Christ, rather than be false to his/her profession and treasonable to Christ! (Luke 14:26-27, 33). WE MUST stand firm and not be governed by popular opinion, but by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. The apostles said, ***“We ought to obey God rather than man.”***

### **\*\*\* The Gospels help us to 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: 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.

### **\*\*\* The Book of Acts Gives Historical Accounts 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). **Also, 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:** Acts 13:50; 16:19-20, and Acts 18 show God's saints facing political power 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. (SADLY, being masters at compromise we often avoid suffering for Jesus' sake!)

### **\*\*\* The Epistles Give a True Analysis of Persecution**

It is amazing to see how much space is given in the Epistles to fortify the faith of suffering Saints. **In this context we learn just 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).

**In the Epistles we also learn what persecution can accomplish:** (1) **Persecution provides** assurance that we are saved (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 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).

### **\*\*\* The Book of Revelation Reveals the Age of Persecution**

The books of Thessalonians, Peter, and the Revelation were written to encourage and give direction to persecuted Christians. Sadly, however, many comfort-loving Americans turn to these same books to find and focus on a supposed promise of no tribulation or persecution. **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.**

The **REDEEMED** in the past, now, or in the future — including during what is called the Great Tribulation — **WILL NOT** suffer God's wrath. However, the redeemed have been, are and will suffer satan's and man's wrath.

**PLEASE UNDERSTAND:** 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— **“Be thou faithful unto death...!”** (Revelation 2:10).

### **\*\*\* GODLY EXAMPLES for us when facing Suffering for the Gospel’s Sake**

**1. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, 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. One unknown to us 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. Another 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 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. Still another 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. Yet another said:** “Persecution often does in this life what the last day will do completely— separate the wheat from the tares.”

**8. JESUS SAYS:** “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 this 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).

**\*\*\* Preparation Starts Today— Watchwords to confess... now:**

**1. Every time difficulties and impossible situations arise now,** 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 fatigue — in faith in the power of Jesus’ blood that sustains me and renews my strength. Then I shall have practice for the future when the physical suffering may be far greater. **3. 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. **4. I will look to Jesus ever anew, turning to Him with all my heart.** And 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. **5. 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. **6. I will bear every hardship, great or small,** out of love for Jesus, so that when I have to undergo pain and torment in persecution, my natural reaction will be, **“I will bear it for Your sake, Jesus.”**

**7. LORD JESUS, by your grace I will live in close fellowship with YOU and fellow saints of a local Bible-believing church now,** conversing with YOU at all times and SEEKING to DAILY CULTIVATE LOVE FOR YOU, LORD JESUS..., so that love, which is the strongest power of all, will give me the strength to bear the suffering in the time of persecution. [Not just 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!]

**8. I will lead a life of prayer now,** so that I shall be able to pray later. Prayer will be my deliverance in times of loneliness, temptation, suffering, torment, and when I am forsaken. **Now I will fight resolutely against my fear of others** and my desire to win their favor, love, respect, and approval, so that 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. 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. Then later 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. 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, now and also at the future trials and cross-examinations. **11. Today I will count on the reality of heaven,** which Jesus brings into our lives, and abide in this hope, so that during persecution I can rejoice, saying, **“Suffering will come to an end, and everlasting glory will follow!”** **12. TODAY, WITH MUCH TREMBLING... AND NO CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF... I EMBRACE THE 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!”** (Phil 1:29)

Great Grace to All! / James Bell / [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)

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## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:**

**MONDAYS:** Jail Ministry— (This ministry is ON HOLD... PRAY FOR opening of doors!)

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

**WEDNESDAYS:**

**➔ 6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE ➔ Enter via IRON STEPS, side door.**

→ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— enter, side double doors.

→ **6:30pm— Young Family Prayer Time!** THIS IS a time of Bible study and prayer geared toward **families with children in the nursery and pre-K class.**

**\*\*\* LADIES BIBLE STUDY—** Next meeting scheduled for **Tuesday, April 30, 2019 @ 11:00am; Continuing in LUKE.** ENTER at the back of the church building, [*Doors open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am*]

**\*\*\* MEN's Fellowship/Bible Study:** EVERY SATURDAY @ **8:00am: (STUDY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN!)** ENTER AT THE back of Church building... under the drive-thru awning. [**DOORS OPEN FOR FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits, & Donuts at 7:30am!**]

## **SUNDAY SERVICES, APRIL 28**

**9:30am— Sunday School Classes for All Ages**

**10:45am— Sunday Morning Worship Service**

**\*\*\*\* — 6:00pm - 7:00pm, Church-wide EQUIPPING DISCIPLES by developing Christ-honoring Marriages: Paul David Tripp's 'WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? (Redeeming the Realities of Marriage)**



**WORK DAY**  
**NEW DATE**  
**APRIL 27**  
**9:30am**



**W O R K D A Y A T T H E  
C H U R C H**

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**HEAT/AIR UNIT:** We made the purchase on a 90 days same as cash basis. During those 90 days we received over \$15,000. We withdrew \$5, 000 from the Raymond James Account and completely PAID OFF the unit this week. As we are able, we plan to 'refund' the Raymond James Account. It is an account we use for emergencies or unexpected large expenditures, such as the Heat/Air unit.