

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 49, December 8, 2020 / 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 JESUS CHRIST!"***

JESUS— “NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS!” (Matt. 6:24)

In the 1950s and early 1960s... every December preparations began in earnest for the annual Christmas pageant/drama... to be held at the Jewell Baptist church, with the next door Methodist joining in with us. **In the front of the auditorium there was always a tall, beautifully decorated Christmas tree.** The entire church "*exchanged names*" and on the night of the pageant everyone brought gifts and placed them under the tree.

As the grand night approached, the reality was that every child was filled with hope and excitement about what might be under the tree with their name on it!

The annual Christmas Pageant always followed the same order: After carols were sung by the congregation, the drama presentation would begin. Parents beamed with pride as their children acted out what was called "the Christmas Story." AFTER the drama, before any presents could be moved from under the Christmas tree, **one of the church deacons would give the annual "the real reason for the season" speech!** He would stress, "Why the tree and the mountain of presents were not the main event!" (**Frankly,** his words, sincere as they were, could never overpower the screaming reality of **the giant tree and the**

mountain of glistening presents— all begging to be opened!)

With duty done, the deacon would look out over the auditorium and choose several of the youth for the much treasured assignment of delivering the gifts! One or more of the deacons would pick up gifts, loudly call out the name on each present, and the youth would **speedy deliver** the gifts to the proper folks in the auditorium. ***Within moments, the sound of packages being opened filled the air, even as more names were called out and more presents were delivered.***

YES, in the hearts of us children— it was the most wonderful night of the year! The pinnacle of the evening was **FINALLY** taking place and would continue until every present had been distributed and opened. (Frankly, the adults loved it too!) Then, we all quieted down for the closing words and prayer, which dutifully reminded us yet again of "*the real reason why we celebrate Christmas.*"

BUT I MUST CONFESS: AFTER THE CLOSING PRAYER, all of us kids quickly got together for *SHOW AND TELL* — none of us **had** any **THOUGHT** or conversation about a **SAVIOUR FROM SIN!**

YES, our pastors preached sermons, the congregation sang Carols, the deacons exhorted, and everyone was sincere! **HOWEVER, the intended impact was lost or never heard because** the eyes and hearts of all children, teens, and adults were on a beautiful Christmas tree and a mountain of presents!

We should not be surprised... for JESUS has told us plainly: “NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS!” Likewise, in many a **Christian home**, right in front of a beautiful tree surrounded with **MORE** presents begging to be opened— a sincere parent or

grandparent will gather their family and say, ***“Children, before we open the presents, I want you to give full attention as I read ‘the Christmas Story’, Luke 2, which is all about the birth of Jesus and is the real reason for Christmas!”*** This, of course, is followed by— ‘the main event’ taking place... the opening of presents from under the tree!

As for the folks at Jewell Baptist, none of us could ever bring ourselves **to confess the truth that on the nights of the annual Christmas Pageant and gift exchange, the tree and the presents were center stage— NOT JESUS THE SAVIOUR FROM SIN!**

***** The sad reality is that year after year** we left ignorant of and unmoved as to the MANY REASONS why Jesus came! **[Again, we should not be surprised, for— “NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS!”]**

This tragedy plagues the church masses— regardless of the size of the congregation. For example: Leadership in big churches understand that people love drama, fantastic productions, and entertainment. Indeed, such productions are a proven key and necessity to modern church growth.

IN THE LAST TWENTY OR SO years, ‘SINGING CHRISTMAS TREES’ have been very effective. Here is a report from one large Baptist church of their ‘Singing’ Christmas tree: “...This year was especially momentous because of some special guests from the world of theatrical productions. Some cast and crew members from the touring company of the Broadway production *The Lion King* watched the Monday evening performance of the *Singing Christmas Tree*. **Many repeat guests declared the performance “the best ever!” and first-time guests** gave glowing praises, but some of the most meaningful comments came from the Broadway professionals themselves.

COMPARED TO ONLY 53 involved in *The Lion King*, the cast [*The Lion King* cast] was amazed to learn that more than 1,200 volunteers participated on stage or behind the scenes in the... production of the *Singing Christmas Tree*, with as many as 350 performers on stage in some of the major scenes. Impressed with the quality and professionalism of every part of the production, they said, **“We’ve been in theatres all across the country and we’ve never seen anything like this!”** ...**And their glowing testimony was what the leadership of the church GLORIED IN and promoted!**

SADLY, THE GRAND PRODUCTION WAS center stage— NOT rejoicing about a **Saviour WHO saves from sin!**

[“NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS!”]

HONESTY REQUIRES THIS: 1) Traditional Christmas is very different from the Birth of Christ. 2) Many years of trying to MIX THE TWO have only proved the words of Jesus, again and again: **“NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS!”** (Matt. 6:24)

MULTITUDES of genuine Christians have yielded to the CULTURE. Thus, for them— CHRISTMAS is BIG... and the Birth of Christ is small! AGAIN: NO SURPRISE, FOR— “NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS!”

LET US ONE AND ALL, HEAR and RECEIVE God’s Word WHICH is full of wonder and celebration when the topic is the birth of Christ. The first Christians could not stop rejoicing!

LET US JOIN IN WITH THEM!

And if we dare to lock ourselves to the wonderful Word of God, the Holy Spirit will also lead us into great joy, wonder, and holy

celebration of the Advent of CHRIST, as well as great and HOLY EXPECTATION of HIS SECOND COMING!

THUS, we come to the most important part of this article— FOR **A search in the Holy Word of God reveals at least 24 reasons why Jesus came!** *May we all, meditate upon, rejoice in, and act upon them so that JESUS HIMSELF is Center Stage in our worship AND in our daily lives!*

JESUS CAME,

1. To reveal God the Father to man: No man hath seen God at any time; **the only begotten Son**, which is in the bosom of the Father, **He hath declared Him**, (John 1:18) Jesus said unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet you have not known me, Philip? **He that has seen Me has seen the Father**; and how do you say then, Show us the Father? (John 14:9)

2. Because God the Father sent him: Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: **as my Father has sent Me**, even so send I you, (John 20:21, John 3:16-17; 6:38).

3. To be the Saviour of the world: And we have seen and do testify that **the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world**, (1 John 4:14).

4. To preach the kingdom of God: And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, **that I may preach** there also: for therefore came I forth, (Mark 1:38; Luke 4:43).

5. To bear witness to the truth: Pilate therefore said unto Him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, you say that I am a king. To this end was I born, **and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.** Every one that is of the truth hears my voice, (John 18:37).

6. To be a light in the world: I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on Me should not abide in darkness, (John 12:46).

7. To fulfill the law: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill, (Matthew 5:17).

8. To do the will of His Father: For I came down from heaven, **not to do My own will, but the will of Him** that sent Me, (John 6:38).

9. To be a divider of men: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: **I came not to send peace, but a sword.** For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law, (Matt 10:34, 35)

10. To seek and save those who are lost: For the Son of man is come to **seek and to save that which was lost**, (Luke 19:10).

11. To call sinners to repentance: When Jesus heard it, He said unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance**, (Mark 2:17).

12. To save sinners... really bad ones: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, **that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief, (1 Timothy 1:15).**

13. To minister and to give His life a ransom for many: Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many, (Matthew 20:28).

14. To finish the work of the Father: Jesus said unto them, **My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work**, (John 4:34; John 17:4).

15. To be the propitiation for our sins: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, **and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**, (1 John 4:10).

16. To put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared **to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**, (Hebrews. 9:26).

17. To take away our sins: And you know that **He was manifested to take away our sins**: and in Him is no sin, (1 John 3:5).

18. To die upon the Cross: Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: **but for this cause came I** unto this hour, (John 12:27).

19. To redeem those under the law, that they might receive adoption of sons: But when the fullness of the time was come, **God sent** forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, **To redeem them** that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, (Galatians 4:4, 5).

20. That we might live through Him: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that **God sent** His only begotten Son into the world, **that we might live** through Him, (1 John 4:9).

21. That we might have life and have it more abundantly: The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: **I**

AM come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, (John 10:10).

22. To bless us by turning us away from sin: Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, **sent Him to bless you**, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities, (Acts 3:26).

23. To destroy the works of the devil: He that commits sin (as a continuing pattern of life), is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. **For this purpose the Son of God was manifested**, (revealed), that He might destroy the works of the devil, (1 John 3:8).

24. To make it possible for the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled in us through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit: God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, (Romans 8:3, 4). [A variety of sources used in preparing this article, including material from John Piper]

HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOUR!

Great Grace to you all! James

www.southsidegallatin.org

NEWS NOTES:

EVERY Saturday, * 8:00am — Men's Bible Study: — THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS! (Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!)**

***** NEXT Ladies Bible Study— Tuesday, JANUARY 12, 2021, 11:00am: Women of the Bible!**

SUNDAY'S SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 13, 2020

***** Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes.

***** WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

Additional Sunday Events:

1. DECEMBER 13, 5:00pm - 6:30 pm- Training Faithful Men, 1689 Confession of faith.

2. DECEMBER 20, LORD'S SUPPER, at end of Morning Worship; and HOME GROUPS, in the evening.

3. DECEMBER 27, 5:00pm - 6:00pm- Church Wide DISCIPLESHIP... presently an important STUDY on PRAYER, using R.C. Sproul videos...

TUESDAYS: WEEKLY Youth Group Meeting, ages 12 and up ... NOW, Tuesdays a 7:15pm... at Jaden and Rhi's home...

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ SOUTHSIDE: 6:30pm— Come in by the back 'double doors' under the Drive Thru awning

**** Adult Prayer Service Service**

**** Young FAMILIES Prayer Service**

HEALTH REMINDERS as to CHURCH SERVICES

1. IF YOU ARE SICK... [OR if you are presently in a state of high immune deficiency or if (at home or work) you are caring for one who is sick; or if you have • Fever; • Coughing; • Chills; • Headache; • Sore throat; etc.], please stay home!]

2. IF YOU ARE HEALTHY and well... you may or may not choose to wear a mask... or gloves... WE do not require; we WILL NOT provide

such. WE CONTINUE to encourage FREEDOM... as to ‘social distancing’— 6ft apart... give sensitivity and respect one to another.

ADDED NOTE: *In addition to carefulness, and good hydration, good nutrition, and sleep— ALSO: so as to SEEK TO HAVE A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM... I PERSONALLY TAKE ELDERBERRY, VITAMIN C, ZINC, GINGER, VITIMIN D, Quercetin, and a good multi-vitamin that includes fiber.*

3. LET each of us DO OUR PART IN personal hygiene. ***IF you use the restrooms— please wash your hands with SOAP; and use nearby SANITIZER.***

IT IS A MATTER OF SAFETY for all, (ESPECIALLY for SENIOR ADULTS), CHILDREN ANY WHERE IN THE CHURCH BUILDING— No unsupervised Children!

FOR THOSE AT HOME: TO RECEIVE THE 10:45am LIVE STREAMING of the worship service of December 13... GO TO: www.southsidegallatin.org [You can also connect to our YouTube page for past messages & Bible Studies!]

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD BY MAIL or ONLINE GIVING:

SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066

OR, you may choose to GIVE, via ONLINE GIVING <https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>