

Next EMAIL version of Grow in Grace we plan to send on **5/28/21**



NOTE: A version of this Newsletter article has been printed SEVERAL times before over the years. WHY? BECAUSE IT IS VITAL and we are FORGETFUL! I updated THIS ARTICLE two weeks ago for this week. We MUST yield to the Holy Spirit's work of EMPOWERING US TO live out these IMPORTANT, Biblical revelations!

Volume 46, No. 20, May 18, 2021 / 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!"***

HARMONIZE TOGETHER! MAKE A SYMPHONY TOGETHER!

It seems that I often hear one of our brothers at Southside pray something like this: *"LORD, I am so thankful for the spirit of unity we have here... so far as I know we are all in harmony. Help us to guard and maintain our fellowship in Christ!"* **AMEN! THANK YOU JESUS!** **INDEED, let us all STRIVE TO MAINTAIN the unity of the Holy Spirit... IN OUR HOMES and in the Church family— SUCH IS A GREAT WITNESS FOR THE GOSPEL!! Therefore, let us take heed to the following!!**

"Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree ***(harmonize together, make a symphony together)*** about whatever [anything and everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven." (Matthew 18:19, Amplified)

I. CHRIST'S Church began as a 'Symphony!' In each of the FOLLOWING **five 'sets' of Scriptures**, there are EXAMPLES of the

early Church **gathered in unity**, followed by **powerful results**. When God's people dwell together in spiritual UNITY around JESUS CHRIST— GOD COMMANDS BLESSINGS! (Psalm 133)

1. Acts 1:13-15 / Acts 2:1-4. // 2. Acts 2:41-47a / Acts 2:47b.
3. Acts 4:19-24 / Acts 4:31. // 4. Acts 4:31 / Acts 4:33-37.
5. Acts 5:12 // Acts 5:14-16.

WHEN we are walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24) and not in the flesh (Gal. 5:19-22); and when we are walking in the love of God (1 Cor. 13) — **The Holy Spirit is UNGRIEVED, UNQUENCHED, and UNLEASHED in Christian homes and churches as we dwell together in UNITY around Jesus Christ!**

II. TO BURST FORTH WITH and MAINTAIN GLORIOUS MANIFESTATIONS of GOD empowered UNITY— we must RECEIVE / act upon these truths:

1. Genesis 3 reveals that with sin comes shame, selfishness, self-centeredness, and separateness— all of these tendencies corrupt unity in marriages, families, and churches. Because of sin we all have a tendency to withdraw from others, to be separate, to concentrate on our own needs, to live for ourselves, and when there are problems— blame others! [Paragraph edited from Dr. Ed Wheat, Love Life]

2. IN CONTRAST, the Early Church believers were bound together because they were truly 'born again'! Their sins were forgiven. They loved Jesus. Jesus was not a mere historical figure. Jesus was their LORD! They had been INVADDED by the God of the universe, by His Holy Spirit; THEREFORE, they 'Symphonized' around the person, the reality of Jesus. **The New Testament model is that of believers being (1) BOUND TOGETHER around WORSHIPING Jesus, (2) caring for 'one another'**

[The Epistles exhort churches to ‘one another’ ministries over 40 times!], **and (3) ON MISSION with Jesus** for a lost world! (Acts 4:23-31)

3. JESUS HIMSELF WAS and STILL IS THE GREAT ATTRACTION, DRAWING CARD, and BONDING FACTOR OF GENUINE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY! **When a sinner is saved**, the Holy Spirit baptizes that one INTO the Body of a local assembly of believers to live in unity with the members of that body. **(1 Cor. 12:1-31)** Moreover, that UNITY is revealed as we unite in FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL, and in the advance of the gospel! (Acts 4:23-31; Phil. 1:4-5; 1:27)

4. The Early Church was REJECTED and HATED by society. HOWEVER, by the Holy Spirit they were immersed/baptized into local congregations of fellow believers— and they gathered for Bible Study, Prayer, Worship, Coming to the LORD’S TABLE, Ministry one to another, and witnessing to the lost! **THESE ACTIVITIES WERE and ARE** the results of being made alive in Christ and baptized by the Holy Spirit into local congregations. (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12-13) No one had to beg or bribe them!

5. The Early Christians literally EMBRACED the teachings of Jesus! They were also looking for Second Coming of Jesus! They were united in a passion to tell others about JESUS! AND the Early Christians were conscious of having been saved from ULTIMATE DISASTER— the eternal wrath of Holy God! **Moreover**, the Holy Spirit rather quickly got LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES— to give specific instructions for them and for us as CONGREGATIONS!

QUESTION: When was the last time we have read one or more of the Epistles and asked: ***“O Holy Spirit, what are the applications to ME and to US as a congregation?”***

QUESTION: When was the last time any of us were in a SMALL GROUP Bible Study and our passion was, ***“O Holy Spirit, what are the applications to me and to US as a congregation?”***

6. BOTTOM LINE REALITY: In New Testament Christianity being rightly related to Jesus overflows into right relationships one with another! **And Jesus says that it is by this method,** (by this reality of LOVING ONE ANOTHER because of being loved by Jesus), **that all men shall know that we are truly His disciples!** (John 13:34-35)

7. FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: If we are POORLY related to one another in our families and with saints in the local assembly to which God has joined us— it is because we are poorly related to Jesus!

8. ENCOURAGING Note: Just ONE person in a home or in a church can be POWERFULLY EFFECTIVE as an unquenched, ungrieved source for the BLESSED SYMPHONY OF HOLY SPIRIT FRUIT as they, as you and I model walking in the steps of Jesus!

III. The Creator of the Church as a Symphony was/is the Holy Spirit!

“Be eager and strive earnestly to GUARD and KEEP the harmony and oneness of **[and produced by] the Spirit** in the binding power of peace.” (Eph. 4:3) **CHRISTIAN:** When GOD by His GRACE saved you— **YOU became** a dwelling place/the home of the Holy Spirit! Indeed, **YOU are** FLOODED with the love of God, by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5) **YOU are** forgiven of all sin. Sin’s dominating power is broken. **YOU are** supernaturally empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. **YOU are** supernaturally joined into Christ; **and YOU are or will be** joined into a local assembly of saints. (1 Cor. 12)

FORGIVEN, we become forgivers. **Loved**, we become those who love. **Baptized** by the Holy Spirit INTO the body of Christ and placed by the Holy Spirit into a specific, local expression of the Body of Christ— WE

ARE VISIBLE expressions of the Body of Christ who are all zealous that the body have NO SCHISM! (1 Corinthians 12:18-27) **ALARM: IF I AM NOT FORGIVEN, I WILL NOT FORGIVE, I WILL NOT LOVE, AND I WILL BRING SCHISM... into the family, into the local assembly.**

There is an AUTOMATIC, fundamental and foundational UNITY among all who are truly saved by grace alone through faith in Christ alone— BECAUSE THAT IS HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES!!

IV. What is the Christian's Responsibility in the Matter of Unity, Harmony, or Spiritual Symphony?

“Be eager and strive earnestly to GUARD and KEEP the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)

(1) Holy Spirit produced HARMONY/SYMPHONY can be seriously CRUSHED— or else we would not be exhorted to guard it! Holy Spirit HARMONY/SYMPHONY can only be kept by EFFORT— thus, we must be eager and earnestly guarding/keeping the harmony produced by the Holy Spirit.

(2) THE SYMPHONY of the Christian Church and Christian home has ENEMIES!

V. ENEMIES DESIGNED TO DISRUPT THE SYMPHONY

1. BACKBITING— (Prov. 25:23; Rom. 1:30; Psalm 15:1-3) Speaking negatively against another when they are not present.

2. SLANDER— (Prov. 10:18; Numbers 14:34-37) “The slanderer as “one who is **given to fault-finding** with the demeanor and conduct of others, sending their innuendo and criticism throughout the church.” **It is the same word that is often used of satan in his role as the accuser of the brethren.** In Numbers 14, spies were sent to check out the promise land. TEN of them came back with a slanderous report and infected the whole nation of Israel. ***** Countless homes, churches, mission organizations, and Christian ministries are paralyzed by slanderous, murmuring, DEMONIC spirits of discontent!**

3. WHISPERING— (Psalm 64:1-4; Prov. 16:28) O the power of the whisperer to separate even the closest of friends, by evil reports whispered **behind another’s back!**

4. GOSSIP— (Psalm 41:5-9) “I am more deadly than the screaming shell from a cannon. I tear down homes, break hearts and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me. No purity is pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice and no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea. I never forget. I don’t forgive. **My name is GOSSIP!**” (Author unknown)

5. DISCORD— (Prov. 6:16-19) Those who ‘sow discord’— go around ‘secretly’ dropping words and attitudes of unbelief, gossip, slander, faults, and failings. Words have a way of germinating in folks minds. **A harvest develops, all in accordance with what has been sown!** Had words of hope, love, forgiveness, faith,

earnest prayer and generous blessings been sown— A GRAND SYMPHONY of love and Christ-likeness would be the result!

6. TALEBEARERS— (Prov. 20:19; Lev. 19:16; Prov. 26:17-22) Many churches, ministries, work places, and homes are destroyed by Talebearers. **The talebearer is very vital and useful to the Backbiter, the Gossip and the Discord Sower. HOW SO?**

Talebearers get their kicks from being ‘runners’ for the backbiter, the gossip, and/or the discord sower. Talebearers never reveal their evil sources. They spill their evil reports and then self-righteously declare, “I cannot tell you who told me... I would not want to break confidentially!” NOTE: Talebearers tell the WRONG people! **SYMPHONY LOVERS tell the RIGHT people!**

EXAMPLE: Destructive actions and destructive tongues were destroying the church at Corinth. **However, those of the house of Chloe informed the person with God-given responsibility to shepherd that flock, the Apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 1:11) Has someone with a satan-guided tongue dumped on you about someone absent? First, exhort them! (Gal. 6:1) If need be, do as the house of Chloe: 1 Cor. 1:11)**

VI. GODLY WEAPONS to GUARD the SYMPHONY!

1. Keep a very still tongue! (James 1:26; 4:11; Titus 3:2) Heed the Word of God: **SPEAK EVIL OF NO ONE!**

2. OBEY God’s method of Direct Communication: Matt. 18:15 / Gal. 6:1

3. A POWERFUL TOOL: The early Methodist Revival last a long time. Doubtless, because the GUARDED THE SYMPHONY! **Here is an edited version of the Methodist's points:**

(1) I will not listen to tale bearing/whispering/discord sowing/slander or willingly inquire after any ill concerning others.

(2) If I do hear any such ill of other in the assembly, I will not be so forward to believe it.

(3) Moreover, if I hear of such ill, I will as soon as possible communicate this matter directly to the person about whom the ill was spoken.

(4) AND, until I have done this, I will not speak a syllable of it to any other person.

(5) After going directly to those concerned and/or to those who need to know because they are responsible before God to work for Godly solutions (1 Cor. 1:11)— neither will I mention this/these matters to any other person whatsoever. **These are not** matters to put on a prayer list, which all too often is but a way to try to gossip with God's approval!

(6) I will make no exception to these guidelines unless I am absolutely obliged by God's Word and God's Spirit to do so.

VII. Peace, Harmony, and SYMPHONY BEGINS for LOST, sinful souls at the FOOT OF THE CROSS! COME TO JESUS NOW!

Peace, Harmony, SYMPHONY CONTINUES for the redeemed as we heed the Word of God in ways as are set forth in this article!

Great Grace to All! / James Bell / 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!*)

***** Ladies Bible Study— Taking a SUMMER BREAK... will announce the date of the next one, later... IN THE MEANTIME, take advantage of the recorded ones on our YOUTUBE page!**

SUNDAY SERVICES: May 23, 30

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

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

Additional Sunday Events for May 2021:

1. May 23, 5:00pm-6:00pm- Church Wide DISCIPLESHIP!

2. May 30, 5:00pm- FIFTH SUNDAY Church-wide ** SINGING/PRAISE to the LORD; ** SCRIPTURE; and ** a message from the Word, Luke Haskins!

TUESDAYS: WEEKLY Youth Group Meeting, ages 12 and up ... 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 ** Young FAMILIES Prayer Service

IT IS A MATTER OF SAFETY for all: NO UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN ANY WHERE IN THE CHURCH BUILDING!

***** 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... WE do not require; we WILL NOT provide such. WE CONTINUE to encourage FREEDOM... as to 'social distancing'— give sensitivity and respect one to another.

NOTICE: THE 'STRINGS' BLOCKING OFF EVERY OTHER PEW... ARE TAKEN DOWN! YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO 'SELF SPACE' THROUGH OUT THE AUDITORIUM!

NOTE: In addition to carefulness, 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, VITAMIN D, Quercetin, and a good multi-vitamin that includes fiber.

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

TO RECEIVE LIVE STREAMING FOR MAY 23;

OR simply to connect with our YouTube page, for a variety of messages— GO TO: www.southsidegallatin.org

***** LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD BY MAIL or by 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>