



MGrace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL 35758
256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGE

<http://www.gracemadison-al.com>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters, and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— August 2007 Issue —

"We should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

AUGUST

- 05 – Bob & Faye Williams
- 12 – Vicki Johson & Sharon Bagley
- 19 – Linda Olive & Sonja Williams
- 26 – Kristy Hines & Jenny Lovassy

SEPTEMBER

- 02 – David & Mary Alice Olive
- 09 – Jon & Tanya Amis
- 16 – Nellie & Hannah McFadden
- 23 – Troy & Jessica Moseley
- 30 – Kristy Hines & Jenny Lovassy

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF AUGUST 1, 2007

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 59,399.66
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 61,467.72
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 37,727.47
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 85,580.79
Building Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 0.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 4,111.95
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 90,073.78
July General Fund offerings	\$ 17,421.75
July Building Fund offerings	\$ 0.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 19,313.21
Missions Fund balance	\$ 9,626.44
General Fund balance	\$ 15,445.75

GRACE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

A BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

August 20 – December 10



Taught by Dr. Samuel E. Waldron of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies, Owensboro, Kentucky, and Pastor Jeff Smith of the Reformed Baptist Seminary, Easley, South Carolina (lectures on DVD).

Classes meet on Mondays at 7 p.m. The cost for auditing the class is \$50.00 (there will also be text books to purchase). Enroll now and study theology in the context of the local church.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

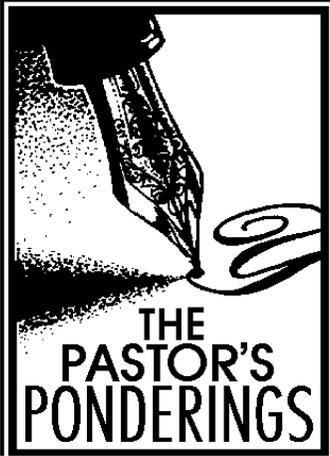
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church	12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service	1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)	



SALVATION AND SUFFERING

Steven Lawson says, “Salvation and suffering are a package deal.” In other words, when you get the one you get the other. “The one who has been granted faith by God to believe has also been granted the privilege of suffering.”

This of course, is an idea that comes from the Scriptures, in particular a text like Philippians 1:29: “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake.” To believe is only possible through grace; it is the gift of God. But alongside this, God has also given us grace to suffer for His sake. Salvation comes first, but where the Lord Jesus Christ lives in His saving power, suffering for His sake, to some degree, will be certain to follow. Both have been granted to us.

Salvation is by faith in Christ alone, but no one believes apart from faith being given to him. Paul also underscored this doctrine in Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” No one comes to believe in Christ on their own accord. No one personally trusts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord by their own initiative. This teaching runs contrary to popular opinion today, but it is true. Faith is the gift of God. Though we are responsible to believe, we would never believe apart from the enabling grace of God which grants faith to us.

If we understand what the Scriptures teach about the depravity of man, it should be of no surprise that salvation from top to bottom is God’s free and sovereign gift. A depraved sinner is utterly helpless; because he is dead, he has no capacity to exercise faith apart from the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit. We are entirely dependent on the grace of God, even for the faith that is required to be saved!

Paul also tells us that suffering is the gift of God. Suffering is a grace gift. Yet how many of us think of suffering in such terms? Instead of viewing suffering as divine favor we think of it more as an unfortunate discomfort.

We should not be surprised that God calls us to suffer for Christ’s sake. Simon Peter said, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps” (1 Peter 2:20-21). We should think it strange to live apart from suffering. According to Jesus, the heart of discipleship is taking up our cross and following Him, “If anyone would

come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me” (Mark 8:34).

The kind of suffering Paul is talking about in Philippians is a particular kind of suffering. He qualifies it as suffering that comes from living for Christ in a world that is openly hostile to God (Fee). This doesn’t mean that suffering is good. It doesn’t mean that Christians ought to court suffering. All it means is that suffering is freely bestowed upon us as a gracious gift.

Suffering for Christ’s sake, i.e. out of devotion for Him, is a gift of God. Remember Paul’s word to Timothy: “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Whoever follows Christ is on a collision course with the hostile forces in the world that are opposed to Christ. If you are on Christ’s side, then as He suffered, so will you (John 15:19-20).

Standing in the intersection of St. Giles and Broad Street in Oxford, England, is a martyr’s memorial. It was erected in memory of three great servants of the Lord who were burned at the stake by Queen Mary for their love of Christ and the gospel. Philippians 1:29 is cited in the inscription, which reads:

“To the Glory of God, and in grateful commemoration of His servants, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Prelates of the Church of England, who near this spot yielded their bodies to be burned, bearing witness to the sacred truths which they had affirmed and maintained against the errors of the Church of Rome, and rejoicing that to them it was given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake...”

Suffering for the cause of Christ, as unpleasant as it may be, ought to be looked on as a blessing, for it is a gracious gift from God. Thank God for the gift of suffering.

Both ideas of faith and suffering being God’s gift are not believed by the majority of those who regard themselves as Christians today. Ask the typical Christian in this day-and-age where his faith came from to believe in Christ and he will answer, “It came out of my own volition and will.” Ask him where suffering comes from and he will answer, “It comes from the devil for God would never bring trouble into our lives.”

That is not the answer Scripture gives. According to God’s word, both saving faith and suffering are gifts of God. Salvation and suffering do not come by chance but from the hand of a sovereign God. Let us rejoice in this twin truth. God is working out his purpose in our lives through salvation and suffering.

WEB SITES

The Strict Baptist Historical Society –
www.strictbaptisthistory.org.uk/

Walking Together Ministries –
www.walkingtogetherministries.org/

Granted Ministries –
www.grantedministries.org/index.html

National Association of Nouthetic Counselors –
www.nanc.org/

Frontline Ministries –
www.frontlinemin.org/

Sola Gratia Ministries –
www.solagratia.org/



Conference on Revival

September 14-16
Preacher – Don Currin

Don Currin is an itinerate preacher that is committed to assisting local churches in their ministry of edifying and equipping the Body of Christ for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Pray that God will use him to stir and strengthen our hearts as we seek God's face for a spiritual awakening.



Puritan Gems

GREAT SINS AS PREPARATIONS FOR CONVERSION

STEPHEN CHARNOCK

“Great sins are made preparations by God to some men's conversion, not in their own nature, that is impossible: but by the wise disposal of God... As a child whose coat is but a little dirty, has it not presently washed, but when he comes to fall over head and ears in the mire, it is taken off, and washed immediately; the child might have gone many a day with a little dirt, had not such an accident happened... So when a wicked man falls into some grievous sin, which his conscience frowns upon him and lashes him for, he looks out for a shelter, which in all his peaceable wickedness he never did” (The Chief of Sinners Saved).

QUESTION #91 – “How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful?”

ANSWER – “Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful, not from any virtue in them, or in him who does administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of the Spirit in those who by faith receive them.”

SCRIPTURE – 1 Corinthians 3:6-7;
1 Peter 3:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

COMMENT – A “reason why baptism is not necessary for salvation is that our justification from sins takes place at the point of saving faith, not at the point of water baptism... Baptism, then, is not necessary for salvation. But it is necessary if we are to be obedient to Christ, for he commanded baptism for all who believe in him” (Wayne Grudem).

ILLUSTRATION – A minister was seeking to explain the significance of baptism to a new convert. He was gesturing as he talked and noticed that as he was using his hand its shadow fell on the ground. So he said to the convert, “Do you see the shadow of my hand on the sand? Now this is just a shadow. The hand is the real thing. And when you came to Jesus, when you believed in Jesus, that was the real baptism. You were joined to him, and what happened to him also happened to you. Jesus was alive, then he died and was buried, and then he rose from the dead. That is what happened to you when you believed in him.” He pointed to the shadow on the sand and said, “When you go down in the water and are raised up again, that is a picture of what has already happened.” Water baptism is a picture, a symbol to teach us what happened to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus.

THEOLOGY



CORNER

A REFORMED AND
BAPTIST CATECHISM



AUGUST 11 – Wedding of Kevin Smith and Sara Bagley at First Baptist Church, Madison, 1:30 p.m. Reception to follow.

AUGUST 20 – The Fall semester of the Bible Institute begins.

SEPTEMBER 2 – Observance of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the afternoon service.

SEPTEMBER 14-16 – A week-end conference on Revival and the Local Church led by Don Currin. Services will be Friday evening, Saturday morning (a lecture on revival), Saturday evening, and all services Sunday.

OCTOBER 6 – GBC will have a booth at the Madison Street Festival again this year. This is an excellent opportunity to meet people and distribute gospel literature. Volunteers are needed at different times during the day. See Fred Smith if you would like to help.

PUTTING MY DAUGHTER TO BED TWO HOURS AFTER THE BRIDGE COLLAPSED

August 1, 2007, by John Piper

At about 6 PM tonight the bridge of Interstate 35W over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis collapsed. I am writing this about three hours after the bridge fell. The bridge is located within sight of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Most of us who minister at the church cross this bridge several times a week...

Tonight for our family devotions our appointed reading was Luke 13:1-9. It was not my choice. This is surely no coincidence. O that all of the Twin Cities, in shock at this major calamity, would hear what Jesus has to say about it from Luke 13:1-5. People came to Jesus with heart-wrenching news about the slaughter of worshipers by Pilate. Here is what He said.

“There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them; do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.’”

Jesus implies that those who brought Him this news thought He would say that those who died, deserved to die, and that those who didn't die did not deserve to die. That is not what He said. He said, *everyone* deserves to die. And if you and I don't repent, we too will perish. This is a stunning response. It only makes sense from a view of reality that is radically oriented on God.

All of us have sinned against God, not just against man. This is an outrage ten thousand times worse than the collapse of the 35W bridge. That any human is breathing at this minute on this planet is sheer mercy from God. God makes the

sun rise and the rain fall on those who do not treasure Him above all else. He causes the heart to beat and the lungs to work for millions of people who deserve His wrath. This is a view of reality that desperately needs to be taught in our churches, so that we are prepared for the calamities of the world.

The meaning of the collapse of this bridge is that John Piper is a sinner and should repent or forfeit his life forever. That means I should turn from the silly preoccupations of my life and focus my mind's attention and my heart's affection on God and embrace Jesus Christ as my only hope for the forgiveness of my sins and for the hope of eternal life. That is God's message in the collapse of this bridge. That is his most merciful message: there is still time to turn from sin and unbelief and destruction for those of us who live. If we could see the eternal calamity from which he is offering escape we would hear this as the most precious message in the world.

“Everyone deserves to die.”

We prayed during our family devotions. Talitha (11 years old) and Noel and I prayed earnestly for the families affected by the calamity and for the others in our city. Talitha prayed, “Please don't let anyone blame God for this but give thanks that they were saved.” When I sat on her bed and tucked her in and blessed her and sang over her a few minutes ago, I said, “You know, Talitha, that was a good prayer, because when people ‘blame’ God for something, they are angry with Him, and they are saying that He has done something wrong. That's what “blame” means: accuse somebody of wrongdoing. But you and I know that God did not do anything wrong. God always does what is wise. And you and I know that God could have held up that bridge with one hand.” Talitha said, “With His pinky.” “Yes,” I said, “with His pinky. Which means that God had a purpose for not holding up that

bridge, knowing all that would happen, and He is infinitely wise in all that He wills.”

Talitha said, “Maybe He let it fall because He wanted all the people of Minneapolis to fear Him.” “Yes, Talitha,” I said, “I am sure that is one of the reasons God let the bridge fall...” I said, “You know, Talitha, that is true whether you die in a bridge collapse, or in a car accident, or from cancer, or terrorism, or old age. God always keeps you, even when you die. So you don't need to be afraid, do you?” “No,” she shook her head. I leaned down and kissed her. “Good night. I love you.”

Tonight across the Twin Cities families are wondering if they will ever kiss a loved one good night again. Some will not. I am praying that they will find Jesus Christ to be their Rock and Refuge in these agonizing hours of uncertainty and even loss.

The word “bridge” does not occur in the Bible. There may be two reasons. One is that God doesn't build bridges, He divides seas. The other is that usually His people must pass through the deadly currents of suffering and death, not simply ride over them. “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you” (Isaiah 43:2). They may drown you. But I will be with you in life and death...

We go *through* the river. Not over it. He went before us, crucified. He came out on the other side. He knows the way through. With Him we will make it. That is the message we have for the precious sinners in the Twin Cities. He died for your sins. He rose again. He saves all who trust him. We die, but because of Him, we do not die...

Weeping with those who weep, and those who should.

(edited; for the full article, see www.desiringgod.org/)