



M Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

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

GBC HOMEPAGES

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

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

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— August 2008 Issue —

"Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:24).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

AUGUST

- 03 – Linda Olive & Sonya Williams
- 10 – Vicki Johnson & Sharon Bagley
- 17 – Faye & Bob Williams
- 24 – Kristy Hines & Jenny Lovassy
- 31 – Sara & Kevin Smith

SEPTEMBER

- 07 – Lori & Joshua Hewlett
- 14 – Tanya & Jon Amis
- 21 – Mary Alice & David Olive
- 28 – Nellie & Hannah McFadden

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF AUGUST 1, 2008

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 62,808.09
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 63,972.09
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 215.95
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 91,668.71
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 3,890.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 95,889.73
July Love offerings	\$ 250.00
July General Fund offerings	\$ 16,844.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 43,336.98
Missions Fund balance	\$ 7,426.15
General Fund balance	\$ 38,257.66

GRACE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE FALL SEMESTER 2008



HERMENEUTICS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
PRINCIPLES OF
BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

SEPTEMBER 8 THROUGH
DECEMBER 15

Taught by Dr. Fred Malone, adjunct professor of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies, Owensboro, Kentucky, and pastor of the First Baptist Church, Clinton, Louisiana (lectures on DVD).

Classes meet on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The cost for the class is \$35.00 (there will also be text books to purchase). Enroll now and learn how better to interpret the Bible.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

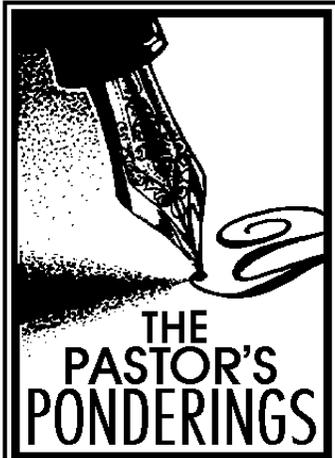
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

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)	



THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Have you seen the television commercial with the scuba diver in a cage chained to his boat with sharks circling him? He is very confident and certain; he feels secure and safe. But when the sharks bump his cage, his spear gun is fired

inadvertently and flies to the surface, hitting his boat. The last thing you see is the man in the cage being pulled down to the bottom of the ocean by his sinking boat.

Some people in the Christian community warn Christians who claim certainty about their spiritual state that the same thing could happen to them. They teach that it is impossible, this side of heaven, to know that you are a Christian. They say that assurance is presumptuous and dangerous, for it is possible, spiritually speaking, for a believer to end up like the scuba diver.

But assurance of salvation is possible. Not only is it possible, God wants his children to know they possess eternal life. God wants us to possess here and now a present certainty that we are the heirs of Christ, saved from sin, judgment and hell, now and for eternity.

No book in the Bible is any clearer on this subject than 1 John. Through the mouth of the apostle John, the Lord says to us, “*We know that we have passed from death unto life*” (3:14), and, “*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life*” (5:13). Thank God for the language of knowledge and confidence in 1 John.

It cannot be wrong to seek assurance since it is the will of God. And it is the will of God! He has revealed this to us. John didn’t use the language of wishing and guessing! He says that we can know that we have eternal life. J.C. Ryle was right when he said, “It cannot be wrong to feel confidently in a matter where God speaks unconditionally, to believe decidedly when God promises decidedly, to have a sure persuasion of pardon and peace when we rest on the word and oath of Him that never changes.”

Let us take God at his Word! It is an utter mistake not to. Lloyd-Jones said, “All Christian people are meant to have assurance of salvation. God has not only provided a way whereby we can be saved, and not only saved us, but He lets us know that He has done so. This is a glorious aspect of the Christian life. The Christian is not meant to remain in doubt and uncertainty.”

What we need to discover for ourselves is whether we are Christians or not. Are we trusting Christ? Do we understand who he is? Have we come to him in faith? Have we committed our lives to him? Are we seeking to live for him? If you can answer those questions in the affirmative, then you have every reason to have assurance. If not, then you need realize your desperate condition and turn from your sin to the Lord.

Granted, carnal presumption or counterfeit assurance is a real possibility, for not everyone who thinks he is a Christian is saved. So some people claim assurance yet do not know Christ. Those who profess faith need to examine themselves to see if they are Christians. John also has a lot to say about that in his first letter.

If we are what the Word declares a Christian to be, then we can have assurance. Are you what the Bible says a Christian is? Remember, your definition of a Christian must be based on the Bible. There are a lot of people who claim to be Christians today who are not Christians in any Biblical sense.

It is important that we give attention to the subject of assurance. You cannot have a healthy Christian life apart from assurance. If you are full of doubts, you will not know the joy of the Lord and serve in the kingdom of Christ effectively. Believers can have and ought to have assurance that they are the children of God. God doesn’t want us to doubt; he wants us to have full assurance. As the book of Hebrews says, he wants us to “*draw near [to him] with a true heart in full assurance of faith*” (10:22).

The apostle John wrote the Gospel that bears his name so that his readers might believe and have life. He said, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31).

The reason John wrote the first epistle that bears his name was in order to give those who believed in Christ assurance of salvation. “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

The things John wrote were intended to produce assurance. We should have assurance because that is what the Word of God says. So assurance rests upon the promise that God makes to a believer. God promises to save completely all who believe on his Son. Either he does or he doesn’t. Assurance isn’t presumption, the lack of assurance is!

WEB SITES

EDWARD PAYSON SERMONS ONLINE
 –www.intercom.net/~hisalone/index.htm

KNOW YOUR BIBLE RECORDINGS
 –www.knowyourbible recordings.org/index.html

LECTURES ON HERMENEUTICS (MP3's), DR. ROBERT STEIN
 – www.biblicaltraining.org/class.php?id=17

LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY
 – www.wesley.nnu.edu/John_Wesley/letters/index.htm

AGAINST HERESIES (BLOG)
 – www.against-heresies.blogspot.com/



Puritan Gems

NEGLECT NOT THE INSTRUMENT OF SALVATION

STEPHEN CHARNOCK

“We invert the order Divine wisdom hath established, when we would have God save us in our own way, not in his. It is the same thing as if we would have God nourish us without bread, and cure our disease without medicines, and increase our wealth without our industry, and cherish our souls without his word and ordinances. It is to demand of him an alteration of his methods, and a separation of that which he hath by his eternal judgment joined together. Therefore for a man to pray to God to save him when he will not use the means he hath appointed for salvation, when he slights the word, which is the instrument of salvation, is a contempt of the wisdom of Divine institutions”

QUESTION #101 – What do we pray for in the first petition (of the Lord’s Prayer)?

ANSWER – In the first petition (which is, *Hallowed be your name*) we pray, That God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he makes himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

SCRIPTURE – Psalm 67:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Psalm 145; Isaiah 64:1-2; Romans 11:36

Comment – “To pray, ‘hallowed be Thy name’ is to attribute to God the holiness that already is, and has always been, supremely and uniquely His. To hallow God’s name is to revere, honor, glorify, and obey Him as the one and only completely perfect God” (John MacArthur).

ILLUSTRATION – William Grenville (1759-1834), former Prime Minister of England, was highly offended at any careless or irreverent use of the name of the Creator. His biographer said, “I remember that, on reading a letter addressed to him, in which the words, ‘My God,’ had been made use of on a light occasion, he hastily snatched a pen, and before he could finish reading the letter, blotted out the misplaced exclamation.”

THEOLOGY



CORNER

A REFORMED AND
 BAPTIST CATECHISM

MEN’S READING GROUP

The Men’s Reading Group is scheduled to begin again on Wednesday, August 20. Meetings will be held in the Fellowship Hall from 6:00 to 7:00 AM. We will be reading a recent book by Jerry Bridges entitled, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate*. Book cost is \$13.00.

LADIES OF GRACE -- 2008-2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15	10 AM-Noon	SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE – LADIES PLANNING SESSION
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19	6:30-8:30 PM	“EVER, ONLY, ALL FOR THEE” BOOK DISCUSSION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4	MORNING	MADISON STREET FESTIVAL – LADIES WILL ASSIST WITH BOTH
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7	6:30-8:30 PM	MISSIONARY GIFT BOXES
FRIDAY, JANUARY 16	10 AM-NOON	SPECIAL SPEAKER
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20	6:30-8:30 PM	CHOOSE LIFE SERVICE PROJECT
FRIDAY, MARCH 20	10 AM-NOON	BIBLE STUDY
FRIDAY, APRIL 17	11 AM – 1 PM	PICNIC LUNCHEON IN CONJUNCTION WITH SPRING BIBLE CONFERENCE
FRIDAY, MAY 15	10 AM - ????	CHURCH SPRING CLEANING

A CERTAIN UNCERTAINTY

Phil Johnson

“One trademark of theological liberalism for the past seventy years is a reduction of faith to ‘courageous ignorance’” (Ronald Nash, *Life’s ultimate Questions*).

Something that drives me crazy about the Emerging Conversation is the way endless disclaimers and qualifications are supposed to be piled onto every profession of belief. Even the most “conservative” Emerging types do this almost pathologically:

“I know some wonderful, sensitive people probably won’t agree with me; and I certainly don’t claim to understand everything about this doctrine perfectly; and I know a lot of people have gone overboard with it; and good people who are smarter than me see things differently than I do; and I admit that my opinion may be shaped too much by Western culture and Greek philosophy; but it seems to me that the Bible really does teach that God will punish evildoers if they won’t repent.”

Any assertion not so qualified risks being labeled “*excessive confidence*,” which according to Brian McLaren, is a “cancer” responsible for practically everything that’s wrong in the world.

Except for one thing. When you start seeing what a noxious malignancy certainty is, then it’s OK to be really, really confident about uncertainty itself. In McLaren’s words, “Thinking along these lines, I became convinced that, yes, many of our world’s worst atrocities were indeed the result of overconfidence” (*Everything Must Change*, p. 39).

You won’t hear postmodernists or their Emerging-church cousins saying many things with that kind of settled conviction! But their doubts

about certainty *per se* are unwaveringly emphatic.

No one nowadays can make *biblical* or *evangelical* assertions with such confident boldness without having every truth-claim subjected to deconstruction, slow torture, or strangulation at the hands of some post-evangelical critic.

What’s worse, more and more of the loudest critics are pastors, seminary professors, Christian authors, and others who have teaching or leadership roles in the church. Most of them would never overtly “deny” biblical truth-claims, of course (such a denial would require more certainty than some of these guys are comfortable with). But they seem to have a pathological need to smother every article of faith under a million and one qualifications.



“Hey, I’m not saying I don’t believe in the virgin birth of Christ; I’m just saying if it turned out not to be true, it wouldn’t really matter. So it seems like we just shouldn’t make it an essential point of our doctrine. But who am I to say, anyway? And who are you to make such a big deal out of it? Instead of arguing about the relative importance of this or that doctrine, shouldn’t we do something more profitable—like ministry?”

Uncertainty is the sole remaining cardinal virtue of postmodernism. The right to question anything and everything is likewise the only dogma postmodern orthodoxy accepts uncritically. And (as we see all the time in the meta here) it’s one of

a small handful of ideas Emergents and their admirers can *always* be counted on to defend militantly.

In other words, Emerging religion has canonized doubt. And – let’s be candid here – many who say they prefer the label “missional” are making the very same mistake. In fact, *even in supposedly conservative and fundamentalist venues* where “Truth and Certainty” are formally affirmed, you’ll find no shortage of Christian leaders willing to palliate their supposed “convictions” almost to death in order to sound more “relevant” to postmoderns. The result has been a dearth of vigorous theological conviction which makes the whole drift instantly *irrelevant*—because it’s nothing but a thoughtless echo of what most of the world already believes (or *disbelieves*) about the knowability of objective truth anyway.

Ironically, the canonization of doubt as a virtue is also a clear echo of the very worst tendency of *modernism* (see the Ronald Nash quote above)—which means, really, that the “postmodern” skepticism of our Emerging friends isn’t technically *postmodern* at all. Their modernist ancestors were fine with so-called *scientific* certainties; but they despised *spiritual* certainties—especially certainties grounded in the conviction that the Bible is truly God’s Word. Emergent Christianity has expanded (not *rejected*) the modernist mind-set by insisting on uncertainty about *everything*—except, of course, the infallible dogma of uncertainty.

Which is why Brian McLaren – who is certain about virtually nothing else – is so cocksure in his conviction that *everything* must change.

It’s also why the convergence of postmodern, post-evangelical and Emergent trends is just a big, noisy ride to nowhere.