



# 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**

— June 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

#### JUNE

01 – Linda Olive & Sonya Williams  
08 – Vicki Johnson & Sharon Bagley  
15 – Faye & Bob Williams  
22 – Kristi Hines & Jenny Lovassy  
29 – Sara & Kevin Smith

#### JULY

06 – Joshua & Lori Hewlett  
13 – Jon & Tanya Amis  
20 – David & Mary Alice Olive  
27 – Nellie & Hannah McFadden

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JUNE 1, 2008

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 44,649.35
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 45,610.32
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 215.95
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 60,205.73
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 3,590.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 63,795.73
May Love offerings	\$ 200.00
May General Fund offerings	\$ 9,858.38
Building Fund balance	\$ 41,108.51
Missions Fund balance	\$ 6,544.35
General Fund balance	\$ 34,816.05

## GUEST PREACHER

### SUNDAY

### JUNE 15



REV. DAVID STEERE

PASTOR OF THE FRESINGFIELD BAPTIST CHAPEL  
FRESINGFIELD, ENGLAND

DAVID STEERE WILL BE PREACHING AT 9:30 AM AND  
6:00 PM SERVICES

Pastor Steere has been the pastor of Fresingfield Baptist Chapel in the county of Suffolk, England, for 32 years. The Lord has prospered and blessed the church under his direction. Pray for him as he preaches the Word of God to us.

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

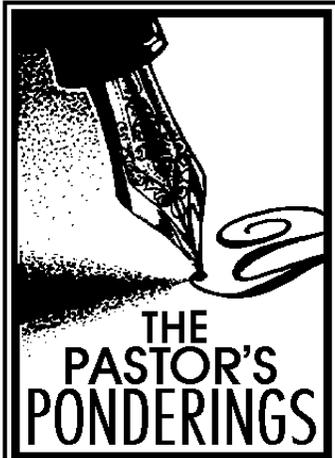
Morning Worship 9:30 AM  
Sunday School 11:00 AM  
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

#### WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting  
7:00 PM

#### 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)



## A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

**W**hen the apostle Peter wrote, “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious” (1 Peter 2:4), he painted a beautiful portrait of Christ. This verse speaks of our coming to Christ and tells us what He is like.

Coming to Jesus initially, in an act of faith, is what saves the sinner. We come to Christ because salvation is in Him. There is no other place to go! Peter once preached, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus is the way to God. No man comes to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6).

But coming to Jesus in this verse means more than just the initial coming to Him for salvation. It also speaks of coming to Him continually, throughout life, in worship and praise. Coming to Christ is not confined to the time when we first believed. Andrew Fuller said, “The Christian life consists in coming habitually to Jesus.”

What a wonderful thing it is for Christians to be able to come to Christ, to draw near to God through Jesus Christ. This was a benefit reserved only for the priests in the OT, but now all believers enjoy this tremendous privilege. We all can come “for fresh supplies of grace, for further counsel and instruction, for heart-reviving communion” (A. W. Pink).

And what is the one to whom we come like? There are four strokes of the brush in Peter’s painting of Christ.

***He is the living one.*** Peter refers to Him as “a living stone.” Christ, a person, is like a stone. That means that the Lord Jesus is the image of solidity and strength. A stone is a perfect representation of Christ who is a firm foundation and a solid rock.

Interestingly, the adjective Peter used to refer to the kind of stone Jesus is, is the word “living.” Peter wrote earlier about a living hope (1:3) and a living word (1:23), and now he speaks of “a living stone.” This, of course, refers to Christ’s resurrection. He is not dead; He is alive. He died, but He rose from the grave. Jesus is alive! He is the Living One, the Resurrected One, and the Life-Giving One.

***He is the rejected one.*** Peter says that the living stone is “rejected indeed by men.” The prophet Isaiah said of the Messiah, “He is despised and rejected by men...” (53:3).

No sadder theme is there in all the world than that of men rejecting Christ! He is worthy of reception, not rejection. Christ-rejecters, of all men, are the greatest sinners.

***He is the chosen one.*** He may be rejected of men, but He was “chosen by God.” This expression is used of the Messiah in Isaiah 42:1, “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights...” There are different kinds of election – vocational, soteriological, national, and Messianic. This is Messianic election.

Jesus was chosen as the Messiah; He was chosen to accomplish the redemption of God’s people. Since Jesus Christ is God’s choice one, He ought to be the sinner’s choice, too!

***He is the precious one.*** Peter concludes by declaring Christ to be “precious.” Used in connection with “chosen by God,” this means that He is “precious to God.” We discover later on in the chapter (2:7) that Christ is precious to those who believe, but here the reference is to the regard that the Father has of Him.

The word “precious” means highly valued or esteemed. Grudem says that it is “an apt term to describe God’s evaluation of his Son and also to suggest how believers should always esteem their Lord.” It doesn’t matter what others think of Him. What matters is how He is regarded in the Father’s eyes, and if our hearts have been renewed by grace, then Jesus Christ will be precious to us as He is to the Father.

Is the Lord Jesus precious to you? What is your estimation of Him? Do you view Jesus like men of the world do who reject Him? Or do you view Jesus like God does, who regards Him as precious?

This is Peter’s portrait of Christ. It is a portrait we would do well to retain in our minds-eye. Evil-intentioned men have tried to blot Jesus from their gaze and well-intentioned men have sometimes blocked a proper view of Him by a maze of theological speculation. But the ageless testimony and the timeless portrait given of Him in God’s Word can never be erased.

There was a day when Jesus entered a house and wanted no one to know it; He was seeking seclusion. The Gospel writer Mark records these words, “but He could not be hidden” (Mark 7:24). “He could not remain incognito. His fame preceded Him; and His bearing and behavior marked Him off as a remarkable Personage” (Morison).

Let not Christ be hidden from your view. There is no one else like Him. Look upon him with the eye of faith and then gaze upon him the rest of your days. Let us be coming continually to him, to the living stone; to the one rejected indeed by men but chosen by God and precious to God!

## WEB SITES

### GLIMPSES OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY

– <http://chi.gospelcom.net/>

### 9MARKS –

[www.9marks.org/](http://www.9marks.org/)

### LIGONIER BLOG

– [www.ligonier.org/blog/](http://www.ligonier.org/blog/)

### ASAHEL NETTLETON

– <http://members.aol.com/intoutreach/Nettleton.html>

### THE FUNDAMENTALS

– [www.xmission.com/~fidelis/](http://www.xmission.com/~fidelis/)



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## TITHING SURPRISES



The Christian who tithes will be surprised at the amount of money he has for the Lord's work, at the deepening of his spiritual life in paying the tithe, at the ease in meeting his own obligation with the nine-tenths, at the ease in going from

one-tenth to a larger percentage, at the preparation this gives to be a faithful and wise steward over the nine-tenths remaining, and at himself for not adopting the plan sooner!

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## Puritan Gems

### IN THE RIGHT ORDER

JOSEPH ALLEINE

“You begin at the wrong end if you first dispute about your election. Prove your conversation [manner of life], and then never doubt your election. If ye cannot yet prove it, set upon a present and thorough turning. Whatever God's purposes be, which are secret, I am sure his promises are plain. How desperately do rebels argue! ‘If I am elected I shall be saved, do what I will. If not, I shall be damned, do what I can.’ Perverse sinner, will you begin where you should end?”

**QUESTION #101** – What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer – The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, “Our Father which art in heaven,” teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

**SCRIPTURE** – Isaiah 64:9; Luke 11:13; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 6:18; Acts 12:5; Zechariah 8:21

**COMMENT** – “Whenever we engage in prayer, there are two things to be considered, both that we may have access to God, and that we may rely on Him with full and unshaken confidence: his fatherly love toward us, and his boundless power” (John Calvin).

**ILLUSTRATION** – A wealthy planter in Virginia, who had a great number of slaves, found one of them reading the Bible, and reproved him for the neglect of his work, saying there was time enough on Sundays for reading the Bible, and that, on other days, he ought to be in the tobacco-house. The slave repeating the offence, he ordered him to be whipped. Going near the place of punishment, soon after its infliction, curiosity led him to listen to a voice engaged in prayer, and he heard the poor black implore the Almighty to forgive the injustice of his master, to touch his heart with a sense of his sin, and to make him a good Christian. Struck with remorse, he made an immediate change in his life, which had been careless and dissipated, burnt his profane books and cards, liberated all his slaves, and began to study how to render his wealth and talents useful to others (*The Shorter Catechism Illustrated*, by John Whitecross).

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## THEOLOGY

CORNER



A REFORMED AND  
BAPTIST CATECHISM

**June 15** – David Steere, pastor of the Baptist Chapel in Fressingfield, England, will be preaching.

**July 6** – Observance of the Lord's Supper in the afternoon service.

**July 13** – Bill and Jennifer Hale, missionaries to Cambodia, will be with us for the day.

**July 21-25** – Sovereign Grace Youth Camp, Conway, Missouri.

**September 14** – Missionary to Spain, Dennis Ashley, will be preaching.



# MINISTERING TO THE CULTURE WITHOUT COMPROMISE

PHIL JOHNSON

Dear Savage Countenance,

Many thanks for your message. You wrote: “why would you question a brother who just wants to fit in with the people he’s trying to reach?... you should quit trying so hard to be different and try harder to be *genuine*... i’m making this point b/c my eyebrow is pierced and i have a tattoo on the back of my neck... i wear combat boots... and i usually wear all black... i listen to christian metal and industrial music—i’ve seen too many christians hide in a corner away from the world and wait for them to come to us... and it just doesn’t work that way, you know?”

OK, first of all let me say that the point I want to make here has very little to do with the question of whether body piercing and tattoos are always inherently sinful. Don’t misunderstand: I would indeed argue that if you pierce or tattoo yourself as an act of self-mutilation, narcissism, or rebellion, then the motivation for such “body modification” is clearly sinful and therefore something Christians ought to avoid.

But that’s really beside the point at the moment. Because your whole argument is that you have tattooed yourself and put studs in your face in order to be more “genuine” and to have a better testimony for Christ. And *that’s* what I want to respond to: the notion that adopting the fads of a juvenile, egomaniacal, shallow, self-destructive, worldly culture “works” better as an evangelistic strategy than a lifestyle that gives more prominence to the principle of Matt. 5:16 and 1 Peter 2:9.

As you have described it above, body modification and combat boots are a significant and deliberate part—if not the very centerpiece—of your evangelistic strategy. You seem to

imagine that if you try hard enough to fit into the punk culture, you might actually win people by convincing them that Jesus would fit nicely into their lifestyle, too.

But wouldn’t you yourself actually agree that there is—*somewhere*—a limit to how far Christians can legitimately go in conforming to worldly culture? Surely you do not imagine that the apostle Paul’s words about becoming all things to all men is a prescription for adopting every vulgar fashion of a philistine culture. Do you?

Can we agree, for example, that it wouldn’t really be good or necessary to get a sex-change operation in order to reach the transgendered community? OK, you might dismiss that as something inherently sinful and wrong for that reason. Well, how about pulling a few teeth and adopting the trashy patois and tasteless lifestyle of Jerry Springer’s guest list in order to have a more effective outreach to the underbelly of the cable-TV community? How serious are you about your strategy of accommodation and conformity?

And why is it mainly the lowbrow and fringe aspects of Western youth culture that this argument is invariably applied to? Why are so few Christian young persons keen to give up video games and take up chess in order to reach the geeks in the chess club? Or give up heavy metal and learn the cello in order to have a ministry to the students who play in the orchestra?

There used to be a misguided youth on the Web who ran a website called “Backyard Wrestlers for Jesus.” He was trying to tap into the backyard wrestling culture as a mission field. So he set up a Web site showing kids how to build a backyard wrestling ring, how to do what The Rock and the Dudley Boys do without getting hurt, and how to talk smack without really talking dirty—so that kids who wrestle in their own backyards could improve their style. Along the way, he figured they would see that his Web site

had something to do with Jesus, and they’d know Jesus is cool, and they’d like Jesus better because he’s so cool.

I admire his desire to reach a troubled culture, but the methodology is all wrong and completely without any credible biblical warrant. I realize making Jesus seem cool is *the* dominant evangelistic strategy of this age, and everyone from Rick Warren to Brian McLaren is trying in whatever way they think best to make Christianity more hip and trendy.

But I still think it’s a bad idea. Incidentally, I grew up in the 1960s in a liberal church with a fairly sizable youth group where dances with live rock music were the bait used to draw us on a regular basis. So there’s nothing particularly fresh or innovative about this philosophy. It didn’t work in my generation, and it’s not really working now. It’s made the church more worldly; it hasn’t made the world more spiritual.

In fact, I’d say that this strategy represents the wholesale abandonment of the church’s responsibility to a sinful culture. The most effective way to minister to *any* culture—and this goes for *every* culture, from highbrow society to white middle-class suburbia to the urban street gang—is to **challenge and confront** the culture instead of conforming to it. “Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean’” (2 Cor. 6:17).

Yes, I know Jesus was a friend of sinners, and His enemies accused Him—wrongly—of participating in their excesses. The truth is that He became their friend without adopting their values. That’s the example we should strive to follow, not the example of worldly culture itself.