



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

— April 2010 Issue —

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

April

04 Jenny Lovassy and Kristy Hines
11 Kevin and Sarah Smith
18 Jessica and Troy Moseley
25 Jon and Tanya Amis

May

02 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan
09 David and Mary Alice Olive
16 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams
23 Bob and Faye Williams
30 Jon and Tanya Amis

LAWN CARE

April - The Palazzolos
May - Dean & Linda Olive

CHURCH CLEANING

April - The Moseleys
May - Jonathan & Tonya Amis

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF

APRIL 1, 2010

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 30,224.39
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 33,148.53
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 4,000.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 36,860.67
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 300.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 38,350.67
March Love offerings	\$ 300.00
March General Fund offerings	\$ 11,354.15
March Designated Missions	\$ 40.00
Haiti Relief (ytd)	\$ 5,150.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 85,114.07
Missions Fund balance	\$ 10,053.75
General Fund balance	\$ 69,384.59



**"CHRIST IS RISEN!"
"INDEED, HE IS RISEN!"**



Instead of greeting a fellow believer with "hello," a Christian in ancient days might say, "Christ is Risen!" and would receive the reply, "Indeed, He is Risen!" So central was the resurrection of Christ from the dead that many believers incorporated it even in their greetings with one another.

Still, around the world, this greeting can be heard in the gathering of saints, especially on the Lord's Day when the resurrection of Christ from the grave is celebrated.

Spanish:

Cristo ha resucitado!
¡En verdad ha resucitado!

Dutch:

Christus is verreezen!
Hij is waarlijk!

Welsh:

Atgyfododd Crist!
Yn wir atgyfododd!

Russian:

Христос воскрес!
Воистину воскрес!

Filipino:

Si Cristo ay nabuhay!
Siya nga ay nabuhay!

Ethiopian:

Christos tensiou!
Bahake tensiou!

French:

Christ est ressuscité! Il est vraiment ressuscité!

Swahili:

Kristo Amefufukka!
Kweli Amefufukka!

Let us sound forth in our own language, "Christ is risen! Indeed, He is Risen!"

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

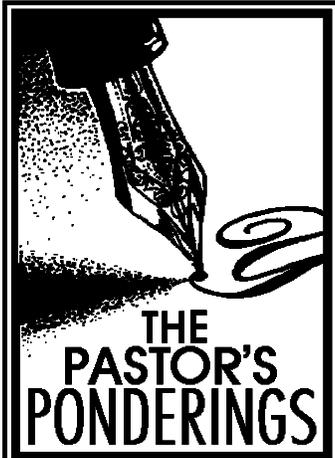
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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)



Sinners, Jesus Will Receive

Stephen Mansfield, writing in *The Character and Greatness of Winston Churchill: Hero in a Time of Crisis*, said in a chapter entitled, "Realism:"

"Historians have long known that civilizations in crisis take refuge in myth and fantasy, because the sensual,

escapist world of imagination promises deliverance from the cold, disturbing world of reality. But the deliverance is never genuine: it is only a temporary distraction, not real hope. Hope springs instead from courageously confronting the truth, no matter how bleak or costly it may be."

Mansfield's point was that Winston Churchill didn't hide the truth from the British people about the dangers of socialism and the intentions of Adolf Hitler before WWII. He spoke the truth when it was hard to speak it; when it was not popular.

What Churchill did in the political realm needs application in the spiritual world. To obtain deliverance from the cold but truthful reality about ourselves, requires realism—realism about God and his holy character and realism about man and his sinful nature. Unless we come to terms with the truth about our sinful behavior and seek pardon from the Lord, we will continue to live in a world of imagination and will remain duped and deceived about our real selves. We must confront the truth about ourselves. There is no deliverance and pardon unless we do so.

The truth about ourselves is that we are sinful, in need of a Savior. There is good news for those who see themselves as lost and sinful. Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Lk 5:32) The good news of salvation is only for those who realize the bad news about themselves.

Salvation is for sinners. Paul said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). To use a medical analysis, which is what Jesus did, isn't the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. And it isn't the righteous that need a Savior; it is sinners. No one will ever be saved that does not see himself or herself as a sinner.

There are multitudes today who do not have a realistic view about themselves. They regard themselves as righteous, but according to Isaiah, "all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (64:6). Whatever righteousness we have, it is self-righteousness, and that cannot save us. Those who see themselves as righteous are

as much sinners as everyone else, but their eyes are closed to reality.

The Bible says, "*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23), with the emphasis on "all." But the self-righteous crowd exempt themselves; they don't see themselves the way God sees them. They do not see the need for a Savior because they don't see themselves as lost, hell-bound sinners.

The Bible doesn't make a division between good and bad people. We are all sinners! Some are worse sinners than others, but we are all sinners. And some of the worst sinners are the self-righteous. Profligate sinners see themselves in need of salvation when moral sinners can't.

The moral Pharisees condemned Jesus for receiving tax collectors and prostitutes. But they knew that they were sinners and in need of saving. And Jesus came for them! Can we imagine Jesus not associating with sinners? Why, that would be as foolish as a doctor not mixing among the sick. Jesus was and is the Friend of sinners.

It does not soil the reputation of Jesus to call him the Friend of sinners (Mt. 11:19; Lk 7:34). When his enemies called him the Friend of sinners, they intended it as an insult, but their words have become "an endearing tribute. All the redeemed gladly acknowledge Him as the friend of sinners, and will love Him eternally for it" (BBC).

Jesus calls sinners to repent and believe in the gospel. We are so wedded to sin and so full of iniquity that we would never seek salvation unless he first called us by his grace. If you would be saved you must leave your sin (that's what repentance is) and come to Jesus Christ as a needy sinner. Salvation is for sinners only. But it is for all sinners. Bunyan said it is for "Jewish sinners, Gentile sinners, old sinners, young sinners, great sinners, the chiefest of sinners."

Spurgeon once said that there are only two things that you need to know to be saved – you need to know that you are a sinner and that Christ is a Savior. If you know that then run to him for relief. If you will look at yourself as a sinner, there is hope for you.

Christopher Porteous said it well:

*He did not come to call the good
But sinners to repent;
It was the lame, the deaf, the blind
For whom His life was spent:
To heal the sick, to find the lost –
It was for such He came,
And to the Savior all may come
To praise His holy name.*

BOOK REVIEW



MY GOD IS TRUE

by Paul D. Wolfe

CANCER! Nearly everyone knows someone who has had it. But do we know well the Bible's teaching that will strengthen us in the face of it? Everyone undergoes testing and trials. But do we do so trusting firmly in the goodness, wisdom and power of God? Here is a book that will help.

My God Is True! is one man's chronicle of cancer and the lessons he learned through it. In these pages Paul Wolfe tells his story of diagnosis, treatment and survival, and he points to the glory and grace of God along the way. Above all he points to the faithfulness of God, whose promises will certainly prove true. Read this story and be reminded that there is good reason—even in the midst of suffering—to worship and rejoice.

PAUL D. WOLFE Paul D. Wolfe serves as Associate Pastor of New Hope Presbyterian Church, Fairfax, Virginia. Forward by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

What the Gospel Is

"The gospel or good news of Jesus Christ is that God the Father, who is holy and righteous in all his ways, is angry with sinners and will punish sin. Man, who disobeys the rule of God, is alienated from the love of God and is in danger of an eternal and agonizing condemnation at the hands of God. But God, who is also rich in mercy, because of his great love, sent his eternal Son born by the Virgin Mary, to die as a ransom and a substitute for the sins of rebellious people. And now, through the perfect obedience of the Son of God and his willing death on the cross as a payment for our sins, all who repent and believe in Jesus Christ, following him as Savior and Lord, will be saved from the wrath of God to come, be declared just in his sight, have eternal life, and receive the Spirit of God as a foretaste of the glories of heaven with God himself" (Thabiti Anyabwile).



April 11 - Since we did not have our normal first Lord's Day service in April, due to Easter falling on this day, we will have morning and afternoon services on April 11. Be sure to bring food for the fellowship meal following the Sunday School hour.

MAY 1-2 - The 2010 Spring Bible Conference that we had planned with Dr. Michael Haykin for May 1-2, has been rescheduled for 2011, May 21-22. The reason for this change is because the elders and deacons will be making proposals soon about some remodeling work for the sanctuary, which if approved by the church, will leave us without a suitable place to meet.

SEPTEMBER 17-19 - Fall Bible Conference with Scott Aniol. The theme is, "God-Glorifying Music." On Friday evening and Sunday morning we will hear what God's Word says about music; on Saturday there will be sessions about what constitutes good music; and on Sunday evening there will be a sacred music concert. Scott's books and music are available through Amazon and iTunes.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 3 - GOD'S DECREES

(paragraphs 6-7)



6. Not only has God appointed the elect to glory in accordance with the eternal and free purpose of His will, but He has also foreordained the means by which His purpose will be effected. Since His elect are children of Adam and therefore among those ruined by Adam's fall into sin, He willed that they should be redeemed by Christ, and effectually called to faith in Christ. Furthermore, by the working of His Spirit in due season they are justified, adopted, sanctified, and 'kept by His power through faith unto salvation'. None but the elect partake of any of these great benefits.

(John 6:64; 10:26; 17:9; Rom. 8:30; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2,5).

7. The high mystery of predestination needs to be handled with special prudence and caution, so that men, being directed to the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying the same, may become assured of their eternal election through the certainty of their effectual calling. By this means predestination will promote the praise of God, and reverential awe and wonder. It will encourage humility and diligence, and bring much comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.

(Luke 10:20; Rom. 11:5, 6, 20, 33; Eph. 1:6; 1 Thess 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10).

THOUGHTS ON GOD



"If I have grown in anything since I have known the Lord, I think it is in this one thing, in having more frequent and realizing thoughts of God the Father,

Son, and Spirit, personally considered. There was a day when I thought doctrine the first thing and all important, and there was a time when I conceived inward experience to be most exceedingly worthy of my regard; I think the same now, but over and above all, that my soul possesses a deep sense of God, and a longing to be in daily personal fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Surely this being filled with God is a more excellent way, for doctrine may be but food untasted, and experience may turn out to be but fancy, but to live upon God by faith, and to serve Christ with the heart, and to feel the Holy Spirit's indwelling, this is reality and truth."

Air Conditioning Hell: How Liberalism Happens

Al Mohler

... The liberal theologians and preachers who so conveniently discarded hell [in the 20th Century] did so without denying that the Bible clearly teaches the doctrine. They simply asserted the higher authority of the culture's sense of morality. In order to save Christianity from the moral and intellectual damage done by the doctrine, hell simply had to go. Many rejected the doctrine with gusto, claiming the mandate to update the faith in a new intellectual age. Others simply let the doctrine go dormant, never to be mentioned in polite company.

What of today's evangelicals? Though some lampoon the stereotypical "hell-fire and brimstone" preaching of an older evangelical generation, the fact is that most church members may never have heard a sermon on hell—even in an evangelical congregation. Has hell gone dormant among evangelicals as well?

Revising Hell: A Test Case for the Slide into Liberalism

Interestingly, the doctrine of hell serves very well as a test case for the slide into theological liberalism. The pattern of this slide looks something like this.

First, a doctrine simply falls from mention. Over time, it is simply never discussed or presented from the pulpit. Most congregants do not even miss the mention of the doctrine. Those who do become fewer over time. The doctrine is not so much denied as ignored and kept at a distance. Yes, it is admitted, that doctrine has been believed by Christians, but it is no longer a necessary matter of emphasis.

Second, a doctrine is revised and retained in reduced form. There must have been some good reason that Christians historically believed in hell. Some theologians and pastors will then affirm that there is a core affirmation of morality to be preserved, perhaps something like what C. S. Lewis affirmed as "The Tao." The doctrine is reduced.

Third, a doctrine is subjected to a form of ridicule. Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral, known for his message of "Possibility Thinking," once described his motivation for theological reformulation in terms of refocusing theology on "generating trust and positive hope." His method

is to point to salvation and the need "to become positive thinkers." Positive thinking does not emphasize escape from hell, "whatever that means and wherever that is."

That statement ridicules hell by dismissing it in terms of "whatever that means and wherever it is." Just don't worry about hell, Schuller suggests. Though few evangelicals are likely to join in the same form of ridicule, many will invent softer forms of marginalizing the doctrine.

Fourth, a doctrine is reformulated in order to remove its intellectual and moral offensiveness. Evangelicals have subjected the doctrine of hell to this strategy for many years now. Some deny that hell is everlasting, arguing for a form of annihilationism or conditional immortality. Others will deny hell as a state of actual torment. John Wenham simply states, "Unending torment speaks to me of sadism, not justice." Some argue that God does not send anyone to hell, and that hell is simply the sum total of human decisions made during earthly lives. God is not really a judge who decides, but a referee who makes certain that rules are followed.

Tulsa pastor Ed Gungor recently wrote that "people are not sent to hell, they go there." In other words, God just respects human freedom to the degree that he will reluctantly let humans determined to go to hell have their wish.

Apologizing for Hell: The New Evangelical Evasion

In recent years, a new pattern of evangelical evasion has surfaced. The Protestant liberals and modernists of the twentieth century simply dismissed the doctrine of hell, having already rejected the truthfulness of Scripture. Thus, they did not enter into elaborate attempts to argue that the Bible did not teach the doctrine—they simply dismissed it.

Though this pattern is found among some who would claim to be evangelicals, this is not the most common evangelical pattern of compromise. A new apologetic move is now evident among some theologians and preachers who do affirm the inerrancy of the Bible and the essential truthfulness of the New Testament doctrine of hell. This new move is more subtle, to be sure. In this move the preacher simply says something like this:

"I regret to tell you that the doctrine of hell is taught in the Bible. I believe it. I believe it because it is revealed in the Bible. It is not up for renegotiation. We just have to receive it and believe it. I do

believe it. I wish it could be otherwise but it is not."

Statements like this reveal a very great deal. The authority of the Bible is clearly affirmed. The speaker affirms what the Bible reveals and rejects accommodation. So far, so good. The problem is in how the affirmation is introduced and explained. In an apologetic gesture, the doctrine is essentially lamented.

What does this say about God? What does this imply about God's truth? Can a truth clearly revealed in the Bible be anything less than good for us? The Bible presents the knowledge of hell just as it presents the knowledge of sin and judgment: these are things we had better know. God reveals these things to us for our good and for our redemption. In this light, the knowledge of these things is grace to us. Apologizing for a doctrine is tantamount to impugning the character of God.

Do we believe that hell is a part of the perfection of God's justice? If not, we have far greater theological problems than those localized to hell.

Several years ago, someone wisely suggested that a good many modern Christians wanted to "air condition hell." The effort continues.

Remember that the liberals and the modernists operated out of an apologetic motivation. They wanted to save Christianity as a relevant message in the modern world and to remove the odious obstacle of what were seen as repugnant and unnecessary doctrines. They wanted to save Christianity from itself.

Today, some in movements such as the emerging church commend the same agenda, and for the same reason. Are we embarrassed by the biblical doctrine of hell?

If so, this generation of evangelicals will face no shortage of embarrassments. The current intellectual context allows virtually no respect for Christian affirmations of the exclusivity of the gospel, the true nature of human sin, the Bible's teachings regarding human sexuality, and any number of other doctrines revealed in the Bible. The lesson of theological liberalism is clear—embarrassment is the gateway drug for theological accommodation and denial.

Be sure of this: it will not stop with the air conditioning of hell.