



# 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**

— January 2010 Issue —

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



### NURSERY SCHEDULE

#### January

- 03 Jon & Tanya Amis
- 10 David & Mary Alice Olive
- 17 Kevin & Sara Smith
- 24 Linda Olive & Sonja Williams
- 31 Vicki Johnson & Amber Solan

#### February

- 07 Bob & Faye Williams
- 14 Troy & Jessi Moseley
- 21 Jon & Tanya Amis
- 28 David & Mary Alice Olive

### CHURCH CLEANING

(see Jon Amis with questions)

**January** - The Palazzolas

**February** - Dean & Linda Olive

**March** - The Moseleys

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2010

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$121,482.97
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$125,501.02
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 3,845.42
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$158,575.96
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 19,602.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$185,217.96
December Love offerings	\$ 16,000.00
December General Fund offerings	\$ 19,422.30
December Designated Missions	\$ 6,090.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 79,500.28
Missions Fund balance	\$ 12,089.57
General Fund balance	\$ 71,858.14

## GUEST PREACHER

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 10**

**MACK TOMLINSON**



**CO-PASTOR OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL**

**DENTON, TEXAS**

**MR. TOMLINSON WILL BE SPEAKING AT 9:30 AND  
11:00 AM AND 6:00 PM**

Mack Tomlinson is also an itinerant evangelist and author. He has edited and published a number of books related to revival and Christian history. He has contributed articles for *HeartCry Journal* and *The Banner of Truth Magazine*. He is presently writing a biography on Leonard Ravenhill.

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

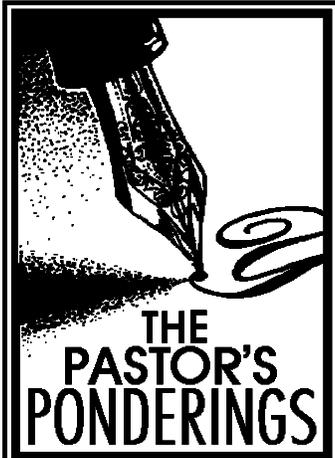
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

#### 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)	



# A Very Sweet Promise

Matthew Henry called Paul's declaration in Romans 16:20, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet," a "very sweet promise." These words truly are a "very sweet promise" because, though the followers of Christ are presently engaged in a tremendous spiritual conflict, ultimate victory over Satan is assured.

The Bible teaches that Satan's evil kingdom has suffered defeat already at the cross but the final realization of the Messianic victory over our chief adversary is a future event. Satan's complete overthrow is still in the future but his defeat and Christ's victory is certain.

Satan is a defeated foe. Christ Jesus has already engaged in Holy War against the enemy of our souls and was decisively victorious over him though his end is not yet. The ultimate defeat of Satan is still to come, but the death blow has already been rendered. That death blow was delivered by our Lord's death on the cross.

Paul likens our Lord's death at Calvary to a military victory in Colossians 2:13-15. He wrote, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

Jesus triumphed over Satan and disarmed him by dying. Hebrews 2:14 says of Christ, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil." The victory is won because of the cross! Christ's triumph over Satan is also due in part to his resurrection (Eph. 1:19f.).

All the encounters of Christ with the devil in the Gospels (and there are many of them) are previews of his ultimate victory. The war with the devil as seen in the book of Revelation shows Satan being cast into the abyss. Since his ultimate defeat is certain we ought to be confident and full of joy.

Donald Grey Barnhouse told this story: "I once saw a small child occupied with a little toy balloon. When it had not air in it, it was a small thing that could be hidden in the palm of the hand. When it was blown up it was a frightening thing, with a devilish face painted on the side. This face could be made extremely large by blowing more air in the balloon. The child had blown and blown until the balloon was quite large. The balloon then frightened the child but when the air was let out of the balloon, it lost its power to frighten.

"This is what happened to Satan when Christ died. The devil and his principalities had been filled with pretensions, but Christ disarmed them and made a show of them, a public example.

His balloon has burst! The wind has all gone out."

Satan's power is now broken. The balloon has burst! And isn't it amazing how Christ won the victory? He became the victor, not by killing, but by being killed. It is upon the basis of the cross-work of Christ that Satan has been defeated and that the ultimate victory over Satan is assured.

Paul's language in Romans 16:20 remind us of the first statement of the gospel in the Bible, Genesis 3:15. God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." The context is the Fall of man. God said that the devil, who instigated the Fall by his subtle temptation, would have his head bruised by the Son, i.e. he would receive a fatal blow.

Paul's word in Rom. 16:20 that describes this is *crush*. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." The word crush means to shatter or smash. Our Lord is the One who actually crushed and will crush Satan but he does so with him under our feet. When Joshua had conquered the kings of Canaan, he called the captains of Israel to set their feet on their necks (Joshua 10:24). In like manner, Christ, who is our Joshua, will have all his servants set their feet upon Satan's neck.

Ironically, Paul says that it is "the God of peace" who will crush Satan. We don't generally associate peace with crushing but God makes the peace by destroying the enmity caused by Satan. True peace cannot exist until the enemy of our souls is completely defeated.

Paul says that God will do this "*soon*." This word soon means quickly, swiftly, speedily, rapidly. When our Lord comes, the final defeat of Satan will be quick and swift. We look back to the cross and see the cause of Satan's defeat. At present, we have victory over him in our lives through the power of the Word of God (Heb 4:12) and the power of the Spirit who indwells us (Rom. 8:13). And a final, full and complete victory over him is assured when Christ returns.

The promise of God to overthrow Satan is not meant to keep us from being watchful against him now, but to encourage us that a full victory is soon to come. It is the promise of victory that under girds our fight for the faith (L. Morris).

There are times when it seems that Satan has prevailed but complete victory over him is assured. He will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20:10). Until then we must put on the whole armor of God so we can stand against the schemes of the devil (Eph. 6:10-20).

Barnhouse told a story about a man who was giving a speech and had one of those unfortunate slips of the tongue. He meant to speak of battles that are fought and won but instead he spoke of battles that are won and fought. Barnhouse said, "Battles, of course, must be fought before they can be won, yet for the Christian it is not a slip of the tongue to speak of battles won and fought, for the battle has already been won by the Lord Jesus Christ, even though we have skirmishes to fight against our adversary the devil!"

Satan's ultimate demise is near. Victory is assured.

# BOOK REVIEW



## **Fearless Pilgrim: The Life and Times of John Bunyan** by Faith Cook

John Bunyan is well known as the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the seventeenth-century spiritual classic which has been the second best-selling book in the world after the Bible. He was also a much-loved preacher and pastor. In this book you will discover the path which prepared him to be greatly used as a pastor to his own generation and a guide to Christ's pilgrim people still.

In this new and well-written biography, Faith Cook relates John Bunyan to the turbulent times through which he lived, surviving two periods of imprisonment in Bedford prison, sustained by his faith, determined, as he himself wrote 'to live upon God that is invisible'.

Faith Cook avoids the temptation of merely regarding Bunyan as one of the great figures of English literature. That he certainly is, but he is so much more – a physician of souls, much-loved pastor and powerful preacher of the gospel of grace.

Bunyan emerges from this book as a writer of plain yet remarkably imaginative prose, steeped in an amazing knowledge of the English Bible. That knowledge is not just textual: it is deeply experimental, the fruit of much meditation, as *The Pilgrim's Progress* particularly shows.

Reviewed by David Legge (edited for length); published by Evangelical Press



**JANUARY 10** - Mack Tomlinson will be preaching

**JANUARY 15** - The Ladies of Grace will hold their first meeting of the new year.

**FEBRUARY 7** – The annual church business meeting will be held in the afternoon after the first Sunday meal.

**FEBRUARY 18-21** – True Church Conference, Grace Life Church, Muscle Shoals, AL. The theme of the conference is *The Quagmire of Hyper-Calvinism*. For more information see <http://www.anchoredin-truth.org/tcc10/>

**MAY 1-2** – Spring Bible Conference with Dr. Michael Haykin. This has been changed from April 24-25.

## **We Believe**

### The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 2 - GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY  
(paragraph 3)



Three divine Persons constitute the Godhead—the Father, the Son (or the Word), and the Holy Spirit. They are one in substance, in power, and in eternity. Each is fully God, and yet the Godhead is one and indivisible. The Father owes His being to none. He is Father to the Son who is eternally begotten of Him. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. These Persons, one infinite and eternal God not to be divided in being, are distinguished in Scripture by their personal nature or in relations within the Godhead, and by the variety of works which they undertake. Their tri-unity (that is, the doctrine of the Trinity) is the essential basis of all our fellowship with God, and of the comfort we derive from our dependence upon Him.

Exod. 3:14; Matt. 28:19; John 1:14,18; 14:11; 15:26; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 5:7.



## *Ladies of Grace*

The Ladies of Grace will hold their first meeting of the year on Friday January 15, at 6:30 PM. Meet at the church to help plan 2010 activities and to receive a copy the book we will be discussing in March - *My Heart in His Hands* by Sharon James. If you have questions, contact Vicki Johnson.



## — INFLUENCE —

"Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church's history, and I will find a little marginal note reading thus: 'In this age men could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended.' Never were there good times when the Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another. I believe that one reason why the Church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the Church."

# What Is Pragmatism & Why Is It Bad?

John MacArthur

In a column published some years ago in a popular Christian magazine, a well-known preacher was venting his own *loathing* for long sermons. January 1 was coming, so he resolved to do better in the coming year. "That means wasting less time listening to long sermons and spending much more time preparing short ones," he wrote. "People, I've discovered, will forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon."

Unfortunately, that perfectly sums up the predominant attitude behind much of ministry today. *Bad doctrine is tolerable; a long sermon most certainly is not.* The timing of the benediction is of far more concern to the average churchgoer than the content of the sermon. Sunday dinner and the feeding of our mouths takes precedence over Sunday school and the nourishment of our souls. Long-windedness has become a greater sin than heresy.

The church has imbibed the worldly philosophy of pragmatism, and we're just beginning to taste the bitter results.

## What Is Pragmatism?

*Pragmatism* is the notion that meaning or worth is determined by practical consequences. It is closely akin to *utilitarianism*, the belief that usefulness is the standard of what is good. To a pragmatist/utilitarian, if a technique or course of action has the desired effect, it is good. If it doesn't seem to work, it must be wrong.

Pragmatism as a philosophy was developed and popularized at the end of the last century by philosopher William James, along with such other noted intellectuals as John Dewey and George Santayana. It was James who gave the new philosophy its name and shape. In 1907, he published a collection of lectures entitled *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, and thus defined a whole new approach to truth and life.

Pragmatism has roots in Darwinism and secular humanism. It is inherently relativistic, rejecting the notion of absolute right and wrong,

good and evil, truth and error. Pragmatism ultimately defines truth as that which is useful, meaningful, helpful. Ideas that don't seem workable or relevant are rejected as false.

## What's wrong with pragmatism?

After all, common sense involves a measure of legitimate pragmatism, doesn't it? If a dripping faucet works fine after you replace the washers, for example, it is reasonable to assume that bad washers were the problem. If the medicine your doctor prescribes produces harmful side effects or has no effect at all, you need to ask if there's a remedy that works. Such simple pragmatic realities are generally self-evident.

But when pragmatism is used to make judgments about right and wrong, or when it becomes a guiding philosophy of life and ministry, it inevitably clashes with Scripture. Spiritual and biblical truth is not determined by testing what "works" and what doesn't. We know from Scripture, for example, that the gospel often does not produce a positive response (1 Cor. 1:22, 23; 2:14). On the other hand, Satanic lies and deception can be quite effective (Matt. 24:23, 24; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4). Majority reaction is no test of validity (cf. Matt. 7:13, 14), and prosperity is no measure of truthfulness (cf. Job 12:6). Pragmatism as a guiding philosophy of ministry is inherently flawed. Pragmatism as a test of truth is nothing short of satanic.

Nevertheless, an overpowering surge of ardent pragmatism is sweeping through evangelicalism. Traditional methodology—most notably preaching—is being discarded or downplayed in favor of newer means, such as drama, dance, comedy, variety, side-show histrionics, pop-psychology, and other entertainment forms. The new methods supposedly are more "effective"—that is, they draw a bigger crowd. And since the chief criterion for gauging the success of a church has become attendance figures, whatever pulls in the most people is accepted without further analysis as *good*. That is pragmatism.

Perhaps the most visible signs of pragmatism are seen in the convulsive changes that have revolutionized the church wor-

ship service in the past two decades. Some of evangelicalism's largest and most influential churches now boast Sunday services that are designed purposely to be more rollicking than reverent.

Even worse, *theology* now takes a back seat to *methodology*. One author has written, "Formerly, a doctrinal statement represented the reason for a denomination's existence. Today, methodology is the glue that holds churches together. A statement of ministry defines them and their denominational existence." Incredibly, many believe this is a positive trend, a major advance for the contemporary church.

Some church leaders evidently think the four priorities of the early church—the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42)—make a lame agenda for the church in this day and age. Churches are allowing drama, recreation, entertainment, self-help programs, and similar enterprises to eclipse the importance of traditional Sunday worship and fellowship. In fact, everything seems to be in fashion in the church today *except* biblical preaching. The new pragmatism sees preaching—particularly expository preaching—as pass. Plainly declaring the truth of God's Word is regarded as offensive and utterly ineffective. We're now told we can get better results by first amusing people or giving them pop-psychology and thus wooing them into the fold. Once they feel comfortable, they'll be ready to receive biblical truth in small, diluted doses.

Pastors are turning to books on marketing methods in search of new techniques to help churches grow. Many seminaries have shifted their pastoral training emphasis from Bible curriculum and theology to counseling technique and church-growth theory. All these trends reflect the church's growing commitment to pragmatism.

This article is excerpted from *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1993).