



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

— July 2011 Issue —

*"Do not be slothful in zeal,
be fervent in spirit,
serve the Lord."
(Romans 12:11).*



NURSERY SCHEDULE

July

03 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams
10 Melanie Myatt and Faye Williams
17 Kristy and Pat Hines
24 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
31 Jessica and Troy Moseley

August

07 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan
14 Kevin and Sara Smith
21 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett
28 Jon and Tanya Amis

CHURCH CLEANING

July - Lovassys
August - Moseleys
September - Dean & Linda Olive

LAWN CARE

July - Jon Amis
August - Peter Lovassy
September - Ricky Troy Moseley

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JULY 1, 2011

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Budgeted expenditures (ytd) | \$ 67,581.65 |
| Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd) | \$ 58,363.20 |
| Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd) | \$ 611.00 |
| General Fund offerings (ytd) | \$ 77,637.10 |
| Designated Missions (ytd) | \$ 330.00 |
| Disaster Relief Offerings (ytd) | \$ 389.36 |
| Love offerings (ytd) | \$ 0.00 |
| Total offerings (ytd) | \$ 78,356.46 |
| June Love offerings | \$ 0.00 |
| June General Fund offerings | \$ 14,615.05 |
| June Designated Missions | \$ 0.00 |
| June Disaster Relief Offerings | \$ 139.36 |
| Building Fund balance | \$ 78,848.45 |
| Missions Fund balance | \$ 10,275.48 |
| General Fund balance | \$ 77,351.61 |

Christians and Patriotism



We are Christians that happen to be Americans. We love Christ first and foremost. However, though our nation is not our highest love, we ought to love the land of our birth, and pray that God will truly bless America.

It is appropriate for Christians to be patriotic as long as we do not compromise our loyalty to Christ and his kingdom.

Let's say **yes** to patriotism **but** remember that Christ is our Lord.

- Let us love America, while remembering that our citizenship is in heaven.
- Let us value our nation's laws, but value the Gospel more.
- Let us be grateful for our heritage, yet be thankful most for free salvation.

"Let us all be grateful for a land so fair, As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer. God bless America, Land that I love. Stand beside her, and guide her, Thru the night with a light from above. From the mountains to the prairies, To the oceans, white with foam, God bless America, My home sweet home."

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

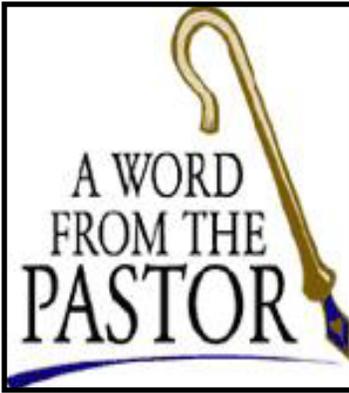
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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)



Loving God and Country

Most Americans will declare their love for the United States of America on the 4th of July. The 4th of July is our official birthday as a nation. As Christians, we should join with our fellow Americans in patriotic zeal. We would do well to remember with gratitude how this nation was formed. We have a grand heritage and we would be remiss to forget it or relegate it to the cupboard of irrelevant history.

Let us thank God that we are Americans and that we live in the home of the brave and the land of the free. Let us honor the likes of George Washington and Paul Revere, Samuel Adams and Benjamin Franklin. Let us study and appreciate the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence. And let us shoot some fireworks and have a picnic!

Of course, nothing should exceed our devotion to Christ. It is possible for patriotism to go overboard. But so can a husband's love for his wife or a mother's love for her children. Nothing is to exceed our love for the Savior! He must have the preeminence.

We have occasions as citizens of this great nation to give the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. But our allegiance to country is not the same as our allegiance to Christ. We should be loyal to our country and her laws unless our country seeks to prevent us from worshiping and serving Christ. We are to render obedience to God first and foremost.

Jesus gave us a great lesson that we need to ponder when it comes to church and state. A man came to Jesus once with a question about taxes. "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" (Mk 12:14). He was actually trying to catch Jesus in a trap.

Jesus took a coin, held it up before the people, and asked whose image was on it. They answered, "Caesar's." Jesus then said those very powerful and memorable words: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mk 12:17). The meaning is simple. There are some things that belong to Caesar and there are some things that belong to God. Give to each his due.

God has given governments legitimate authority, and we must render what is due to the governing powers. But we also have obligations to God. In fact, that is our primary obligation (Acts 5:29). However, God

can be served, while at the same time we strive to be good citizens. A state should never be in fear of its Christian population! We honor God by submitting to the authorities that be. Disobedience to the state should be rare, and then it should be without malice and violence.

Just because we are followers of Christ doesn't mean we automatically lose our love for America. In fact, being Christians means we ought to love our country more than others! And if we love America, really love her, then, we will do our best to make her a better place. We will deplore fraud, injustice and scandal. It doesn't matter where and by whom or in which political party. We will do all in our power to make our nation a better nation.

What we need to do to make our nation better is to pray and preach! Pray for all men, for kings and all in high positions. And preach the gospel to all men, for the greatest need of man is to know the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is how we should show love to God and country.

Our fellow citizens need to know that God is the Creator. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. 100:3). Because He is our Creator, then we owe Him allegiance, devotion and affection.

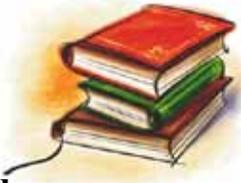
And they need to know that Christ is the Redeemer. "God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). God could have left us in our sin and punished us for transgressing His Law, but He gave his Son to redeem us. Redemption comes to us at no cost but it cost God dearly! He gave His one and only Son to be the sacrifice for our sins.

One would have to be blind not to see the hand of God in making this nation what it is. His providential hand can be seen in the settling, the founding, and the building of our nation. She is far from perfection, and is very much given to wickedness today, but we who love the Lord ought to love our country and seek its welfare.

May God help us to love Him and our country. Let us show proper honor and devotion to both God and country in the proper way, remembering to render "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

And remember this. You will not go to heaven because you are an American. You can only go to heaven if you are a Christian. I urge you to call on the Savior today and bow to him who is Lord of all.

BOOK REVIEW



Stop and Look At God's World / At Yourself / At God's Word

by Donna Drion

Published by Day One, 32 pp. each volume

It took me a few days to get round to reviewing these, not because they are long and complicated, but because my two-and-a-half year old son would barely let them out of his sight. That in itself is a good testimony for a children's book.

Each volume is brightly and skillfully illustrated. The images are bold, with simple central characters but lots of careful and clever detail. Most of the pictures have a cartoonish quality (that is not intended as an insult), but every so often the artist intersperses a more lifelike picture that, standing out among the others, showcases her ability. Occasional abstract designs in the background break up the routine throughout the books.

The text is also uncomplicated, with plenty of more rhythmic sections to help toddlers memorize it and then chant along, although the final book of the series has longer blocks of words. The truth is simply told and its application straightforwardly made. Parents will easily be able to explain, specify and amplify as required with their own young children, and older children should handle these books easily, not least as they start reading.

Each of the volumes finishes with a sequence of questions and answers from a catechism for young children, revealing something of a framework for the whole set. Children who are learning the popular catechism for boys and girls will find this an additional treat, as each familiar question and answer has an appropriate picture.

Furthermore, each volume is printed on good glossy paper and solidly bound with boards to resist the rigors of regular infantile handling. In short, this set or its individual volumes would be a pleasant and profitable addition to the libraries of Christian parents with younger children. It is warmly recommended.

Jeremy Walker



JULY 13 – Daniel Noren, a native Swede, will take the prayer meeting and inform us about gospel work in Sweden. He is associated with HeartCry Missionary Society, and is one of the few evangelicals preaching the gospel there.

AUGUST 14 – Justin Dillihay will be preaching again in the pastor's absence. Please pray for him as he comes to open God's Word.

OCTOBER 17-18 – The Regional FIRE Conference for the Southeast will be held at Grace Baptist Church, Hartsville, TN. Pastor Donny Martin and the good folk there will be hosting the meeting in their new building.

OCTOBER 21-23 – Tony Carter, pastor of Eastpointe Church, Atlanta, GA, will be the preacher for our Fall Bible Conference. Please mark these days on your calendar, and plan to attend every service.

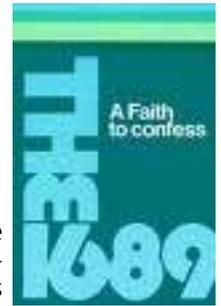
We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

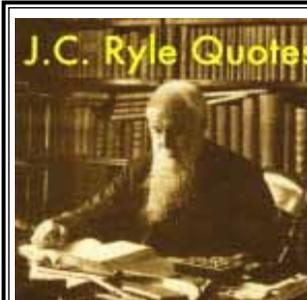
CHAPTER 10

EFFECTUAL CALLING

(PARAGRAPHS ONE AND TWO)



1. At a time appointed by and acceptable to God, those whom God has predestinated to life are effectually called by His Word and Spirit out of the state of death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Their minds are given spiritual enlightenment and, as those who are being saved, they begin to understand the things of God. God takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. He renews their will, and by His almighty power He sets them to seek and follow that which is good, at the same time effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ. And to all these changes they come most freely, for they are made willing by divine grace.
Deut. 30:6; Ps. 110:3; Song 1:4; Ezek. 36:26, 27; Acts 26:18; Rom. 8:30; 11:7; Eph. 1:10, 11, 17, 19; 2:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14
2. God's effectual call is the outcome of His free and special grace alone. Until a man is given life, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is dead in sins and trespasses, so is entirely passive in this work of salvation, a work that does not proceed from anything good foreseen in him, nor from any power or agency resident in him. The power that enables him to answer God's call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, is no less than that which effected the resurrection of Christ from the dead.
John 5:25; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:19-20; 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9



QUESTIONS TO PONDER ON THE JOURNEY

Are you poor? Seek treasure in heaven and be rich. Are you old? Be ready for your end, and prepare to meet your God. Are you young? Begin well, and seek in Christ a never-failing friend, who will never forsake you. Are you in trouble, anxious about this life? Seek Him who alone can help you and bear your burdens—seek Him who will never disappoint you. When others turn their backs upon you, then will Jesus Christ the Lord take you up. Are you a sinner, a great sinner, a sinner of the worst description? It shall all be remembered no more if you only come to Christ—His blood shall cleanse all sin away. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.

Christ is All in All

by Iain Hamilton

John Brown was one of the most illustrious Bible commentators of the nineteenth century. The Banner of Truth publishes his commentaries on *Galatians* and *Hebrews* in the 'Geneva' series, and his three-volume work on *The Discourses and Sayings of our Lord*. Also published by Banner of Truth, but currently out of print, is his two-volume commentary on *1 Peter*. Why mention him at the beginning of my pastoral letter? For this reason: While recently perusing Brown's commentary on *1 Peter*, I came across this wonderful paragraph that I wanted to share with you. He is commenting on the opening verses of *1 Peter 2* and in particular on the Christ-saturated content of these verses:

The religion taught in the New Testament, of which our text is a fair specimen, is Christianity in the most emphatic and peculiar sense of the term, 'Christ is all in all'. It is his religion. It is all *by* him; it is all *about* him; he is its author, he is its substance; he is the sum of this system, the soul of this body. Everything is viewed in its connection with him. Every doctrine and every precept, every privilege and every duty, every promise and every threatening. The ground of acceptance is his sacrifice; the source of light and life, holiness and peace, his Spirit; the rule of duty, his law; the pattern for imitation, his example; the motives to duty, his authority and grace; the great end of all, his glory, God's glory in him... let the language of our hearts be that of the dying martyr: 'None

but Christ, none but Christ'. [*1 Peter*, Volume 1, pp. 238-239]

Are these not stirring, moving, and true words?

In essence, Brown is telling us that Christianity is Christ. He is the 'so great salvation' that God holds out to us in the gospel. This was something Jesus himself was self-consciously aware of. When you read through the Gospels you cannot miss that he preaches himself. This is seen perhaps most startlingly in Matthew 11:28-30, 'Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest...' Jesus does not prescribe for the weary and burdened some spiritual

"God has nothing else to give you, for in his Son he has given you everything. Not just everything you need, but everything!"

panacea; he prescribes himself. Jesus' personal sense of his comprehensive ability to meet the needs of a broken, sin-weary world is staggering: 'Come to me'!

Now, why am I saying this? For one simple reason, to encourage you (and me) to look alone to our Lord Jesus for the comfort, help, strength, reassurance, and hope that we all need to sustain us in our walk with God. It is in Christ that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (*Eph. 1:3*). God has nothing else to give you, for in his Son he has given you everything. Not just everything you need, but everything!

This is but another way of saying what our Lord himself tells us in John 15: 'I am the vine, you are the branches.' He is our life. To live

by faith is to live 'out of Christ' (see *Gal. 2:20*). Faith is like a bucket that we drop into the inexhaustible riches and depths of our Saviour, to draw up out of him all we need to live a godly, God-pleasing, gospel-useful life. Do you lack wisdom? Go to Christ who is the wisdom of God. Do you lack patience? Go to Christ the epitome of godly patience. Do you lack constancy? Go to Christ who was obedient unto death. Do you lack courage? Go to Christ 'who endured the cross'. John Calvin puts this truth beautifully in *The Institutes* (2.16.19):

We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ (*Acts 4:12*). We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is 'of him' (*1 Cor. 1:30*). If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in his dominion; if purity in his conception; if gentleness, it appears in his birth... If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal, in his condemnation; if remission from the curse, in his cross (*Gal. 3:13*)... In short, since a rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other.

Now that is theology at its most biblical and glorious. Ponder that. Thank God for that. Live in the great good of all that Jesus Christ is.

Iain Hamilton is pastor of the Cambridge Presbyterian Church and is a trustee of the Banner of Truth Trust (www.cambridgepres.org.uk)