



M G 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

— October 2011 Issue —

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



NURSERY SCHEDULE

October

09 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan
16 Kevin and Sara Smith
23 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett
30 Jon and Tanya Amis

November

06 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams
13 Melanie Myatt and Hannah McFadden
20 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
27 Troy and Jessi Moseley

CHURCH CLEANING

October - Johnsons
November - Volunteers Needed
December - Moseleys

LAWN CARE

October - Dean and Linda Olive

Thanks to all who helped this year!

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2011

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$101,372.48
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 98,211.85
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 611.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$107,219.26
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 1,930.00
Disaster Relief Offerings (ytd)	\$ 389.36
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 0.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$122,791.06
September Love offerings	\$ 0.00
September General Fund offerings	\$ 13,000.44
September Designated Missions	\$ 800.00
September Disaster Relief Offerings	\$ 0.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 85,315.66
Missions Fund balance	\$ 10,938.06
General Fund balance	\$ 82,521.13

Fall Bible Conference



with
Anthony J. Carter
October 21-23, 2011



Friday, October 21

7:00 PM Service of Worship

Saturday, October 22

9:00 AM Breakfast and Message on
Being Black and Reformed

Sunday, October 23

9:30 AM Service of Worship
11:00 AM Sunday School - Testimony
12:30 PM Sunday Lunch
2:00 PM Service of Worship



Anthony J. Carter is lead pastor of East Point Church in East Point, GA. He is author/editor of several books including *On Being Black and Reformed* and *Glory Road: The Journeys of 10 African-Americans into Reformed Christianity*.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

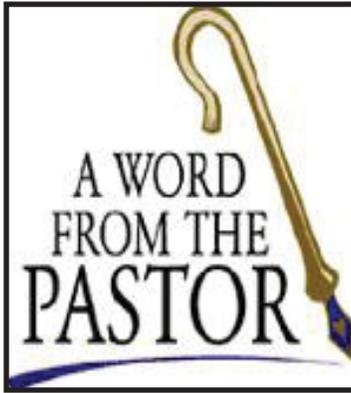
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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)



Give No Opportunity to the Devil

Paul tells Christians something very important that they need to know about the devil when he charged the Ephesians, “*Give no opportunity to the devil*” (Eph. 4:27). He warns the saints that the devil will take every occasion he finds to hurt and

destroy.

The devil is a real being. Paul never treated him as anything less. Later in this letter he speaks about the necessity of putting on the whole armor of God in order to withstand the schemes of the devil (6:11). All of the apostles took seriously this great adversary. Peter spoke of the devil as one who walked about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). The Lord Jesus himself had many head-to-head confrontations with the devil, especially the days of temptation at the beginning of his ministry (Matt. 4:1-11).

Satan will take whatever he can and use it for his own ends. He is looking for opportunity! He is looking for open doors! So we are not to give him opportunity. We are not to allow him even a slight foothold in our lives.

In the context, this charge follows two imperatives about anger. Paul had just said, “*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath.*” He then declared, “*And give no opportunity to the devil.*” When we sin by being angry (not all anger is sin, mind you), that gives the devil a chance to exert his influence in our lives. Stephen Charnock said, “Where wrath breaks the lock, the devil will quickly be over the threshold.”

This doesn’t mean that the devil is the root of anger or that he produces all anger. We become angry for many reasons and it is usually the product of the flesh. But where sinful anger exists, the devil has opportunity to use it to exploit his own ends.

So we should avoid being angry and if we do become sinfully angry, deal with it immediately (not letting the sun go down on it). John Angel James said, “The man that takes a revengeful temper to his pillow, is inviting Satan to be his guest.” Sinful anger must be dealt with quickly else the devil will use it to sow discord and division in our relationships. He is a slanderer that will seize every opportunity “afforded by the festering of anger to cause division within the body” (O’Brien).

Our text is an indication that we are engaged in a spiritual warfare against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, a theme Paul expands in Eph. 6:12. We engage the evil one day by day. The struggle

is in the moral realm; it is within our hearts. And he will take every opportunity he can to gain a foothold in your life and in mine.

When we yield to sin, William Gurnall says, “We lose our ground, and what we lose he gains.” And we can be sure he will improve his advantage by our sins every time! It is like the penetration of a wedge in a block of wood; once it has hold, then the wood can be easily split. The devil is looking for that foothold! He is looking for an occasion. And we give it to him when we sin! So we must be on guard.

An enemy is defeated by knowing something about his schemes and then by overpowering him. Since the devil will use any means to defeat us, we must be alert to his devices and must call on reinforcements from heaven. In 2 Cor. 2:11, Paul speaks of Satan taking advantage of us but he says, “*we are not ignorant of his devices.*” And the help we have in defeating him is the Son of God in heaven interceding for us and the Spirit of God in our hearts enabling us to walk in righteousness. Also, God has given us the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, that we might defeat him.

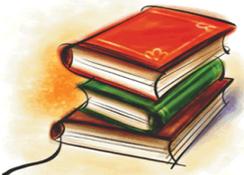
There are many places where the devil seeks to get a foothold. Anger is one of the obvious places. That is the door or trap that is first noted by Paul. But there are other avenues by which the devil will seek to achieve his evil schemes in our lives. Look at the surrounding context of Eph. 4:27 and you will note prohibitions against lying (25), stealing (28), and corrupt speech (29). These are areas where the devil is looking for an opening.

The devil is well able to exploit each of these areas for his own advantage! He will use these things to lead us further into sin. Thus, we “need to withstand every temptation so that the influence of the evil one may be resisted” (O’Brien). Remember the words of James, “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*” (4:7).

Sin by itself produces a serious breach in our fellowship with God, but when the devil takes advantage of us and uses our sin as an opportunity to discredit our testimony or make us stumble, we are harmed and reproach is brought to the name of Christ. John Piper says, “When we sin, we move in his sphere, and come into accord with him. When we sin, we ‘give place to the devil.’”

So let us watch out for Satan’s devices. He hates God and thereby hates us, and he will fan every sinful spark that he finds in our lives, add fuel to it, and set us on fire. Let us deal with our sin in short order, not leaving it to fester, else we will leave the door wide open for the devil to gain an unwelcome foothold in our lives. He has snares set up all around us. Let us beware; let us be on the watch; let us be alert (1 Pet 5:8).

BOOK REVIEW



Glory Road:

The Journeys of 10 African-Americans into Reformed Christianity

Edited by Anthony J. Carter

Crossway, 192 pp.

Glory Road details the journeys of 10 African Americans into Reformed Christianity. These are: Reddit Andrews, Thabiti Anyabwile, Anthony Bradley, Anthony Carter (the compiler), Ken Jones, Michael Leach, Lance Lewis, Louis Love, Eric Redmond, and Roger Skepple.

Reading this book has encouraged me in two particular areas; namely, evangelism and Biblical truth. In evangelism because these men received abundant life through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. God brought them to himself in many different ways. In Biblical truth because knowledge of the Reformed Faith came to these men as they came to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

If there can only be many more such men in the USA, the situation among African Americans would certainly be different. Who can doubt the fruit of the preaching and understanding of the Reformed Faith upon individuals, churches, and entire communities? May the God of grace, whose grace is extolled in the doctrines of grace, raise up an army of soldiers with such testimonies, not only among the African-Americans, but also among us African-Africans.

Conrad Mbewe, pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia



OCTOBER 17-18 – The Regional FIRE Conference for the Southeast will be held at Grace Baptist Church, Hartsville, TN. For more information see http://firefellowship.org/download/brochures/2011_Regional_SE.pdf

OCTOBER 21-23 – Tony Carter, pastor of Eastpointe Church, Atlanta, GA, will be the preacher for our Fall Bible Conference. Please be present at each service and invite others to come and hear the preaching of God's Word.

NOVEMBER 6 – Time to change your clocks! Daylight Saving Time ends. Communion will also be observed in the afternoon service.

DECEMBER 4 – Alan Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ardmore, TN, will be preaching in the afternoon service.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 11

JUSTIFICATION

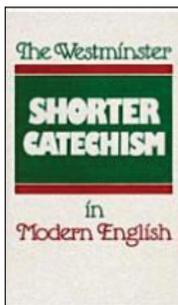
(PARAGRAPHS FOUR THROUGH SIX)

- From all eternity God decreed to justify all the elect, and in the fullness of time Christ died for their sins and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless they are not justified personally until, in due time, the Holy Spirit actually applies to them the benefits of Christ's Person and work.
Rom. 4:25; Gal. 3:8; Col. 1:21,22; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:2.
- God continues to forgive the sins of all the justified. They can never lose their justification; but they may, by reason of sin, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; in which case, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg God's pardon, and renew their faith and repentance, God will not usually restore to them 'the light of His countenance'.
Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51; Ps. 89:31-33; Matt. 6:12; 26:75; John 10:28; 1 John 1:7,9.
- Believers in Old Testament times were justified in precisely the same way as New Testament believers.
Rom. 4:22-24; Gal. 3:9.



Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question 33



Q: What is justification?

A: Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

J.C. Ryle Quotes



NEVER FORGET YOUR DEBT TO CHRIST

Cling to Christ, I say, and never forget your debt to Him. Sinners you were, when you were first called by the Holy Ghost, and fled to Jesus. Sinners you have been, even at your best, from the day of your conversion. Sinners you will find yourselves till your dying hour, having nothing to boast of in yourselves. Therefore, cling to Christ.

What to Do in Worship

by Anthony J. Carter

How shall we worship? If we asked ten churchgoers this question, we might expect to receive ten different, even contradictory answers. This is due in part to a lack of knowledge concerning what the Bible actually says about worship. Many people think that although worship is a major theme of Scripture, the Bible does not tell so much “how” we are to worship but is most concerned with “who” we are to worship. Looking at the first four commandments (Ex. 20:2-11), Barna and Jackson have said:

“(God) did not tell the Israelites how to worship God so much as to exhort them to ensure that they engaged Him—and only Him—in worship. By providing the motivation but not the methods related to worship, the Lord left open the door for varied expressions of our hearts to Him, resulting in the widespread styles of worship encountered in churches and denominations around the world today” (*High Impact African-American Churches*, p. 87).

Such statements should cause us to wonder if God cares how we worship him at all. If Barna and Jackson are right, one form of worship is equally as valid as another form. Consequently, the God of truth has acquiesced to relativism and has left to the whims of sinful human beings the guidelines for the central function of the church—worship. This I do not accept. This we need not accept because the Bible does tell us much about the worship of God, both in terms of method and motive. John Frame makes this point when he writes:

“Therefore, we must seek above all to do what pleases [God]. To do this, we cannot trust our own imaginations. Nadab and Abihu trusted their own wisdom, and God judged them severely. Can any of us trust ourselves to determine, apart from Scripture, what God does and does not like

in worship? Our finitude and sin disqualify us from making such judgments. For such a serious decision—potentially a life-and-death decision—we must seek God’s own wisdom” (*Worship in Spirit and in Truth*, p. 39).

In this book, we are commending the Reformed tradition because we are convinced that the Reformed Christian approach holds the most biblically accurate and historically consistent understanding of the Christian life. This also extends to the area of worship. Historically, the Reformed tradition has advocated what is known as the *regulative principle of worship*. According to the Baptist Confession of Faith (1689):

“The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and does good to all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures” (Ch 22, Par 1).

In short, the regulative principle of worship says that our intentional aspects of our worship service toward him are to be only what God has prescribed in the Bible. We are not to worship him in a way inappropriate and inconsistent with his nature (see Deut. 12:4). Rather, we are to do what he commands and how he commands it (see Deut. 12:32). This is the consistent expression of the Reformation mantra *sola Scriptura*.

The Bible must serve as our guide in our worship. We are not to be taken in by the world’s methods or motives. We are to examine every element of our worship service so as to find biblical warrant and justification for the use of that element in the worship of God. Melva Costen writes:

“Use Scripture to undergird the

entire worship event. The use of a lectionary would be helpful, but is not required. Each of the elements in the order of worship should reflect an interweaving of the Scripture(s) and the sermon, so that the congregation might be led to a well-rounded worship experience” (*African-American Christian Worship*, p. 136).

And yet, it is not enough just to examine the elements, but we must also actively set forth a worship that is consistent with our theology. The Bible has a high view of God, so too should our worship. The Bible has a clear and consistent analysis of the human condition, so our worship should reflect this truth. The Bible has an unmistakable emphasis on the person and work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, so too should our worship. The Bible consistently reminds us that we are to make less of ourselves and much of God, so too should our worship. This is the essence of biblically-deduced, God-exalting, human-humbling, and Christ-adoring worship.

The Bible is God’s Word about God. It is the primary source for us knowing who God is and how God works. When we enter into worship, our goal should be to say about God what God says about God. Therefore the Bible is indispensable. Ligon Duncan suggests an excellent approach: “Read the Bible, preach the Bible, pray the Bible, sing the Bible, and see the Bible.” Unfortunately, in the majority of churches in America, particularly predominantly African-American churches, the Bible is nothing more than a prop or an institutional icon. It is present, but we rarely read it, we sporadically preach it, we hardly pray it, we sparingly sing it, and we reluctantly see it. Recovering biblical worship in our churches will begin with the recovery of the Bible as the guide for worship.

(*Experiencing the Truth: Bringing the Reformation to the African-American Church*, edited by Anthony J. Carter, Crossway Books, pp. 95-97)