



# 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**

— August 2012 Issue —

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" 1 Peter 4:10*



### NURSERY SCHEDULE

#### August

05 Pat and Kristy Hines  
12 Kevin and Sara Smith  
19 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett  
26 Vicki Johnson and Melanie Myatt

#### September

02 Jenny and Peter Lovassy  
09 Jon and Tanya Amis  
16 Troy and Jessica Moseley  
23 Nellie McFadden and Amber Solan  
30 Pat and Kristy Hines

### CHURCH CLEANING

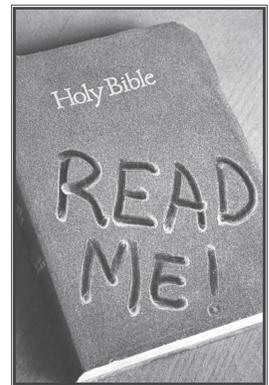
**August** - Moseleys  
**September** - Amises  
**October** - Lovassys  
**November** - Johnsons

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF AUGUST 1, 2012

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$148,215.46
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$159,613.08
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 4,622.66
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 99,798.81
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 9,458.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 110.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$110,366.81
July Love offerings	\$ 0.00
July General Fund offerings	\$ 15,263.22
July Designated Missions	\$ 1,306.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 82,462.80
Missions Fund balance	\$ 17,016.25
General Fund balance	\$ 68,854.24

### Six Counsels of Brownlow North

1. Never neglect daily private prayer; and when you pray, remember that God is present, and that He hears your prayers. (Heb. 11:6).
2. Never neglect daily private Bible reading; and when you read remember that God is speaking to you and that you are to believe and act upon what He says. I believe all backsliding begins with the neglect of these two rules. (John 5:39).
3. Never let a day pass without trying to do something for Jesus. Every night reflect on what Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself, "What am I doing for Him"? (Matt. 5:13-16).
4. If you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room and kneel down and ask God's blessing on it. (Col. 3:17). If you cannot do this, it is wrong. (Rom. 14:23).
5. Never take your Christianity from Christians, or argue that because such and such people do so and so, therefore, you may. (2 Cor. 10:12). You are to ask yourself, "How would Christ act in my place"? And strive to follow Him (John 10:27).
6. Never believe what you feel, if it contradicts God's Word. Ask yourself, "Can what I feel be true if God's Word is true"? And if both cannot be true, believe God and make your own heart the liar. (Rom. 3:4, 1 John 5:10-11).



### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

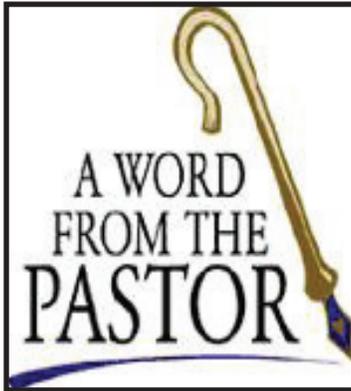
Morning Worship 9:30 AM  
Sunday School 11:00 AM  
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

#### 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)



## Theological Triage

Al Mohler has taken the triage system that is necessary in emergency rooms in our hospitals and applied it to theological debate. He calls it “theological triage.” He says, “The triage nurse in the emergency room provides a good model for our theological debates.”

The word “triage” is associated with the emergency room in America. It originated in WWI by French doctors (triage is from a French word that means to separate, sift, or select). On the battlefield, assessments had to be made about who got treated first. The field doctors divided the injured into three categories:

- 1) Those who are likely to live, regardless of what care they receive.
- 2) Those who are likely to die, regardless of what care they receive.
- 3) Those for whom immediate care might make a positive difference in outcome.

Following this criterion, the battlefield doctors determined who received the priority in treatment. This philosophy has been adopted in hospital emergency rooms. Triage determines the order and priority of emergency treatment. “Patients are brought in with a great variety of injuries—sprained wrists, gunshot wounds, slight stomachaches, and spider bites. In that situation, someone has to make an evaluation of what is most urgent and what can wait” (Mohler).

As it is necessary for emergency rooms to operate on some kind of triage system, so it is necessary that churches implement some kind of theological triage. We actually already do this, but perhaps without much thought to it as we should. There are three categories that we must put doctrines in. We must determine what is primary, what is secondary, and what is discretionary.

We begin with what is **primary**. Primary doctrines establish the Christian faith, apart from which there would be no Christianity. These are the things that are non-negotiable. These are the things that are absolutely necessary.

A student once asked Professor Lewis Drummond how one should relate to Christians who do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ. Dr. Drummond replied, “You relate to them as lost people.” That’s a good answer because the resurrection is primary. People who deny the resurrection are not Christians. There is no Christianity apart from the resurrection. The resurrection is a first order issue.

Next we look at the **secondary**. Secondary issues are important, but the heart doctrines of the Christian faith are not on the line here. Secondary issues will prevent two Christians from joining the same church, but they still regard one another as Christian. We have wonderful fellowship with some Presbyterian brethren but we are not part of the same local assemblies because they baptize babies and we don’t.

There is a place for second-order debate, for friendly conversation over issues like baptism, but this issue does not

keep us from good Christian fellowship. In our debates, however, over secondary issues like baptism, we must remember not to make it a first-order issue.

Last, we come to what we could call **discretionary**, or a third order doctrine. All truth is important, but some doctrines are not of such importance that disagreement on them means we cannot cooperate together in the same church. This area concerns doctrines that we debate among ourselves. But they are not causes for division, or they shouldn’t be!

I have given examples of what is primary (the resurrection) and what is secondary (baptism). Let me give you an example of what is discretionary. In our church, we don’t make eschatology an issue. We debate the timing of the millennium or even the nature of the millennium. We don’t debate the fact that Jesus is coming again, for that is a primary issue, but the details relating to his return lead to some disagreements among us. But this shouldn’t be a cause for division.

Theological triage is necessary. Al Mohler says, “Without the discipline of theological triage, we are constantly at risk of confusing third order issues for first order issues—the original besetting sin of fundamentalism. At the same time, we are also at risk of mistaking first order issues for third order ones—the besetting sin of liberalism. Keeping our equilibrium requires that our triage be clear and self-conscious, articulated and accountable.”

The difficulty we face is in triage concerns which doctrines are primary, which are secondary, and which are discretionary. Without question, the more we can agree on, the more harmony and unity there will be. B.H. Carroll helps us with a comment:

“A church with a little creed is a church with a little life. The more divine doctrines a church can agree on, the greater its power, and the wider its usefulness. The fewer its articles of faith, the fewer its bonds of union and compactness... The modern cry: ‘Less creed and more liberty,’ is a degeneration from the vertebrate to the jellyfish, and means less unity and less morality, and it means more heresy. Definitive truth does not create heresy — it only exposes and corrects. Shut off the creed and the Christian world would fill up with heresy unsuspected and uncorrected, but none the less deadly.”

We must make proper distinctions in doctrine. We must distinguish between what is primary, secondary, and discretionary. Remember what Paul said to the Corinthians, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received” (1 Cor. 15:3). He followed up with doctrines of the first order — the death, burial, resurrection, and appearance of Christ.

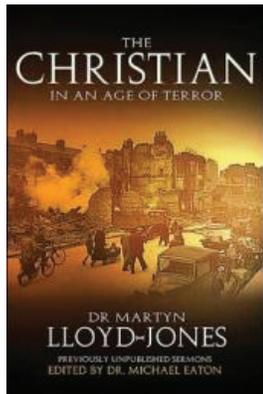
Let’s be sure that we know what the core doctrines are! Let’s fight to the death for them. But let’s also be sure that we know which doctrines are not first in order of importance and treat those who differ with us charitably. There are doctrines that are like vital organs in our body; we don’t have Christianity without them. But there are other doctrines that are like non-vital organs; we can live without them, though the quality of life may not be as good.

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Christian in an Age of Terror: Selected Sermons of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 1941-1950

Edited by Michael Eaton

Kregel Publications, 2008, 280 pages



The present volume contains twenty-five previously unpublished sermons preached during 1941-1950 by the late Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Most of the sermons included were delivered to the congregation of Westminster Chapel during the dark years of WW II.

Divided into six sections, *The Christian in an Age of Terror* includes a series of messages from Acts 12 dealing with a Christian response to persecution; a brief series on the great truths of the gospel from Hebrews 11:1-3; an exposition of the Pauline imperatives found in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14; a

Christian preview of history from Revelation 4-5; and a series of sermons addressing the topic, 'What is a Christian?', from Romans 8. A concluding message delivered on the first Sunday in 1950 from Psalm 127:1-2 reviews the biblical priorities that should shape the Christian's outlook in the midst of the sin, evil, and death that mark life in this fallen world.

Readers will appreciate the passionate biblical exposition of texts which continue to speak with such contemporary relevance to our generation as well. Delivered during a time of international turbulence, the sermons resonate with the pathos of a minister burdened with the spiritual welfare of his hearers and the true spiritual needs of contemporary man.

James M. Garretson



**AUGUST 8** – We are suspending our prayer meeting so we can support the Bible Conference at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Trinity, AL. Please see the bulletin board for information about the services.

**AUGUST 16** – The Sovereign Grace Baptist Pastor's Fellowship will be held at Providence Baptist Church, Pulaski, TN. Services begin at 10 AM. Everyone is invited to attend.

**SEPTEMBER 23** – Andrew Ward, missionary with ABWE to Togo, West Africa, will be preaching in the morning worship hour and presenting his missionary work in Sunday School. Part of his responsibilities will be to train national pastors in theology through the Bible Institute and Baptist Academy of Theology in Africa.

**OCTOBER 15-16** – Regional FIRE Conference at Faith Bible Church, Sharpsburg, Georgia.

**OCTOBER 19-21** – Fall Bible Conference at our church with David Ellis preaching. David has been with us before and we are delighted to have him again. He is pastor of Mount Road Baptist Church, Hinckley, England.

## We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

### CHAPTER 18

THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION (PARAGRAPHS THREE AND FOUR)



3. The infallible assurance of salvation is not an essential part of salvation, for a true believer may wait for a long time, and struggle with many difficulties, before he attains to it. It is not a matter of extraordinary revelation, for if he makes a right use of the means of grace, and is enabled by the Spirit to know the things that believers receive freely from God, he may well attain to it. It therefore becomes the duty of every one to be as diligent as possible in making his calling and election sure. By doing this he will experience greater peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, greater love and thankfulness to God, and an increased strength and cheerfulness in dutiful obedience. These things are the natural outcome of the assurance of salvation, and they constitute strong evidence that assurance does not lead men into loose living.

Ps. 77:1-12; Ps. 88; 119:32; Isa. 50:10; Rom. 5:1, 2, 5; 6:1-2; 14:17; Titus 2:11, 12, 14; Heb. 6:11-12; 1 John 4:13

4. True believers may find that their assurance of salvation fluctuates; sometimes more, sometimes less. They may prove neglectful in preserving it, as for example, if they give way to some particular sin that wounds their conscience and grieves the Spirit; or a strong temptation may suddenly spring upon them; or God may see fit to withdraw 'the light of His countenance' and cause darkness to envelop them, a course He sometimes takes even with those who fear His name. Yet, whatever happens, certain things inevitably remain with them—the new nature which is born of God, the life of faith, the love of Christ and the brethren, sincerity of heart and conscience of duty—and by reason of these and through the work carried on by the Spirit within them, the assurance of salvation may in due time be revived. In the meantime the same influences preserve them from utter despair.

Ps. 30:7; 31:22; 42:5, 11; 51:8, 12, 14; 77:7-8; 116:11; Song 5:2, 3, 6; Lam. 3:26-31; Luke 22:32; 1 John 3:9



### John Owen

"I will not judge a person to be spiritually dead whom I have judged formerly to have had spiritual life, though I see him at present in a swoon (faint) as to all evidences of the spiritual life. And the reason why I will not judge him so is this — because if you judge a person dead, you neglect him, you leave him; but if you judge him in a swoon, (faint) though never so dangerous, you use all means for the retrieving of his life."

# WHY DISABILITIES?

David Murray

There are 600 million people with disabilities in the world? Why so many? What's God's purpose in this?

God's purpose? Surely a good God has nothing to do with people having disabilities?

Yet, in Exodus 4v11, God claims a role in disability: "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

But why? Why disability, Lord? What's your purpose?

## Disability shows us sin

First, disability shows us sin. Whenever we see a person with disability, we cannot but think, "This was not how we were meant to be." God created humanity "very good," perfect in every way. We had physical perfection, uniting indescribable external beauty with smoothly-purring internal functionality. We had intellectual perfection, connecting knowledge, understanding, memory, perception, imagination, and reasoning powers in finely-tuned balance. We had emotional perfection, combining love, joy, and peace in sublime proportion. We had spiritual perfection, fusing moral excellence and communion with God in serene concord. We were made a little lower than the angels, in the image and likeness of God.

But now, when we look at even the best specimen of humanity, what do we see? Imperfection: deformed bodies, broken minds, chaotic emotions, and "soul-less" souls. When we enter hospitals, nursing homes, and respite-care facilities, imperfection overwhelms us.

What happened? Sin happened. Not that people's personal sin brought disability into their lives (though, rarely, that may happen); rather, sin brought God's curse upon the whole of humanity, and on every part of human nature, to one degree or another.

The worst part of this curse is our spiritual disability. And yet it's the

most invisible, the most difficult for us to see or believe. That's one reason God makes the curse more obvious in physical, mental, and emotional impairments. It reminds us that we have a deep and serious spiritual problem. These disabilities preach to us that we are spiritually blind, deaf, lame, ignorant, and senseless. Remember, no matter how bad someone's disability is, our spiritual disability is worse.

## Disability shows us God

Although sin has marred the image of God in us all. In some ways, it is even more marred in people with disabilities. Yet, in other ways, the image of God shines brighter in them than in the relatively able-bodied and mentally capable.



Without "romanticising" disability, we often see people with disabilities displaying much greater openness, joy, sincerity, purity, warmth, genuineness, integrity, sympathy, and even love. They often don't have the same suspicion, cynicism, hypocrisy, and deceit that others regularly manifest.

We don't just see God's image more clearly through disability; we also see God's grace more brightly. We see God's grace to us by contrast and ask ourselves: "Who made you to differ, and what have you that you didn't receive?"

We see God's grace in Christ's care and concern for the disabled. He not only healed many of them when He walked among us, vividly picturing what He can do for our souls, but He also showed His yearning heart for them: "Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor

and crippled and blind and lame" (Luke 14:21)

We see God's grace in the salvation of the disabled. While there are difficult questions surrounding the spiritual responsibility of people with mental impairment, we must surely acknowledge that God can and has saved many people with disabilities. In some ways, the salvation of a person with disability shows even more clearly that salvation is by grace not works!

And, ultimately, we will see God's grace in heaven, when he will showcase the glorified bodies and minds of those who suffered so much in this world. With what delight will he shout: "Look what I've done with this body, with this mind, with this soul!"

## Disability shows us Humanity

Disability shows us humanity in its heights and in its depths. We are taken to humanity's heights when we observe the sacrificial love, tender care, and persevering patience that family, friends, and other caregivers lavish upon those with disabilities. By showing us the inestimable value and worth of every human life, they provoke us to good works and to worship the God whom they image.

But disability also shows us humanity in its depths. 90% of children found to be with Down Syndrome are murdered before they see the light. Some children born with disabilities are victims of infanticide, official and unofficial. And even those who are spared to live in this world still face much sinful prejudice and cruelty.

Let's grieve over humanity in its vicious depths, even in our own prejudices. Let's continue to pray for God's deliverance of our society from its terrible crimes against these little ones. And let's encourage, appreciate, and imitate those who show us humanity in its heights of selfless love. As one caregiver said, "I treat every disabled person as Jesus in distressing disguise."