



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 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

January

08 Jon and Tanya Amis
15 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
22 Troy and Jessica Moseley
29 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan

February

05 Kevin and Sara Smith
12 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett
19 Melanie Myatt and Hannah McFadden
26 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams

CHURCH CLEANING

January - Moseleys
February - Dean & Linda Olive
March - Palazzolos
April - Marshalls

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2012

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$135,142.35
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$124,809.20
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 12,574.63
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$169,542.24
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 20,530.00
Disaster Relief Offerings (ytd)	\$ 389.36
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 3,566.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$201,914.10
December Love offerings	\$ 2,000.00
December General Fund offerings	\$ 27,919.75
December Designated Missions	\$ 16,800.00
December Disaster Relief Offerings	\$ 0.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 91,422.42
Missions Fund balance	\$ 28,455.26
General Fund balance	\$ 99,849.70



Special Day of Services February 19

Preacher

Barry King

Pastor of Wood Green Baptist
Church, London, England

Director of Grace Baptist
Partnership

Service Schedule

- 9:30 AM – Pastor King preaching
- 11:00 AM – presentation of Grace Baptist Partnership
- 12:00 PM – Lunch
- 1:30 PM – Pastor King preaching

Barry King is an American ministering in England. He is involved in an extensive church planting ministry there and is expanding that work to many other countries.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

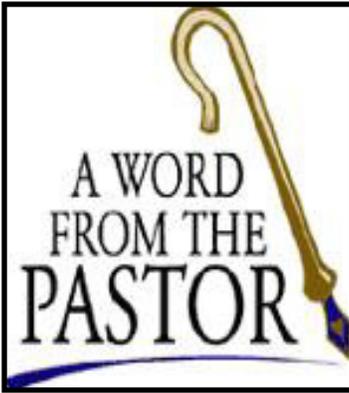
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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)



And It Was So

There are many recurring phrases in Genesis 1 that highlight the power and plan of God in creation. What are they? “God created” or “God made,” “God said,” “God saw,” “God called,” “Let there be,” “there was evening and there was morning,”

followed by a numerical designation, “the first day,” “the second day,” etc., and “it was good.”

Also among the recurring phrases are the words, “and it was so.” With the announcements, statements, commands, and evaluations that are present in this first chapter of the Bible, there is also this repeated report, “and it was so.”

These words are found six times, vv. 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, and 30 (and we ought to include v. 3 though it isn’t the exact phrase). This phrase tells us that creation took place just as God had planned. What God declared by the word of his power came to pass! What God said happened.

God said let there be light “and there was light” (3). God said let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters... “and it was so” (7). God said let the waters under the heavens be gather together into one place, and let the dry land appear, “and it was so” (9). God said let the earth sprout vegetation... “and it was so” (11). God said let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens... “and it was so” (15). God said let the earth bring forth living creatures... “and it was so” (24). And God said that he gave man every plant yielding seed... “and it was so” (30).

God never speaks empty, powerless words. He began with nothing yet spoke all things into existence. God said “and it was so!” And this runs right through the creation narrative as a refrain! This is classic cause and effect. The *said* accounts for the *so* and the *so* is the result of the *said*.

What power there is in the Word of God, spoken or written! When God commands, it is done. When God promises, it is fulfilled. When God speaks, it comes to pass! This recurring declaration, “and it was so,” leaves no doubt about the certainty of the creative word of God.

There was no failure with the spoken word at creation and there is no failure with God’s written word now. We can’t even imagine God speaking or commanding something to be and it not coming to pass. That’s because he is omnipotent and can do all that he says, and because he is pure, holy, and true, and will surely do all that he says.

We can be assured, therefore, that every promise

made by God (and threat) will be perfectly fulfilled. Not all has come to pass yet, but as Jesus said, “till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Mt 5:18).

The words from Genesis 1, “and it was so,” are not found in every chapter in the Bible, but the thought surely is. Think of a few episodes in the book of Genesis where these words apply.

God told Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would surely die. And when they ate of it, they did die spiritually, and later physically. So we exclaim, “and it was so,” just like God said. God told Noah to prepare an ark for his family because he was going to destroy the earth. “And it was so.” God told Abraham that he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because their wickedness was so great. “And it was so.” The cities were utterly consumed and went up in smoke. And God told Abraham that he would give him and Sarah a child in their old age. “And it was so.” Isaac was born and Abraham had an heir.

We could go through every book of the Bible and thus illustrate the power of God’s Word! God brought his people out of Egypt; God brought them into the Promised Land; God preserved his people when Haman plotted against them; God sent them the promised Messiah! And he has brought salvation to us through Jesus Christ.

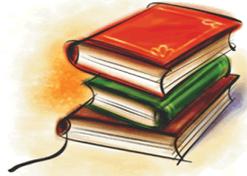
Psalms 33:9 sums up everything God spoke into existence that is recorded in Genesis 1. It also applies to every promise in the Bible. “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”

And this is true in our own experiences. God promises to save all who believe on his Son. Have you not found that to be true? Can you not say, “and it was so?” And what about the peace he promises, the help he promises, and the grace sufficient to meet every trial that he promises, can you not say, “and it was so?” God is true to his word. And that is why we need not worry about today or tomorrow.

We should, therefore, keep our eye focused on the promises of God’s word as we read the Bible this year and remember that on the last day it shall be said, “and it was so.” It has been the case so far and it will be so until the very end. Is there anything to hard with the Lord? No, nothing is impossible with God!

May this simple phrase, “and it was so,” banish all fear and doubt from our minds and hearts! May it make us strong in faith. God’s Word stands forever true. We can be assured that whatever God has promised, “it shall be said of it by-and-by, ‘and it was so’” (Spurgeon).

BOOK REVIEW

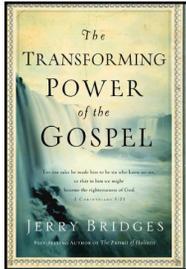


The Transforming Power of the Gospel

by Jerry Bridges

Navpress, 192 pages, 2012

Also available in Audio and for Kindle



The apostle Paul writes that we are to be transformed, but for many Christians, figuring out how to approach spiritual transformation can be elusive. Bestselling author Jerry Bridges (*The Pursuit of Holiness, Respectable Sins*, etc.) helps us understand that we have available to us the ultimate power source for true spiritual growth: the gospel.

In *The Transforming Power of the Gospel*, Bridges guides you through a thorough examination of what the biblical meaning of grace is and how it applies to your life; how Jesus' work in His life and death applies to the believer in justification and adoption; why basic spiritual disciplines are necessary for spiritual growth; and what role the Holy Spirit plays in both definitive and progressive sanctification.

This is Jerry Bridges at his best: honest, biblically-grounded, and wanting to help you become more Christlike.

Back by Popular Demand!

Well, maybe not by popular demand, but several men have requested that we begin the men's reading group again. We will begin reading on Wednesday, Feb 1, 6-7 AM, at the church. We will start off by reading Gardiner Spring's book, *The Distinguishing Traits of Christian Character*. It is available for 99 cents on Kindle. If you need a hard copy, let the pastor know and he will put in an order (\$11.50).



JANUARY 29 – Sunday School lesson by Dr. David Murray via DVD. The subject is *God's Technology: Training our Children to Use Technology to God's Glory*. Dr. Murray is professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

FEBRUARY 4 – Annual Church Business meeting in the afternoon. All church members should be in attendance. The lunch menu for our first Sunday meal is Italian – please look

for the sign-up sheet.

FEBRUARY 19 – Barry King, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Wood Green, London, England, will be preaching in both worship services and will take the Sunday School hour to tell us about his ministry of helping to plant churches in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe.

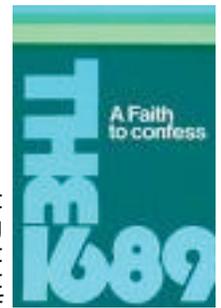
MARCH 15 – We are hosting the Sovereign Grace Pastor's Fellowship on Thursday, March 15. Services will begin at 10 AM. God willing, there will be three pastors preaching God's Word. The church will be providing lunch. Services begin at 10 AM. The meeting isn't for pastors only. All are welcome who want to hear God's Word preached and fellowship with brethren from other churches.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith CHAPTER 14

SAVING FAITH

(PARAGRAPHS ONE, TWO AND THREE)



1. The grace of faith by which the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls is the work of the Spirit in their hearts. Normally it is brought into being through the preaching of the Word. By the Word and its ministry, by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, by prayer, and also by other means appointed by God, faith is increased and strengthened.

Luke 17:5; Acts 20:32; Rom. 10:14, 17; 2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:2

2. By faith a Christian believes everything to be true that is made known in the Word, in which God speaks authoritatively. He also perceives in the Word a degree of excellence superior to all other writings, indeed to all things that the world contains. The Word shows the glory of God as seen in His various attributes, the excellence of Christ in His nature and in the offices He bears, and the power and perfection of the Holy Spirit in all the works in which He is engaged. In this way the Christian is enabled to trust himself implicitly to the truth thus believed, and to render service according to the different requirements of the various parts of Scripture. To the commands he yields obedience; when he hears threatenings he trembles; as for the divine promises concerning this life and that which is to come, he embraces them. But the principal acts of saving faith relate in the first instance to Christ as the believer accepts, receives and rests upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life; and all by virtue of the covenant of grace.

Ps. 19:7-10; 119:72; Isa. 66:2; John 1:12; 15:14; Acts 15:11; 16:31; 24:14; Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 11:13.

3. Saving faith has its gradations. It may be weak or strong. Yet, like all other kinds of saving grace, even at its lowest ebb it is quite different in its nature from the faith and common grace of temporary believers. In consequence, though it may be frequently attacked and weakened, it wins through to victory, developing in many Christians until they attain to full assurance through Christ, who is both the 'author and finisher of our faith'.

Matt. 6:30; Rom. 4:19, 20; Eph. 6:16; Col. 2:2; Heb. 5:13, 14; 6:11, 12; 12:2; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:4, 5



John Owen

“To believe that He will preserve us is, indeed, a means of preservation. God will certainly preserve us, and make a way of escape for us out of the temptation, should we fall. We are to pray for what God has already promised. Our requests are to be regulated by His promises and commands. Faith embraces the promises and so finds relief.”

The Church and Controversy

Gregory A. Wills

The church has never been free of controversy for any substantial period. Sometimes it occurs when persons from the outside attack the church's teachings, practices or leaders. But more commonly, controversy originates within. False doctrine emerges within the church and creates division and controversy. False teachers can be quite winsome in promoting their errors, and gain substantial numbers of followers within the church.

This should not surprise us. Jesus foretold it. "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Mt 7:15). Peter warned that "there will be false teachers among you" (2 Pt 2:1). The apostolic churches were afflicted with "false apostles" (2 Cor 11:13; Rev 2:2) and "false brothers" (2 Cor 11:26; Gal 2:4). And when the early church was beset by controversy over false teaching, Tertullian reminded his brethren that this should not shock them, since "it was an apostle that betrayed Christ."

Controversy nevertheless is often unjustified. Not every difference of opinion, disagreement or discourtesy demands controversy. Indeed most do not. Most differences within the church are genuinely minor matters that require only humble forbearance, or at most, gentle remonstrance followed by humble forbearance. We ought to abjure a controversial spirit. Delight in controversy can hardly be right. At times churches have entertained and encouraged controversy over relatively inconsequential matters. This is divisiveness and a failure to love and forbear. At times Christians have pursued controversy with a mean spirit or by such crooked means as deceit or slander. This is sin.

And controversy is always tragic. The presence of controversy reveals that error, immorality and divisiveness have already done

considerable damage within the church. But the controversy itself also produces injury. And the injury generally extends in surprising ways to areas well beyond the actual field of battle.

Controversy, however, is all too often necessary. To reject controversy when the church is threatened by error, immorality or divisiveness is far more destructive than the war against it. The toleration of false teaching, immorality and divisiveness can exchange the true gospel for "a different gospel" (Gal 1:6), can change the Lord's Supper into an observance in which "it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat" (1 Cor 11:20) and can bring upon a church the judgment of the Lord, who said to an ancient church, "I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam... So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans" (Rev 2:14-15). The cost of controversy is high, but the

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cost of avoiding controversy is often far higher. Controversy damages the church, but failure to oppose error and sin dooms large portions of it. Better to cure the patient, even though it results in some scars, than to suffer the patient's death in the name of peace.

The absence of controversy therefore does not necessarily indicate a healthy state of affairs. Orthodoxy and righteousness have often suffered great loss without any controversy at all. When error begins to spread, there will be no controversy unless someone stands against it. If we fail to controvert the error and we shun controversy for the sake of unity and peace, not only will we fail to achieve unity and peace, but we will also be in danger of losing the

gospel itself.

Christians therefore have a duty to engage in controversy, for it is our duty to controvert error and immorality. And we rightly honor those who have prevailed over heresy, even when it entailed considerable controversy. Athanasius stood "against the world" when he pressed the controversy to defend the full deity of Christ Jesus, and Christians still honor him for it. Southern Baptists rightly honor such leaders as Adrian Rogers, W.A. Criswell, Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler for their defense of the truth of the full inspiration of the Bible, despite the considerable controversy it involved.

Controversy produces a number of benefits to the church. Controversy tests us. When Paul corrected the errors and sins of the church at Corinth, he explained that the factions that existed among them were necessary to test the church: "There must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized" (1 Cor 11:19). Controversy also serves to purify the church. If pursued in accordance with truth and righteousness, it drives from the church the error and unrighteousness that was corrupting it. Controversy additionally serves to elucidate and advance revealed truth. Augustine recognized that heretics, whose false teaching afflicts the church in every generation, nevertheless "train her in wisdom." False teaching compels Christians to search the Scriptures thoroughly in order to ascertain, establish, and defend its true teachings.

Taken from "Crawford H. Toy: Southern Baptists and the Lessons of Controversy," in *Ministry by His Grace and for His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles*, Founders Press, 2011. Gregory Wills is professor church history at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.