



# MGrace 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 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

#### July

01 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams  
08 Peter and Jenny Lovassy  
15 Jon and Tanya Amis  
22 Troy and Jessica Moseley  
29 Amber Solan and Hannah McFadden

#### August

01 Pat and Kristy Hines  
08 Kevin and Sara Smith  
15 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett  
22 Vicki Johnson and Melanie Myatt

### CHURCH CLEANING

**July** - Hammacks  
**August** - Moseleys  
**September** - Amises  
**October** - Lovassys

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JULY 1, 2012

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$134,750.84
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$144,574.63
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 528.40
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 84,535.59
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 8,152.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 110.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 94,297.59
June Love offerings	\$ 0.00
June General Fund offerings	\$ 11,374.90
June Designated Missions	\$ 1,302.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 80,162.70
Missions Fund balance	\$ 5,895.61
General Fund balance	\$ 83,851.39

## Another Declaration of Independence: Freedom in Christ

Mike Pohlman

As I prize my freedom as an American, I am moved to consider a greater freedom—my freedom in Christ. It is the freedom that comes with being a disciple of Jesus Christ. "If you abide in my word," our Lord declares, "you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32).

The Fourth of July is a wonderful time to consider our freedom—as Americans and as Christians. Our national freedom is precious, but our freedom in Christ is of infinite worth.

The saving truth that Jesus speaks of in John 8:32 brings ultimate freedom—freedom from sin and death and the devil; freedom from a life of futility and an eternity of wrath. It is freedom from the tyranny of hate and bitterness and cruelty. It is the freedom to love God and neighbor.

May this "Declaration of Independence" be on our lips and in our hearts this Fourth of July holiday.

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

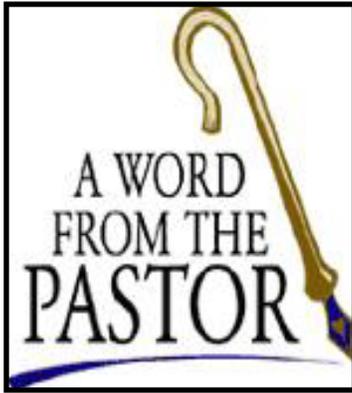
Morning Worship 9:30 AM  
Sunday School 11:00 AM  
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

#### 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)



## Thanking Our Good God for Bad Things

God is good but he providentially allows bad things to happen in our lives. He allows the bad for our good. He is like a good doctor who sometimes prescribes medicine that taste awful. He is like a good surgeon who brings great pain to set a broken limb. He does this

for our good.

The Psalmist said of God in Psalm 119:68, “You are good and do good.” On either side of this text are two statements about the importance of bad things in our lives. Verse 67, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word,” and verse 71, “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.” God is good even though he ordains bad things to happen in our lives. One of the avenues of bad coming into lives that produces what is good, is affliction.

The word *affliction* indicates trouble. It implies pain and distress. This pain and distress can come from a variety of sources – illness, loss, suffering, etc. It refers to adversity of all kinds. Yet the Bible teaches us that God is the ultimate source of affliction. He afflicts his children according to his will (1 Kings 8:35; Isa. 64:12; Nah. 1:12). Since God works all things according to the counsel of his will (Eph. 1:11), then he most surely afflicts his children for good purpose.

Psalm 119:67 & 71 tell us why God afflicts us, and the profit we receive from it.

Note first of all the reason God afflicts us. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word” (67). Affliction brings us to our senses! The Psalmist speaks of going astray *before* he was afflicted. The affliction was used by God to bring him back into harmony with God’s word. His going astray may have been through carelessness rather than willful departure, but he erred nonetheless!

God is like a loving parent who disciplines his/her child in order to correct their erring ways. “For whom the LORD loves he chastens (disciplines), and scourges (whips) every son whom he receives” (Heb. 12:6). God does this because he loves us! The time of affliction then is a time of love! “Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty” (Job 5:17).

William Cowper’s brother, John, came to Christ on his sick-bed. It was in affliction that he discovered he was “marked out for mercy.” He said to his brother before his death, “I am sure that God has visited me with this sickness, in order to teach me what I was too proud to learn in health.”

The purpose of affliction is to put us back on the right path! Joel Beeke says, “Sanctified affliction cures sin.” We often become inattentive to the Lord – we confide in the flesh, fail to pray, enjoy carnal allurements, etc – and the Lord comes with affliction and we are awakened to our backslidings! We are humbled by affliction and it causes us to put things in the right perspective. Thank God for affliction.

Note secondly the profit we receive from affliction. “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes” (71). The last thing we usually think about when we are afflicted is the good that it does us. But it is good for us to be afflicted! Our afflictions are worthwhile. The question is, do we see the good in them.

Prosperity often blinds us. It takes adversity to open our eyes. That is why the Psalmist can say, “It is good for me.” He knew this by experience. Luther said, “I never knew the meaning of God’s word until I came into affliction. I have always found it one of my best school-masters.” Charles Bridges asks, “How else can we have experimental acquaintance with the promises of God save in those situations for which the promises were given?” God says, “Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me” (Ps 50:15).

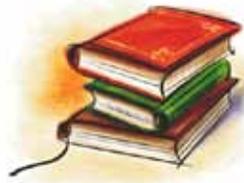
So affliction is good for us. There are some things good which are not pleasant and this is one of them. Spurgeon quotes a man that said, “Sin is pleasant, but unprofitable; and sorrow is profitable, but unpleasant” (Wm. Secker). He quotes another man who said, “I am mended by my sickness, enriched by my poverty, and strengthened by my weakness” (A. Wright).

Affliction is beneficial because it brings us to learn God’s statutes (71) and it brings us to keep God’s word (67). A.W. Pink said, “It is in seasons of temporal prosperity that we are most apt to decline spiritually, and generally we have to pass through deep waters of trouble before we are restored—the snapping dog of adversity is employed to recover the strayed sheep. Afflictions are blessings in disguise when they cool our lusts, wean us from the world, make us realize our weakness, and cast us back immediately upon God.”

How many people do you suppose ever think that the reason an affliction has come into their lives is due to God’s awakening grace? Not very many, I suggest! But God allows the affliction, not to hurt us but to awaken us and drive us to him. That being the case, we ought to thank God for afflictions!

Let’s rejoice that God is pruning and chastening us for our good. May we say as Joseph did to his brothers, “You meant it to me for evil, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20). May we believe as Paul did, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purposes” (Rom. 8:28).

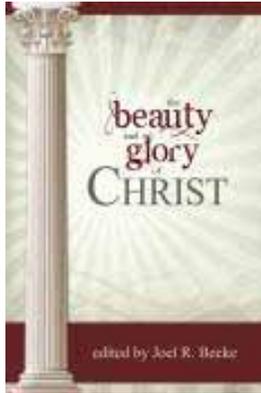
# BOOK REVIEW



## The Beauty and Glory of Christ

edited by Joel Beeke

Reformation Heritage Books, 256pp.



Enjoy the spiritual feast served in *The Beauty and Glory of Christ*, a compilation of the addresses given at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary's annual conference in August 2010 at Grand Rapids, Michigan. Each essay sets before readers the unsearchable riches of the Lord Jesus Christ, the hope of our glory and the glory of our hope. Topics include:

1. Christ's beauty prophesied and typified in Isaiah and Song of Solomon.
2. Christ's glory in His incarnation, earthly ministry, and death on the cross.
3. Christ in historical theology and everyday life.
4. And Christ's glorious exaltation in His resurrection and in His triumph in the book of Revelation.

Contributors include David Murray, Iain Campbell, Richard Phillips, Gerald Bilkes, David Carmichael, Albert Martin, Joel Beeke, William VanDoodewaard, Ray Pennings, and James Grier.



**JULY 3** – Prayer Meeting will be Tuesday, July 3, instead of Wednesday, July 4. We will gather to pray for our leaders and for revival.

**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.

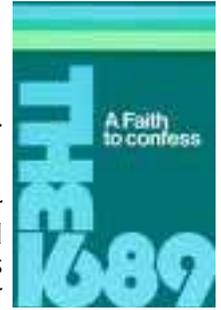
**OCTOBER 19-21** – Fall Bible Conference at our church with David Ellis preaching. David has been with us before and we are delighted to have him again. He is pastor of Mount Road Baptist Church, Hinckley, England.

## We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

### CHAPTER 18

THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION (PARAGRAPHS ONE AND TWO)



1. Although temporary believers and other unregenerate persons may be deceived by erroneous, self-engendered notions into thinking that they are in God's favor and in a state of salvation—false and perishable hopes indeed!—yet all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to conduct themselves in all good conscience according to His will, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace. They may rejoice in hope of the glory of God, knowing that such a hope will never put them to shame.  
Job 8:13,14; Matt. 7:22,23; Rom. 5:2,5; 1 John 2:3; 3:14,18,19,21,24; 5:13.
2. The certainty of salvation enjoyed by the saints of God is not mere conjecture and probability based upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith based upon the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel. It also results from the inward evidences of the graces of the Holy Spirit, for to those graces God speaks promises. Then again, it is based upon the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, for He bears His witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Such witness results in the keeping of our hearts both humble and holy.  
Rom. 8:15,16; Heb. 6:11,17-19; 2 Pet. 1:4,5,10,11; 1 John 3:1-3.



The sermons by Wyn Hughes, pastor of Heath Evangelical Church, Cardiff, Wales, are edifying and evangelistic. You will find help for yourself and may direct a particular sermon to a friend in need. You can find his sermons at <http://www.heath-church.org/>.



## John Owen

“How can we possibly believe the promises concerning Heaven, immortality, and glory, when we do not believe the promises concerning our present life? And how can we be trusted when we say we believe these promises but make no effort to experience them ourselves? It is just here that men deceive themselves. It is not that they do not want the Gospel privileges of joy, peace and assurance, but they are not prepared to repent of their evil attitudes and careless life-styles. Some have even attempted to reconcile these things and ruined their souls. But without the diligent exercise of the grace of obedience, we shall never enjoy the graces of joy, peace and assurance.”

# The Sufficiency of Christ: Confronting the Church's Waning Confidence in the Son of God

Don Currin

In his classic satire *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis imagined this mythical letter from the demon Screwtape to his apprentice, Wormwood, who was attempting desperately to prevent a Christian believer from practicing biblical Christianity:

My Dear Wormwood,

The real trouble about the set (beginning) your patient is living in is that it is merely Christianity.

They all have individual interests, of course, but the bond remains mere Christianity. What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of "Christianity And." ...If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian colouring...

Your affectionate uncle,  
Screwtape

C. S. Lewis exposed in his allegory one of Satan's clever strategies against the Church ..... that Christ alone is not adequate for His people. The Devil has successfully cast a shadow upon the sufficiency of Christ by convincing many believers that what they really need is "Christ And." His scheme of Christ plus something has been pervasive in the contemporary church and opened the door to a flood of man-centered philosophies that include Christ plus visualization, Christ plus psychology, Christ plus mysticism, Christ plus emotional healing, Christ plus self-esteem, Christ plus knowledge, Christ plus superstition, Christ plus spiritual warfare, Christ plus church growth strategies, etc. Believing that Christ alone is inadequate to sustain them in their needs, countless Christians and spiritual leaders have relied heavily upon human reasoning to remedy their moral, emotional, and ecclesiastical ills.

Unfortunately, the problem has worsened as there are those who have completely replaced Christ with religious practices and principles to solve their problems. How tragic! Personally, I'm tired of Christianity without Christ! I'm tired of principles without a Person. I'm tired of ten-step formulas that are promoted as a

sure cure for all the evils known to man. As a teenage girl in our church on one occasion lamented, "At times I feel as if I am more committed to godliness than I am to God."

Contrary to the experts, the Scripture sounds a certain sound when it declares that Christ has been made unto us sanctification (I Corinthians 1:30), that He saves His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21), and that his divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). Perhaps those who feel they need a seminar every three months, or should get specialized counseling periodically, really need to look to Jesus Christ to put their chronic woes into remission.

John Newton expressed in one of his hymns the frustration of attempting to bring his passions under the control of God by using cheap substitutes for Christ. Then he relates his fulfillment of trusting the Son of God only.

*By various maxims, forms and rules-  
That pass for wisdom in our schools-  
I sought my passions to restrain,  
But all my efforts proved in vain.  
But since my Savior I have known  
Art all my rules reduced to one-  
To keep my Lord by faith in view-  
This faith supplies, and motive too.*

A. W. Tozer affirmed, "That man who has struggled to purify himself and has had nothing but repeated failures will experience real relief when he stops tinkering with his own soul and looks away to the perfect One. While he looks at Christ the very things he has so long been trying to do will be getting done in him."

How long will believers look to men? How long will those in the church depend upon self for deliverance from temptation? C. H. Spurgeon was right when he said that "failure follows on the heels of self confidence." Isn't high time that men cease to rely on the arm of the flesh? Perhaps the question to ask oneself is "when the Son of Man comes will he find faith" in me?

In the midst of a spiritual awakening in the British Isles in the early part of the last century, a chorus was birthed. The lyrics reveal the utter dependence on God that those who were converted had.

*I cannot do without Him,  
I cannot stand alone.  
I have no strength or goodness,  
No wisdom of my own,  
But Thou beloved Savior,  
Art all in all to me,  
And weakness will be power,  
While leaning hard on Thee.*

Asahel Nettleton, one of the prominent ministers in the Second Great Awakening, made it his practice not to spend prolonged periods of time counseling people who were under an awful burden of sin. His reasoning was he found that it discouraged them from seeking Christ alone for salvation. He recorded in his journal an experience he had in Nassau, New York, in April of 1830:

"I have since thought that the effect of my leaving them as I did in the advanced stages of their conviction was evidently beneficial. It drove them from all human dependence. Distressing as it is, and cruel as it may seem, it is necessary for them to feel that no arm but God's can help them."

For those who would censure Mr. Nettleton as a careless prophet who was probably unfruitful in his labors because of his passivity in "drawing the net", an estimated 30,000 souls were ushered into the Kingdom of heaven under his ministry.

Perhaps God is attempting to use the frustration and futility that you have encountered from your reliance on other sources. If that has been your experience, look to the Son of God Who is mighty to save and sustain.

The story is told about the late William Randolph Hearst who invested a fortune in collecting rare works of art. On one occasion, he read about some valuable pieces of art and decided to add them to his collection. He sent his agent abroad to locate and purchase them. Months went by before his agent returned to report to Hearst that the pieces of art had at last turned up- they were stored in his own warehouse. Hearst had purchased them years before! Likewise, it may surprise you that the divine aid that you have desired for years may be within your grasp if you will only rest confidently and completely in Him.