



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

— November 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

November

04 Jon and Tanya Amis
11 Nellie McFadden and Amber Solan
18 Pat and Kristy Hines
25 Kevin and Sara Smith

December

02 Kristin Scarborough and Lori Hewlett
09 Vicki Johnson and Melanie Myatt
16 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
23 Troy and Jessica Moseley
30 Jon and Tanya Amis

CHURCH CLEANING

November - Lovassys
December - Moseleys

Thank you to All who helped clean our church building this year.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2012

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$188,609.39
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$198,985.05
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 4,867.25
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$139,012.48
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 12,758.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 2,595.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$154,365.48
October Love offerings	\$ 2,035.00
October General Fund offerings	\$ 13,134.01
October Designated Missions	\$ 407.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 87,865.62
Missions Fund balance	\$ 17,879.94
General Fund balance	\$ 71,006.10

**"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)**

If you ever struggle to render thanks to God as you ought, here are some ways to cultivate a heart of gratitude.

- ✓ Be humble and focused on God
- ✓ Be thankful for everyday blessings
- ✓ Spend time in the Word of God to learn His promises
- ✓ Always thank God in the midst of adversity and trials
- ✓ Record blessings in your Bible or a journal and continually reference them when you encounter difficulty
- ✓ Express your gratitude publicly

A grateful spirit and a thankful heart are an integral part of a holy life. The person who recognizes God's goodness and is thankful brings joy to the Father and glory to His name.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

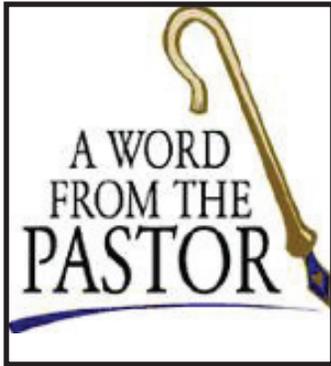
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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)



Being Thankful

November is a month that resounds with the note of thanksgiving. We celebrate a national holiday with that very name—Thanksgiving Day. It is always observed on the fourth Thursday of the month of November. It is my favorite holiday.

The day reminds me that giving thanks to God for all that I have is not only a duty but also a great privilege.

It has become a tradition for some of my Facebook friends to post something for which they are thankful every day in November. I followed a number of people last year, including some in our church, that echoed 30 points of gratitude, one for every day of the month. Many are doing this again this year. I enjoy reading their posts because they remind me to have a thankful heart.

One of my Kentucky friends got a late start this year in her Facebook posts featuring the sweet note of thanksgiving. On day three of the month she said, “Two days behind: Day one: I am thankful that God sought me out and I’m one of his. Day two: I am thankful for the love God has for me, knowing I am not worthy. Day three: I am thankful for a God that knows what is best for me even though I sometimes don’t think so.”

Posts like that make Facebook edifying! I know there are many drawbacks of social media but it can be an instrument to glorify God. I hope that if you do Facebook that you will seek to encourage others spiritually, along with the other things that you share. Status updates that glorify the Lord and encourage others are the best.

A friend in Texas has for a long time now extended her giving thanks to everyday of the year! And she not only posts one item for which she is thankful every day, but three! Reading her posts are the most encouraging and uplifting messages that appear in my feed every day. Here are two examples of recent posts made by my friend.

“Today I am Thankful for these three things: 1) Thankful to be still thinking about yesterday’s message on Hope. What a Hope the believer in Christ has. 2) Watching a new stalk of bananas growing outside my dining room window - the most fascinating developing fruit ever—a new row of bananas form every day. 3) It is written of Hudson Taylor, ‘To be the servant of all was the privilege he desired most.’”

“Today I am Thankful for these three things: 1) Thankful for my friend _____’s sense of humor—after visiting with me for a couple of hours she said she had to go home as ‘she was hoarse from listen-

ing so much.’ lol 2) Thankful for a beautiful ‘sweet potato plant’ trailing along my fence. 3) The truth of Romans 5:1 – ‘Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’”

Echoing thanks is something the Bible bids us to do. Psalm 9:1 is a testimony of a man that should be ours too. “I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.”

This verse tells us that thanks should be expressed to God from our hearts, meaning our entire being. Going through the motions of giving thanks should be avoided. Being truly thankful to God should be our goal. We should feel and sense the need to offer thanks to God and should do so from our hearts!

Bob Gonzales, professor at Reformed Baptist Seminary, speaks of “the common sense of thanksgiving.” He means that there is an “intuitive sense possessed by all men of the ethical propriety of giving thanks.” He goes on to say, “All men in their heart-of-hearts instinctively recognize the appropriateness of expressing gratitude to another for benefits received.”

That’s what we should long for and do. This should be automatic! We have received good from a good and gracious God and we should let thanks ascend upward in grateful praise.

But this verse also tells us that for that to happen, we need to recount all of his wonderful deeds. Thinking of the things God has done, not just for us, but all that he has done in creating the world and providentially ruling over all things, should be our focus. And if it is, then we will be overwhelmed with the desire to render thanks unto God!

Giving thanks is the best soul-therapy you will ever experience! It will change your attitudes. It will change your priorities. It will refocus your attention on what is important in life. Being thankful directs us to look to God above, the giver of all that we have. It causes us to say:

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

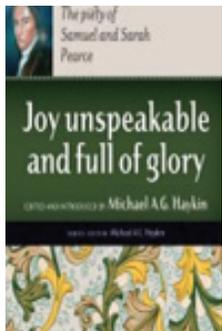
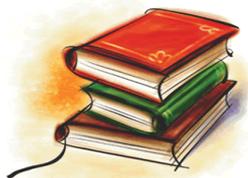
Whether you post things for which you are thankful for on Facebook or not is immaterial. But you should be expressing thanks to God for all that he has done for you! Do you have a thankful heart? Are you giving thanks to the Lord with your whole heart? Are you recounting all of his wonderful deeds and lifting up your voice to the Lord in thankfulness?

Lord, make us truly thankful!

BOOK REVIEW

Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory: The Piety of Samuel and Sarah Pearce

by Michael A. G. Haykin
Joshua Press, 2012, pp. 248



Samuel Pearce, a young eighteenth-century English pastor, was described by his friend and biographer Andrew Fuller as “another Brainerd”—a reference to the celebrated American missionary David Brainerd. Pastor of Cannon Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, England, during the tumultuous 1790s, and a close friend of pioneer missionary William Carey, Pearce played a key role in the early days of the Baptist Missionary Society.

In the providence of God Pearce died at just thirty-three, but in the eyes of many of his contemporaries, he seemed to have condensed a lifetime of holy and joyful ministry into a single decade.

This book examines the piety of Samuel and his wife Sarah through their letters. His marriage to Sarah Hopkins was one of deep love and mutual respect, and she joined him in his passion for the salvation of sinners—both at home and abroad. Through excerpts from Samuel and Sarah’s letters and writings, we are given a window into their rich spiritual life and living piety.



NOVEMBER 21 – A Thanksgiving Prayer Meeting. We will come together for a time of sharing how God has blessed us and of giving thanks to Him for His many blessings.

DECEMBER 9 – Darren Thole, from Providence Presbyterian Church, will be preaching in the morning worship service, and Bob Marsh will be preaching in the evening (pastor Olive will be preaching in England on the 9th and 16th of December).

DECEMBER 16 – Don Currin will be preaching morning and evening.

DECEMBER 23 – We will be joining our friends at Providence Presbyterian Church for a Christmas meal and service. The main meal will be provided by them and we will bring the desserts. The meal begins at 5:00 PM and at 6:00 PM, Pastor Olive will be preaching in the worship service.

DECEMBER 30 – Worship service at 9:30 AM and 6:00 PM but no Sunday School.

JANUARY 6 – Worship service at 9:30 AM and 1:00 PM with Brunch between the services; no Sunday School.

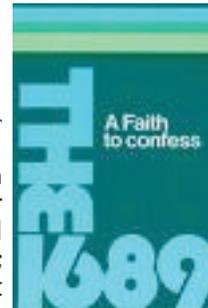
FEBRUARY 3 – Annual Church Business Meeting in the afternoon at 1:30 PM.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 20

THE GOSPEL AND ITS GRACIOUS EXTENT



1. As the covenant of works was broken by man’s sin and was unable to confer life, God in His mercy promised to send Christ, who would be woman-born; and by means of the promise the elect would be called, and faith and repentance wrought in their hearts. In this promise the very substance of the gospel was revealed as the effectual means for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

Gen. 3:15; Rev. 7:9

2. This promise of Christ and of salvation by Him is revealed to men by the Word of God alone. Neither the works of creation and providence, nor the light of nature, reveal Christ and His grace to men, not even in a general or obscure way; much less is it possible by their means for men who lack the revelation of Christ by the promise of the gospel to attain to saving faith or repentance.

Prov. 29:18; Isa. 25:7; 60:2, 3; Rom. 1:17; 10:14, 15, 17

3. The revelation of the gospel to sinners, both to nations and to certain persons, together with the promises and precepts which belong to gospel obedience, has been made at various times and in a variety of places, according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God. The promise of the making known of the gospel has not been made contingent upon any good use made by men of their native abilities developed by means of light common to all, for such a development has never taken place, nor can it do so. Hence in all ages the extent to which the gospel has been proclaimed, whether to wider or more confined areas, has been granted to persons and nations in greatly varying measures according to the all-wise will of God.

Ps. 147:20; Acts 16:7; Rom. 1:18-32

4. The gospel is the only external means of making Christ and saving grace known to men, and it is completely adequate for this purpose. But that men who are dead in their sins may be born again—that is to say, made alive, or regenerated—something further is essential, namely, an effectual, invincible work of the Holy Spirit upon every part of the soul of man, whereby a new spiritual life is produced. Nothing less than such a work will bring about conversion to God.

Ps. 110:3; John 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; Eph. 1:19, 20



John Owen

“Be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you.”

Pride and Prejudice

Iain Hamilton

Of all the dangers that can overtake a Reformed church, pride is surely the worst and most serious. There is, of course, a right kind of pride, a thankfulness to God for our history and heritage. But the pride I am thinking of, is that ugly, self-righteous, self-preening brute that says with the Pharisees, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men” (“We are not like other churches”!).

Such self-regarding censoriousness, is particularly the preserve of the privileged and blessed. You see it often in the lives of the great and the good. Sadly, tragically, such pride can also be seen in the very circles where it ought never to be seen, in the circle of Christ’s disciples.

Of all people, Christians, and Reformed Christians in particular, have the least to be proud about. In rebuking some Christians in Corinth for their pride, Paul exclaimed, “What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”

What have we indeed to boast about? Were we not “dead in trespasses and sins” when God in his grace sent his Son to save us? Were we not guilty, hell-deserving sinners, God’s very enemies, when he “commended his love towards us” and gave up the Lord Jesus Christ to die that sin-bearing, wrath-quenching death of the cross to deliver us from a ruined eternity and bring us ultimately to glory?

Total depravity and unconditional election are not merely doctrines to confess, they are truths to humble us to the dust. And yet, how easily, only too easily, can we allow our vast gospel privileges and blessings to turn

us into self-regarding, narrow-hearted men and women.

One incident in the Gospels illustrates the point. John saw a man driving out demons “in (Jesus’) name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us” (Mk.9:38ff). Not one of us!! Jesus’ response was swift and categoric: “Do not stop him.”

The disciples had become narrow-hearted and exclusive. After all, they were Christ’s disciples, his hand-picked apostles. They

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were “the men.” And anyway, who was this stranger who was casting out demons in Jesus’ name? “He was not one of us,” of that much John and the others were sure. An exclusive spirit had overtaken the disciples; this man did not belong to their privileged group and so they told him to stop what he was doing. The man, however, was clearly doing a good work; he was fighting on the same side as John and the others. He was not in their little group, but he belonged to Jesus!

What are we to make of this incident? Bishop Ryle had this to say: “Here is a golden rule indeed, and one that human nature sorely needs, and has too often forgotten. Men of all branches of Christ’s Church are apt to think that no good can be done in the world, unless it is done by their own party and denomination. They are so narrow-minded, that they cannot conceive the pos-

sibility of working on any other pattern but that which they follow. They make an idol of their own peculiar ecclesiastical machinery, and can see no merit in any other.”

Ryle is not saying, and I am not saying, that Christians should turn a blind eye to sin and evil in other Christians (though we have a marked propensity to see clearly in others what we are blind to in ourselves—at least so said our Saviour). But we must diligently guard our churches from becoming infected with a self-preening, self-regarding spirit, that imagines we are the people and wisdom will die with us (Job 12:1)!

We must see beyond ourselves to all who are fighting the good fight of the faith and warring against our great enemy, the devil. We must cultivate a brotherly spirit towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Of course there will be tensions and difficulties! We all have cherished and prized distinctives—all of us. And, I have no doubt that it is ten thousand times easier to preach this than to practice this, but practice this we must.

What else is the Holy Spirit teaching us from this Gospel incident? The fundamental issue is not, “Is he one of us?”, but, “Is he one of Christ’s?” If nothing else, such large-heartedness will help save us from self-preening censoriousness towards fellow blood-bought brothers and sisters. Our differences will no doubt remain, but the spirit in which we engage in our differences will honour our Saviour.

Iain Hamilton is pastor of Cambridge Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, England. He is also an associate editor of the Banner of Truth Magazine.