



# M Grace Messenger

## GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street  
Madison, AL 35758  
256-837-8821

### GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gbcmadison-al.com>  
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>

*"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters and destinies."*

**DEAN OLIVE, Pastor**

— December 2014 Issue —

*"Do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the Lord with all your heart." 1 Samuel 12:20*

### NURSERY SCHEDULE

#### December

07 Linda Olive and Andrea Page  
14 Vicki Johnson and Lori Hewlett  
21 Amber Solan and Wilma Pinch  
28 Jenny and Peter Lovassy

#### January

04 Linda Olive and Andrea Page  
11 Amber Solan and Wilma Pinch  
18 Jenny and Peter Lovassy  
25 Vicki Johnson and Nellie McFadden

### CHURCH CLEANING

**December** - Olives

*A sincere thank you to all who volunteered to clean the meeting house in 2014. A signup sheet is located at the back of the Worship hall for 2015 cleaning.*

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2014

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$132,630.71
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 137,372.71
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 2,891.06
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$152,153.53
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 6,840.50
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 5,170.00
Benevolence (ytd)	\$ 1,060.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$165,224.03
October Love offerings	\$ 0.00
October General Fund offerings	\$ 15,769.35
October Designated Missions	\$ 715.00
Building Fund balance	\$138,025.02
Missions Fund balance	\$ 6,407.71
General Fund balance	\$ 55,403.95



## Special Christmas Service



We will be joining our friends at Providence Presbyterian Church for a Christmas Meal and Service on Sunday evening, December 14.

The Christmas Dinner will be served at 5 PM. The main course will be provided by the folks at Providence and we are responsible for bringing the desserts.

The Christmas Service will follow the meal at 6 PM. The service will consist of Christmas hymns and a sermon by Pastor Olive.

Everyone is encouraged to come and participate in the fellowship and worship.



### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

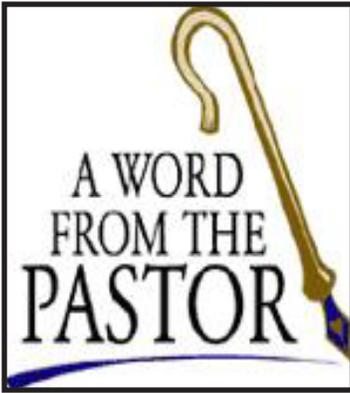
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

#### WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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#### 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)	



## A Birthday to Remember

It is good that we remember the birth of the Son of God, the Savior of the world. We remember one another's birthdays and we celebrate these birthdays in various ways – gifts, cards, cake and ice cream, etc. I'm glad that we remember

the birth of Christ, not in a party atmosphere, of course, but with awe and reverence. We remember his birthday because of who he is and what he came to do.

There are so many names and so many titles for the One born. The song writer asks, *Who is he in yonder stall, at whose feet we humbly we fall?* He answers, *Tis the Lord, the King of glory!* We also answer with him *Tis the Christ of God, Tis the Savior of the world, Tis God with us, Tis Jesus our Lord!*

At his birth he was also called Immanuel, meaning “*God with us*” (Matt 1:23). This captures the wonder of the Incarnation for he truly was God coming as man to be with us. There is no truth in God's Word more mysterious and more incomprehensible than this. A virgin conceived and gave birth to One who was fully God and yet fully Man. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary. She was overshadowed by the Most High God. The child that was born of this virgin maiden was the holy Son of God (Lk 1:26-38).

We embrace this high mystery without question and rejoice that God became a Man. *Veiled in flesh the Godhead see/Hail the incarnate Deity!* Mystery of mysteries is the Incarnation and the Humiliation of Jesus Christ!

The reason he became a man was in order to save men. That Joseph and Mary named him Jesus reflects the great purpose for which he came. The name Jesus means, “*Jehovah saves.*” The angel that appeared to Joseph instructed him to “*call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins*” (Mt 1:21).

O, what a precious name Jesus is to us! None of us would even consider using this name for a son born in our home. We revere it too much to give it to another. We might call our sons Peter, Paul, John, or Timothy, but not Jesus! O, how we love the Savior's name, the sweetest name on earth!

After his birth the angels in glory declared to the shepherds, “*For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord*” (Lk 2:11). We have a theology in miniature in this verse. Christ the Lord came to save us. There was a price to pay to

redeem sinners and Jesus came to pay it. He came to rescue sinners from their plight.

We love the name of Jesus because it tells us of the salvation he brought. “*He came to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). “*He came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief*” (1 Tim 1:15). The mission of the God-Man was a rescue mission. He came to save. He came to save his people from their sins. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it! He didn't come try to save them; he didn't come to do his best to save them; he came to save them and nothing can prevent him from accomplishing this goal. *Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!*

The shepherds on their own initiative made known the news that the Savior who is Christ the Lord had been born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:17-18). They were the first human messengers to proclaim his arrival. We too are to tell the good news to all men everywhere. At the end of all four Gospels, and at the beginning of the book of Acts, we have what is commonly called the Great Commission. Jesus instructed his disciples to “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*”

It is our responsibility and privilege to tell the world that God sent his Son to save sinners. The privilege of making Christ known to the world is reserved for men and women who have come to know him. The shepherds who received the announcement that Christ had been born is our example. They had a wondrous story to tell. Can you imagine the excitement which was evident when they told others what they saw and heard?

We should be like them. It is our great privilege to tell the things we have seen and heard. Like them, we ought to be spreading the word!

*Down in a lowly manger/Our humble Christ was born/And God sent us salvation/That blessed Christmas morn!*

*Go, tell it on the mountain/Over the hills and everywhere/Go tell it on the mountain/That Jesus Christ is born!*

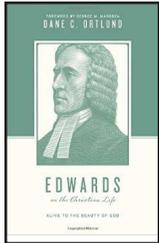
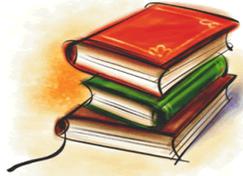
Yes, we have much to celebrate. Christ's birth is most significant. Because of the Incarnation there could be Atonement. Because he took on flesh, he could offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Yes, it is good for us to celebrate the birth of Christ. May we do so with the utmost reverence and gratitude, remembering to tell the good news everywhere that the Savior has come.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God

by Dane C. Ortlund, foreword by George M. Marsden, published by Crossway Books, 2014, 208 pp. This is one of several books in a series on Theologians on the Christian Life.



This may be the closest I have ever personally come to reading a systematic treatment of Jonathan Edwards's theology. To that end, I was enamored with what was written and how it all influenced most every aspect of Jonathan's life. Furthermore, it was evident how Edwards's view of beauty has influenced the likes of John Piper (and, consequently, anyone influenced by Piper!).

This work was an easy and quick read though you will definitely want to be able to read it slowly in parts. You will also want to read with a pen in hand as you will underline and take notes throughout the book. What is more, you will be grateful for the bibliography as you will want to investigate Edwards's thoughts further on some of the topics.

Finally, perhaps the best thing that can be said about a book that is not the Bible is that it drives you into the Bible to study and know and seek to either agree more or disagree completely. In the end, you will find that your knowledge of God is enhanced because Ortlund places Edwards's thought exactly where it was originated...in the mind of God as found in His revealed text, the Bible.

Fans of Jonathan Edwards will love this work. Those who only know of Jonathan Edwards as the preacher of Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God will be fascinated to know what made Edwards long for genuine revival and that was the beauty of God and His creation. I heartily recommend this work to all.

*Terrence Delaney*



**DECEMBER 14** – We will be joining our friends at Providence Presbyterian Church for a Christmas meal at 5 PM followed by a worship service at 6 PM.

**DECEMBER 21** – An early evening service at 5 PM, following by a time of refreshments and Christmas caroling to some very special people.

**DECEMBER 24** – No mid-week meeting.

**DECEMBER 28** – No Sunday School on Sunday morning. Fred Smith will be preaching in the evening service.

**DECEMBER 31** – Prayer meeting will be held as normal. Special attention will be given to resolutions for the new year.

**JANUARY 4** – First Sunday meal after the morning worship service (no Sunday School). The ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be observed at the 12:30 afternoon meeting.

**FEBRUARY 1** – The Annual Church Business Meeting will be held in the afternoon service.

## Spurgeon's Catechism with Scripture Proofs



**Question 6:** How many persons are there in the Godhead?

**Answer:** There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.

**Scriptural Proof:** Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14 [also 1 Corinthians 2:11; 8:6; John 1:1; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3]

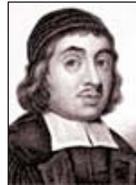
**Commentary:** The word "Godhead" is needed because we shouldn't say that there are three persons in God. No, there are three persons who are God.

Nor should we say that there are three Gods. There is one God. They are distinct persons with special roles in creation and redemption. But they are in perfect harmony and are (in ways beyond our comprehension) perfectly One God.

This is the familiar doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine is true to the Bible and peculiar to the Bible. No other religion has a teaching like this. It is one of the most fundamental and vital doctrines of the Christian faith.

We may define the doctrine of the Trinity as follows: "God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God" (Grudem).

"The word trinity means 'tri-unity' or 'three-in-oneness.' It is used to summarize the teaching of Scripture that God is three persons yet one God... Though we will never fully comprehend the mystery of the Trinity, we can worship God for who he is both in our songs of praise, and in our words and actions as they reflect something of his excellent character."



### Thomas Watson Puritan Preacher & Author

#### THE SINS OF THE GODLY

The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they bring a greater reproach upon religion. For the wicked to sin, there is no other expected from them; swine will wallow in the mire; but when sheep do so, when the godly sin, that redounds to the dishonor of the Gospel: 'By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme' (2 Sam 12:14)."

## Blessed are the Poor in Spirit...

Kevin Tucker

In the introductory article of this series, we examined the context for our Lord's proclamation of the foundational truths of the gospel of His kingdom in His Sermon on the Mount. We saw that Jesus' sermon defines and describes kingdom life in a fallen world. We gave particular attention to the first part of His sermon known as the Beatitudes.

In this article, we come to look at the first Beatitude as found in Matthew 5:3. With His disciples gathered on the mountain, Jesus '... opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Here, in the opening sentence of His sermon, the Son of God pronounces blessing on a certain group of people, those who are poor in spirit. We saw in the last article that blessed translates the Greek word 'makarios,' which means happy or spiritually prosperous. God's blessing is the ultimate blessing; there is no higher approval.

Before proceeding, we should note some negatives concerning this poverty of spirit about which Jesus speaks. It is not material poverty, though it is unfortunately often mistaken for that. Neither is it something we can produce in ourselves or come to on our own.

What does Jesus mean by poverty of spirit? D. A. Carson defines this poverty as the personal acknowledgement of spiritual bankruptcy. It is the conscious confession of our complete lack of worth before God. As such, it is the deepest form of repentance.

Luke gives us an example of this spiritual poverty as he recorded Jesus' well-known parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The proud Pharisee prayed, vainly commending himself to God.

*'But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' Jesus said 'I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.'*" (Luke 18:13-14) Conscious of his utter lack of moral virtue, the tax collector acknowledged he was completely dependent on God's mercy for salvation.

This spiritual poverty is vividly illustrated in Isaiah 57:15. *'For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite."*' Here, we see a high and holy God dealing mercifully with those who are humble and have a repentant spirit.

So, we must inquire as to the origin of this spiritual poverty; how does a person become poor in spirit? It is only by God's grace and His Spirit's leading that a person is brought to see his real condition before Him. It is only when we are brought to shame and silence before a holy and righteous God that we can see who and what we really are. It is here that this poverty of spirit is born in our heart. Sinclair Ferguson notes that, undecieved at last, void of any righteousness of our own and debtors in God's court, our only plea is for mercy. Now we can clearly see that our only hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we must understand that being poor in spirit really involves an emptying of ourselves, of our pride and of our self-righteousness. The Beatitudes that follow deal with a filling and we cannot be filled until we are first empty. Recall the words of godly Simeon holding our Lord as an infant, *'Behold, this child is*

*appointed for the fall and rising of many...'* (Luke 3:34) Christianity always involves a falling in terms of conviction of sins before the rising of conversion. The gospel of Christ always condemns a person before it releases him.

So what is the result of our spiritual poverty? Jesus says that the spiritually poor are blessed because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven refers to the realm and sphere where Christ is reigning. The kingdom of heaven is here now in all people who are true believers in Jesus as *'...the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'* (John 1:29) We who recognize Christ as our Lord, and in whose lives He reigns and rules at this moment, are in the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of heaven is in us.

Also, there is a sense in which the kingdom is yet to come. It will come finally when the rule and reign of Christ is established over the entire world. Then, there will be *'...new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.'* (2 Peter 3:13) And then *'...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'* (Philippians 2:10-11)

This poverty of spirit of which Jesus speaks is necessarily and completely antithetical to the world's value system. The world admires those who have accumulated much of its temporal trappings—money, power, influence, and the like. However, Jesus said if you would be ultimately and eternally rich, you must first lose everything, including yourself, and become poor in spirit. It is those, and those only, who will find rest in the kingdom of heaven.