



# 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>  
<https://www.facebook.com/GraceBaptistMadisonAL>

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

**DEAN OLIVE, Pastor**

— February 2020 Issue —

*"He who calls you is faithful;  
he will surely do it."*

*1 Thessalonians 5:24*



### NURSERY SCHEDULE

#### February

- 02 Troy and Jessica Moseley
- 09 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
- 16 Vicki Johnson and Melanie Myatt
- 23 Susan Gay and Janet Marsh

#### March

- 01 Troy and Jessica Moseley
- 08 Melanie Myatt and Vicki Johnson
- 15 Susan Gay and Linda Olive
- 22 Melanie Myatt and Lori Hewlett
- 29 Vicki Johnson and *volunteer*

### CHURCH CLEANING

- February** - Moseleys
- March** - A. Williams

**I AM**

my

*Beloved's*

and my

*Beloved*

is

**MINE**

SONG OF SOLOMON 6:3

### O LOVER OF THE LOVELESS

*It is thy will that I should love thee  
with heart, soul, mind, strength,  
and my neighbor as myself.*

*But I am not sufficient for these things.*

*There is by nature no pure love in my soul;*

*Every affection in me is turned from thee;*

*I am bound, as slave to lust,*

*I cannot love thee, lovely as thou art,  
until thou dost set me free.*

*By grace I am thy freeman and would serve  
thee,*

*for I believe thou art my God in Jesus,  
and that through him I am redeemed,  
and my sins are forgiven.*

*Spirit of love, make me like the loving Jesus;*

*give me his benevolent temper,*

*his beneficent actions,*

*that I may shine before men to thy glory.*

*The more thou doest in love in me and by me,*

*humble me the more;*

*keep me meek, lowly,*

*and always ready to give thee honor.*

*Valley of Vision, the Banner of Truth.*

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	5:00 PM

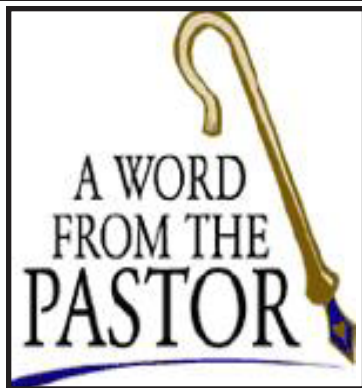
#### WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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#### FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Meal at the Church	11:00 AM
Afternoon Service	12:30 PM

*No Sunday School  
or Evening Service*



## The Greatest of These is Love

1 Corinthians 13 has been rightly nicknamed “the love chapter.” The word love appears nine times. At the end of the chapter, the apostle Paul joined with love two other virtues, faith and hope.

But he said, “The greatest of these is love” (13:13).

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians that all spiritual gifts will cease at some point but the Christian graces of faith, hope, and love are permanent. They will abide or remain. When the gifts have served their purpose and cease to be, there abides “faith, hope and love.” They will not cease to exist throughout heaven’s endless day. Of all the virtues that are ours in Christ, these three are left standing. But of those three, there is one that is greater than the others. That one is love.

Paul doesn’t say why love is the greatest of the three but it may be because, as D. A. Carson says, “love is the only one that God exercises.” Faith, hope, and love will all exist in heaven but love is the only one that characterizes God. We never read that God is faith or that God is hope, but we do read that “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16).

What is faith? Faith is simple trust. What is hope? Hope is confident expectancy. But what is love? How do we define love? What is this virtue that is set apart as the greatest? One of the best definitions that I have found comes from the Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary. David Lanier writes, “Love is unselfish, loyal, and benevolent intention and commitment toward another.”

Love then is both a Christian virtue and a divine attribute. God is love and he calls his children to be loving. In the case of God loving man, the notion of worth or merit is completely absent. God loves sinners. God in Christ gives himself sacrificially for our benefit. Love always has an object. So love is affection, loyalty, and sacrificial commitment expressed to someone.

I am not sure why the translators of the KJV used charity rather than love in the love chapter. The Tyndale and Geneva Bibles, which preceded the KJV, have love. The KJV translators rendered the Greek word *agape* as charity 27 times and love 82 times in the New Testament, but it has nothing to do with benevolence. The English word charity comes from the Latin, *caritas*, which means dearness or affection.

Love is the greatest of these three eternal verities. Love is the most important. It is foundational. Love is the all-embracing virtue. After mentioning a number of virtues that we as saints are to put on, Paul said in Colossians

3:14, “And above all these put on **love**, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (the other things are kindness, humility, meekness, patience, etc., see vv. 12-13). Love is also first in Paul’s list of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

If you want to know more fully what love is you need only to look back to the first few verses of 1 Corinthians 13. The characteristics of love are spelled out by Paul in this chapter. He says that love is patient and kind (4a) and then shows that love is not jealous, proud, arrogant, rude, insistent, irritable, resentful, irritable, or revengeful (4b-6). Love is not self-centered but is willing to sacrifice its own desires for the good of others. Truly, “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends/fails” (7-8a).

Of course, the model of love is Christ himself who laid down his life for us. His sacrifice at Calvary is the heart of defining what real love is. “He loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Philip Ryken wrote a book entitled, *Loving the Way Jesus Loved*. He takes the attributes of love asserted in the Love Chapter and shows how Jesus illustrates fully what love is and isn’t.

The self-sacrificing love of Jesus is to characterize us in this present world. And this very love will go with us into eternity. We will continue to love God and each other and this love will grow into perfect expression in heaven.

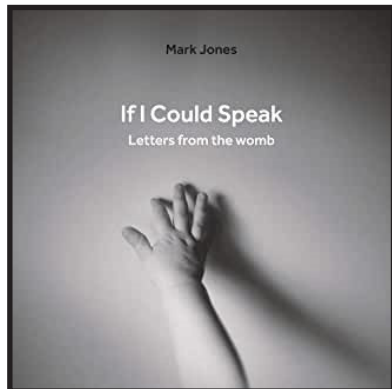
Love occupies the supreme place and rightfully so. It occupies that place in this world and in the world to come. Don Carson says, “The greatest evidence that heaven has invaded our sphere, that the Spirit has been poured out upon us, that we are citizens of a kingdom not yet consummated, is Christian love.”

The Corinthians thought that the most important thing in the Christian life were spiritual gifts – things like tongues and prophecies. But Paul wanted them to know that faith, hope, and love outlasts the gifts and are more important than the gifts. “The church’s manifestation in time of the glories that are yet to come is not accomplished in the gift of tongues, nor even in prophecy, giving, teaching. It is accomplished in love” (Carson).

The things which abide, the things which are permanent, are faith, hope, and love. We ought not ignore the gifts but we need to have our priorities straight. If we are like the Corinthians, more interested in gifts than in graces, then we have erred. May the Lord help us to focus more on the things that are eternal. And let us remember that the greatest virtue of all is love. “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

## BOOK REVIEW

*If I Could Speak: Letters from the Womb*, Mark Jones, Christian Focus Publications, 2020, pp. 72.



“Dear Mommy...” So begins the imagined correspondence from an unborn baby to her mother. Making an impassioned plea to her mother to not abort her, she shares her hopes and fears with the woman who can control whether she lives or dies.

“Nothing is more personal than the beginning of a child’s life in the womb—or the termination of that life by abortion. *If I Could Speak* gives a voice to an unborn child, and her appeals to her parents to allow her to live are deeply moving and profoundly illuminating. Using sanctified imagination and yet solemn reality, Mark Jones provides us with the best book that I have ever read to reach both mind and soul on the dreadful holocaust of abortion. You simply must read this book—it will move you to biblical tears, righteous anger and heartfelt prayer simultaneously—and then pass it on to many others” (Joel Beeke).

## GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

# 30<sup>th</sup>

## CHURCH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Sunday March 15, 2020

Special Guest Preacher:

# MARK WEBB

He will be preaching  
all three services.



## Spurgeon's Catechism with Scripture Proofs



**Question 61:** Which is the ninth commandment?

**Answer:** The ninth commandment is, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:16 [see also Proverbs 6:19; 12:22; Matthew 15:19; Colossians 3:9; Revelation 21:27]

**Commentary:** The ninth commandment is God’s law which governs our speech. It calls for truthfulness. To bear false witness is to lie. A lie is the willful misrepresentation of the truth.

We live in a culture that has become accustomed to lying. Politicians lie, journalists lie, advertisers lie, and even teachers, who are supposed to be concerned with facts, often twist and distort them in order to advance an agenda. But in a culture of lies Christians are called to be people of truth. We serve a truth-telling God and we are to be like him. Those who are rightly related to God through Jesus Christ are to seek by God’s grace to attain to a pattern of conformity to the truth.

The ninth commandment prohibits lying of all sorts. However, in all likelihood, it applies specially to legal proceedings. There can be no integrity in legal proceedings without the truth. But while the ninth commandment may refer specially to formal testimony in a courtroom, it also applies to ordinary testimony in private conversation.



## Samuel Rutherford

Puritan Quotes  
**PAIN & JOY**

The thorn is one of the most cursed and angry and crabbed weeds that the earth yields, and yet out of it springs the rose, one of the sweetest smelled flowers, and most delightful to the eye.



# Six Life-Giving Truths from the New Testament (part 1)

*Thomas R. Schreiner*

1. The kingdom of God is central to Jesus' ministry. The synoptic Gospels make it immediately apparent that the kingdom of God is central to Jesus' teaching. When Jesus referred to God's kingdom, he had in mind God's saving power, the fulfillment of his saving promises.

The kingdom can be explained in terms of the "already – not yet." The kingdom was inaugurated in Jesus' ministry but not yet consummated. It had arrived, but the full salvation and judgment promised had not yet come to pass.

The kingdom is a future reality, an end-time kingdom wherein God will fulfill his saving promises. This is made evident from the Lord's Prayer, in which believers are to pray, "Your kingdom come" (Luke 11:2). Jesus also speaks to the disciples of the day when he will come "in his kingdom" (cf. Luke 23:51), which clearly refers to the future fulfillment of the kingdom promise. There is a sense, of course, in which God always and invariably rules as king over all. When Jesus spoke of the future coming of the kingdom, he was not referring to God's sovereign reign over all of history, for God has always ruled over all that occurs. The coming of the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed designated something new, a time when God's enemies would be demonstrably defeated and the righteous would be visibly blessed.

The kingdom is also a present reality. The kingdom is present in Jesus' ministry in that the saving promises of the kingdom (i.e., the saving rule of God) had dawned with his coming. In other words, the Old Testament promises of a new covenant and a new creation and a new exodus were beginning to be fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus understood the

presence of the kingdom as evidenced in his exorcisms, his miraculous signs and preaching (Luke 4:16–30), and his person (Luke 17:20–21).

Perhaps the most remarkable feature in Jesus' teaching about the kingdom is the role that he envisions for himself. The kingdom has come in his person. He is the king and judge, deciding both who enters the kingdom and who is excluded from it (Matthew 25:31–46). The Father will deny access to the kingdom to those who deny Jesus before others, whereas those who confess Jesus will be inducted into God's presence. Jesus saw his return as the event that commences the eschatological kingdom.

2. John loves "life." One of the primary themes in John's Gospel is life. The synoptic Gospels emphasize the fulfillment of God's promises by speaking of the kingdom of God, but in John the focus is not on God's kingdom but on eternal life. The two notions are remarkably similar. John particularly emphasizes that this life is available now for those who believe in Jesus, while conversely those who do not put their trust in Jesus stand under God's judgment even now.

Life in John is not an abstract entity but rather is rooted in John's Jewish worldview. Life belongs to the age to come, which is inaugurated by the resurrection. What is remarkable in reading John is his emphasis on the gift of life now. He does not focus on the future age when the resurrection will occur. He fixes his gaze on what believers in Christ possess even now through faith in Jesus as the Christ. The gift of life in the present age is available only because Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

John anchors the believer's enjoyment of life to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in history. The life of the age to come has dawned because Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the dead. In the resurrection of Jesus, the coming

age has invaded the present age. Life has penetrated where only death reigned. Light has dawned where darkness shrouded all. Truth has arrived to conquer falsehood. John impresses upon the reader the presence of life now because the resurrection of Jesus in history shines in the darkness (John 1:5), demonstrating his victory over the ruler of the world (John 12:31) and over the power of death.

3. Believers are "in Christ." Jesus Christ is so pervasive in Paul's letters that it is difficult to know where to begin. One of the most significant elements in Paul's Christology is his teaching about being "in Christ." Union with Christ, or participation with Christ, is surely one of the fundamental themes of his theology. Believers who were in the old Adam and the old age are now members of the new age inaugurated in Christ, and they are in Christ rather than in Adam.

Because believers are in Christ, they are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17, cf. Eph 2:10); they are sons of God (Gal 3:26); they enjoy the blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14); they possess God's covenantal promises; they need not fear condemnation (Rom 8:1); they are sanctified (1 Cor 1:2); they enjoy the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Phil 3:9); they have been freed from the power of sin and death (Rom 8:2; Gal 2:4); they possess every gift (1 Cor 1:4); they are complete in Christ (Col 2:10); they are one in Christ with other believers (Gal 3:28; cf. Eph 2:14–16).

The notion of union with Christ points to a high Christology, for every spiritual blessing belongs to believers because of their participation in Christ.

(Excerpt from *New Testament Theology*, Baker Academic)