

November 10, 2019

Deacons: Lead Servants

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

When during World War II the Netherlands were occupied by Germans the deacons of the Dutch Reformed Church assumed the care for the politically persecuted, supplying food and providing secret refuge. Realizing what was happening, the Germans decreed that the elective office of deacon should be eliminated. The Reformed Synod on 17 July 1941 resolved: "Whoever touches the diaconate interferes with what Christ has ordained as the task of the church... Whoever lays hands on diakonia lays hands on worship!" The Germans backed down.

Frederick Herzog
20th century theologian

Deacons... must become God's channel for mobilizing the members of his church to minister in the lives of others.

George Fuller
Presbyterian pastor and former president
of Westminster Theological Seminary

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"

Matthew 25:34-40

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

James 2:14-18

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45

God invented deacons to en flesh the example of Christ in tangibly and concretely loving and serving the congregation in our midst. Deacons are to embody Christ's own service of His people, especially as they administer mercy in the life of the local congregation... For Paul, the deacon-his job description-is that of a man who wants to concretely and tangibly show the love of Christ in the body of Christ. He wants to serve. The office of deacon is emphatically an office of service, not just in some generic sense, but really and specifically. The deacon is not out for power or prestige: he is a man who wants to serve, he wants to help when the people of God are hurting, and he wants to aid them. When the people of God are in need, he wants to comfort and assist them. He wants to make the Christian claims of love tangible.

Ligon Duncan
Presbyterian pastor and Chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

Psalms 145

People: I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Leader: The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

People: My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

We extol our God and King

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

1. Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre - a - tion!
2. Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so won - drous - ly reign - eth,
3. Praise to the Lord, who doth pros - per thy work and de - fend thee.
4. Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me a - dore him!

O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and sal - va - tion!
shel - ters thee un - der his wings, yea, so gent - ly sus - tain - eth.
Sure - ly his good - ness and mer - cy here dai - ly at - tend thee.
All that have life and breath, come now with prais - es be - fore him!

All ye who hear, now to his tem - ple draw near;
Hast thou not seen how all thy long - ings have been
Pon - der a - new what the Al - migh - ty can do,
Let the a - men sound from his peo - ple a - gain;

praise him in glad ad - or - a - tion.
grant - ed in what he or - dain - eth?
if with his love he be - friend thee.
glad - ly, for, aye, we a - dore him.

It is the joy of God's people to sing praises to him. There is none like him and one day his glory will be clearly seen and all people will come and worship him, acknowledging that he alone is God. Our worship this morning is a taste of that day.

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

Micah 6

God reminds us of what is good, of what he requires of us

"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The majesty of
God's forgiveness
is lost entirely
when we lose what
has to be forgiven.
What has to be
forgiven is not just
what we do but
who we are, not
just our sinning
but our sinfulness,
not just our
choices but what
we have chosen in
place of God.
David Wells

We confess our frequent failures in what he requires

Holy Father, we confess that we are people who do not trust you. We are stubborn and rebellious, habitually unwilling to hear your loving, fatherly instruction. We have repeatedly despised your words, and even your incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

When we suffer, we lose confidence that you love us, experience spiritual amnesia, and live as orphans. We trust in our own resources for physical and emotional comfort, health, wealth, success, and intimacy. We often rely on the perverseness of abusing food, drink, sexuality, or other people to bring us peace. We fail to return to you, frequently do not rest in you, and consistently do not trust you. Father, forgive us.

Lord Jesus what a staggering love you have shown us in the midst of our weakness. You flawlessly trusted your Father on our behalf in your humanity. Because you took on our sin, becoming an orphan as you were abandoned by your Father, we will never be orphans again. Our sins, though like scarlet, are now as white as snow, washed in the cleansing, healing stream of the blood drawn from your veins.

Spirit of God, lead us to the crucified Christ in our weariness and sin. Awaken us to trust and find our refuge in his work on our behalf. Remind us that our true rest and freedom is only found in union with him. Amen.

God declares his love that washes us, cleanses us of our sin

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD: "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool"... You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Isaiah 1
1 Corinthians 6

We give glory to God for his staggering love

“Father, Long before Creation”

1. Fa - ther, long be - fore cre - a - tion thou hast cho - sen us in love;—
2. Though the world may change its fash - ion, yet our God is e'er the same;—
3. God's com - pas - sion is my sto - ry, is my boast - ing all the day;—
4. Lov - ing Fa - ther, now be - fore thee we will ev - er praise thy love;—

5
and that love so deep, so mov - ing,
his com - pas - sion and his cov - 'nant
mer - cy free and nev - er fail - ing
and our songs will sound un - ceas - ing

7
draws us close to Christ a - bove, Still it keeps us,
through all a - ges will re - main, God's own chil - dren,
moves my will, di - rects my way, God so loved us,
til we reach our home a - bove, Giv - ing glo - ry,

10
still it keeps us firm - ly fixed in Christ a - lone.
God's own chil - dren must for - ev - er praise his name.
God so loved us that his on - ly Son he gave,
giv - ing glo - ry to our God and to the Lamb;—

13
Giv - ing glo - ry, giv - ing glo - ry to our God and to the Lamb.

In love he
predestined us for
adoption to
himself as sons
through Jesus
Christ, according
to the purpose of
his will, to the
praise of his
glorious grace,
with which he has
blessed us in the
Beloved.
Ephesians 1

“And as Moses
lifted up the
serpent in the
wilderness, so
must the Son of
Man be lifted up,
that whoever
believes in him
may have eternal
life. For God so
loved the world,
that he gave his
only Son, that
whoever believes
in him should not
perish but have
eternal life.”
John 3

“To God Be the Glory”

1. To God be the glo - ry, great things he has done! So loved he the
2. O per - fect re - demp - tion, the pur - chase of blood! To ev' - ry be -
3. Great things he has taught us, great things he has done, and great our re -

6 world that he gave us his Son, who yield - ed his life an a - tone - ment for
liev - er the prom - ise of God; the vil - est of - fend - er who tru - ly be -
joic - ing through Je - sus the Son; but pur - er and high - er and great - er will

12 sin. and o - pened the life - gate that we may go in, Praise the
lieves, and that mo - ment from Je - sus for - give - ness re - ceives.
be our won - der, our trans - port, when Je - sus we see.

17 Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear his voice! Praise the Lord! Praise the

22 Lord! Let the peo - ple re - joice! O come to the Fa - ther through Je - sus the

28 Son, and give him the glo - ry, great things he has done!

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

Luke 10:25–37

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Sermon

Rev. Per Almquist

Deacons: Lead Servants

The Church that God Built

Preaching is how
we learn to think
God's thoughts
after him in this
world.

We give ourselves to serving God with all of our lives

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

1. Take my life, and let it be con - se - cra - ted,
 2. Take my hands, and let them move at the im - pulse
 3. Take my voice, and let me sing, al - ways, on - ly,
 4. Take my sil - ver and my gold; not a mite would
 5. Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no
 6. Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its

7 Lord to thee. Take my mo - ments and my days;
 of thy love. Take my feet, and let them be
 for my king. Take my lips, and let them be
 I with - hold. Take my in - tel - lect, and use
 lon - ger mine. Take my heart, it is thine own;
 trea - sure store. Take my self, and I will be

14 let them flow in cease - less praise,
 swift and beau - ti - ful for thee,
 filled with mes - sag - es from thee.
 ev - 'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose,
 it shall be thy roy - al throne,
 e - ver, on ly, all for thee!

2, 4, 6. G A m G F E m F/D G sus G
 23 Take my life, all I am; take my life and make it thine.

For just as you
 once presented
 your members as
 slaves to impurity
 and to lawlessness
 leading to more
 lawlessness, so
 now present your
 members as slaves
 to righteousness
 leading to
 sanctification.

Romans 6

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

We celebrate the Lord's Supper experiencing the grace of God in the death of Jesus Christ that we may serve him proclaiming his death to the world around us

We celebrate God's free grace to us in Jesus Christ by observing the Lord's Supper each Sunday. We invite to the Lord's Table all those who are baptized followers of Jesus Christ, under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup with us as a visitor, you are acknowledging to our church that you are in covenant with God. You also acknowledge that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. If you have any doubts about your participation, please speak to one of the elders after the service. Wine and bread are the elements of the supper as instituted by Jesus Christ and so we follow his example.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1

"Man of Sorrows! What a Name"

1.Man of Sor - rows! what a name
2.Bear - ing shame and scoff - ing rude,
3.Guil - ty, vile, and help - less we;
4.Lift - ed up was he to die,
5.When he comes, our glo - rious King,

for the Son of God who came
in my place con - demned he stood,
spot - less Lamb of God was his cry;
"It is fin - ished!" was his to bring,
all his ran - somed home to

ru - ined sin - ners to re - claim: Hal - le -
sealed my par - don with his blood:
full a - tone - ment! Can it be?
now in heav'n ex - al - ted high:
then a - new this song we'll sing:

lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!

"O Love That Will Not Let Me Go"

1. O Love that will not let me go, I
 2. O Light that fol - low'st all my way, I
 3. O Joy that seek - est me through pain, I
 4. O Cross that lift - est up my head, I

rest my wea - ry soul in thee; I give thee back the
 yield my flick - 'ring torch to thee; my heart re - stores its
 can - not close my heart to thee; I trace the rain - bow
 dare not ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust, life's

life I owe, that in thine o - cean depths its flow may
 bor - rowed ray, that in thy sun - shine's blaze its day may
 through the rain, and feel the prom - ise is not vain that
 glo - ry dead, and from the ground there blos - soms red life

rich - er, full - er be.
 bright - er, fair - er be.
 morn shall tear - less be.
 that shall end - less be.

I have loved you
 with an everlasting
 love; therefore I
 have continued
 my faithfulness to
 you.

Jeremiah 31

We serve God, loving him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and loving our neighbor with his love

... as we give our tithes and offerings to him

We give our offerings to God as a public demonstration of our faith, putting our money where our mouths are. In this action we show what we claim, that our lives are organized around God and lived for him instead of ourselves.

... and as we come to him in prayer

*During this time we live in faith, trusting in the power of his grace, placing our lives and our church in his hands.
We ask that he would work in us and through us for his glory.*

Jesus is not telling us that we can be saved by imitating the Good Samaritan, even though he is clearly charging us to imitate his pattern. Rather, Jesus is seeking to humble us with the love God requires, so we will be willing to receive the love God offers.
Tim Keller

GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

We rejoice in God's promise that as we serve him, he changes us from glory into glory

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, joy of heav'n, to earth come down:
2. Breathe, O breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry trou - bled__breast;
3. Come, Al - might - y to de - liv - er, let us all thy life re - ceive;
4. Fin - ish, then, thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less let us__be:

fix in us thy hum - ble__dwell - ing, all thy faith - ful mer - cies__crown.
let us all in thee in - her - it, let us find the prom - ised rest.
sud - den - ly re - turn, and ne - ver, ne - ver more thy tem - ples leave.
let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect - ly re - stored in__thee;

Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion, pure, un - bound - ed love thou art;
Take a - way the love of__sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga__be;
Thee we would be al - ways bles - sing, serve thee as thy hosts a - bove,
changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, 'till in heav'n we take our place,

vis - it us with thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
End of faith, as its Be - gin - ning, set our hearts at li - ber - ty.
pray, and praise thee, with - out ceas - ing, glor - ry in thy per - fect__love.
'till we cast our crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and__praise.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3

God promises that as we serve him, loving him and, through him, our neighbors, he establishes us in his good work

Leader: Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word... Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

People: Amen

Please stay and join us for a time of refreshment and enjoying each other's company.

*This is a time to share in life together as the gospel calls us
as we reconnect with those we know and as we meet someone new.*

2 Thessalonians 2, 3

We do not end our service with a command or a well-wish, but with God's blessing reminding us of the beauty and power of God's promise to his people.



Welcome to Free Grace

We are a broken church full of broken people. We know we need God's free grace. Some of us have accepted this grace, some are exploring what it's all about. All of us are still trying to understand it. We are a church that seeks to proclaim this free grace of God with both our words and our lives. Not satisfied with simply talking about it, we want to live it out. We invite you to come, explore, and live God's free grace with us.



Our Connections

Free Grace is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a family of churches that seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Our Leadership

Free Grace is lead by her elders, men called by God and set apart by the church to care and lead her as individual members, families, and as a whole. Our elders are:

Rev. Per Almquist (pastor)
Brian Cosgrove
Ken Morris



Credits

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Shannon Van Dyke , voice; Connor Crawford, voice; Beth Almquist, voice, violin; Jacob Paris, guitar, bass; Wagner Sgobi, piano

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Deacons aren't ushers, janitors, and accountants, but men with spiritual maturity leading all of us in serving God as we make his love visible and concrete to each other.

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory