

**November 24, 2019**

# The Bad Witness

*Free Grace Presbyterian Church*

## SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

Head knowledge is no proof that we are joined to Christ. The devils know Christ well enough, but have no portion in Him.

J.C. Ryle

19<sup>th</sup> century Anglican bishop of Liverpool

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Galatians 3:27–28**

A true Christian is someone who has responded to the biblical gospel about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by turning from his sins (repentance) and by trusting in the Saviour (faith). Simply professing faith or receiving Christian baptism is no sure indicator that a person is soundly converted.

Guy Prentiss Waters  
NT scholar

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

**Acts 2:37–39**

Geoffrey Thomas explains: "When this great awakening happened in Samaria lives were transformed and turned upside down. A whole new way of life began.

People began to talk in a new and different way and they were full of enthusiasm about certain new things that had come into their lives. They had a new perspective on life, family, job, money, and possessions. They themselves were new people caught up by a new strength, and they were united in Christian fellowship by a glorious power that affected everything they did and thought."

Too much of what we do and experience falls far short of this. Our services are too often governed by a clock, a ritual that we go through ensuring that it never interferes with Sunday lunch. We want religion wrapped up in beautiful packaging, so long as it does not interfere with more important things—children's soccer games or college football!

Derek Thomas  
Presbyterian pastor

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

**Matthew 28:18–20**

# GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

**Leader:** Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

**People:** **The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**

Psalms 98

**Leader:** Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

**People:** **Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.**

**We break forth into joyous song and sing praises**

"Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord"

1. Come, let us sing un - to the Lord  
2. The great sal - va - tion of our God  
3. He called to mind his truth and grace  
4. All lands to God lift up your voice;

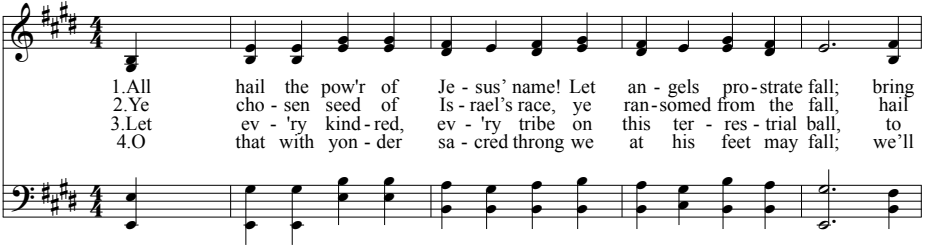
new songs of praise with sweet ac - cord;  
is seen through all the earth a - broad;  
in prom - ise made to the Is - rael's race;  
sing praise to him, with shouts re - joice;

for won - ders great by him are done,  
be - fore the hea - then's won - d'ring sight  
and un - to earth's re - mo - test bound  
with voice of joy and loud ac - claim

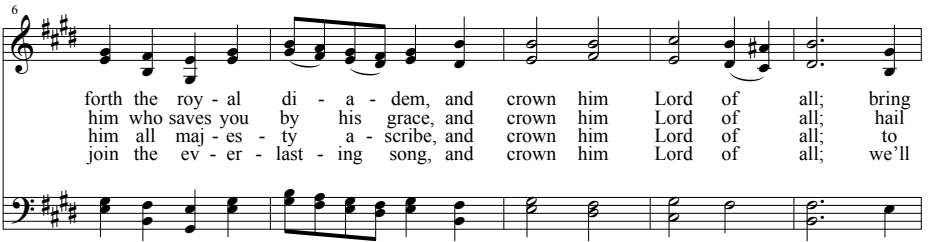
his hand and arm have vic - t'ry won.  
he has re - vealed his truth and right.  
glad tid - ings of sal - va - tion sound.  
let all u - nite and praise his name!

In our worship we give glory to God, praising him for who he is and what he has done. We also cry out for his presence with us—by his Spirit now as he promised, but also when Christ returns in glory.

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"



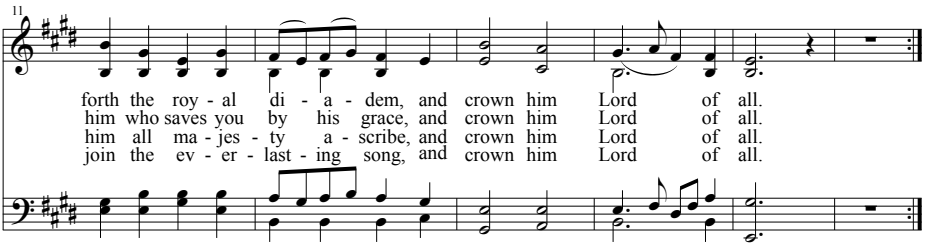
1. All hail the pow'r of Je - sus' name! Let an - gels pro - strate fall; bring  
 2. Ye cho - sen seed of Is - rael's race, ye ran - somed from the fall, hail  
 3. Let ev - 'ry kind - red, ev - 'ry tribe on this ter - res - trial ball, to  
 4. O that with yon - der sa - cred throng we at his feet may fall; we'll



6  
 forth the roy - al di - a - dem, and crown him Lord of all; bring  
 him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all; hail  
 him all maj - es - ty a - scribe, and crown him Lord of all; to  
 join the ev - er - last - ing song, and crown him Lord of all; we'll

And being found  
 in human form, he  
 humbled himself  
 by becoming  
 obedient to the  
 point of death,  
 even death on a  
 cross. Therefore  
 God has highly  
 exalted him and  
 bestowed on him  
 the name that is  
 above every name,  
 so that 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



11  
 forth the roy - al di - a - dem, and crown him Lord of all.  
 him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all.  
 him all ma - jes - ty a - scribe, and crown him Lord of all.  
 join the ev - er - last - ing song, and crown him Lord of all.

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# GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

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## God declares the truth of our sin and calls us to turn to him in repentance

"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, "In repentance and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."

Romans 3  
Isaiah 30

## We turn to God in repentance and rest in him for the forgiveness of our sin

*We use this time in God's presence to confess our sins and our need for God's grace, silently, personally before him alone. We invite you to join us in sorrow over your sin and joy in his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.*

We confess our sins in order to give glory to God. We confess our failures, our rebellion, our striving after our own glory so that we can proclaim the glory of his grace to us in Jesus Christ, who became sin that we might become the righteousness of God.

## God sings out of his great mercy to us

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time...Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ... knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

1 Peter 1

Charles Spurgeon

1. What love could re - mem - ber no wrongs we have done?  
 2. What pa - tience would wait as we con - stant - ly roam?  
 3. What rich - es of kind - ness He lav - ished on us.

Om - nis - cient, all - know - ing, He counts not their sum.  
 What Fa - ther so ten - der is call - ing us home?  
 His blood was the pay - ment, His life was the cost.

Thrown in - to a sea with - out bot - tom or shore.  
 He wel - comes the weak - est, the vil - est, the poor.  
 We stood 'neath a debt we could nev - er af - ford.

Our sins, they are man-y—His mer-cy is more. Praise the Lord,

His mer-cy is more. Strong-er than dark - ness,

new eve-ry morn; our sins, they are man - y—His mer-cy is more.

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## GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

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<sup>9</sup>But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup>They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." <sup>11</sup>And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup>But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup>Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

Acts 8:9–25

<sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup>who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup>for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup>But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup>You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup>Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup>For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." <sup>24</sup>And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

<sup>25</sup>Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

*What rule has God  
given to direct us  
how we may  
glorify and enjoy  
him?*

The Word of God,  
which is contained  
in the Scriptures of  
the Old and New  
Testaments, is the  
only rule to direct  
us how we may  
glorify and enjoy  
him.

Westminster Shorter  
Catechism  
Question 2

**Sermon**

Rev. Per Almquist

**The Bad Witness**  
The Church that God Built

God... does not  
send teachers to  
make the air  
resound with empty  
words, but in order  
to work mightily by  
their voice and to  
bring their words to  
life by the power of  
his Spirit, for the  
salvation of  
believers.

John Calvin



**We witness to another beyond ourselves, telling the story of Jesus Christ and his grace**

"Blessed Assurance"

D G D A

1. Bless - ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a fore - taste of  
 2. Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light, vi - sions of rap - ture now  
 3. Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest, I in my Sav - ior am

E A D G D

glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of God,  
 burst on my sight; an - gels de - scend - ing, bring from a - bove,  
 hap - py and blest; watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a - bove,

G Em A<sup>7</sup> D REFRAIN

born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.  
 ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love. This is my sto - ry,  
 filled with his good - ness, lost in his love.

G D G D A E A A<sup>7</sup>

this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long; this is my

D G D G Em A<sup>7</sup> D 7

sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

I will praise the  
 LORD as long as I  
 live; I will sing  
 praises to my God  
 while I have my  
 being.  
 Psalm 146

# GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

Let us consider,  
then, that this  
sacrament is a  
singular medicine  
for all poor sick  
creatures, a  
comfortable help  
to weak souls,  
and that our Lord  
requires no other  
worthiness on our  
part, but that we  
unfeignedly  
acknowledge our  
naughtiness and  
imperfection.

John Calvin

## The Holy Spirit works within us as we proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ by celebrating the Lord's Supper

*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.*

"Jesus, I Come"

1. Out of my bon - dage, sor - row, and night, Je - sus, I come;  
 2. Out of my shame - ful fail - ure and loss, Je - sus, I come;  
 3. Out of un - rest and ar - ro - gant pride, Je - sus, I come;  
 4. Out of the fear and dread of the tomb, Je - sus, I come;

7  
 Je - sus, I come. In - to thy free - dom, glad - ness, and light,  
 Je - sus, I come. In - to the glo - rious gain of thy cross,  
 Je - sus, I come. In - to thy bless - ed will to a - bide,  
 Je - sus, I come. In - to the joy and light of thy home,

13  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.

17  
 Out of my sick - ness in - to thy health,  
 Out of earth's sor - rows in - to thy balm,  
 Out of my self - to dwell in thy love,  
 Out of the depths of ru - in un - told,

21  
 out of my want - ing and in - to thy wealth,  
 out of life's storms in - and in - to thy calm,  
 out of de - spair, in - and to rap - tures a - bove,  
 in - to the peace of thy shel - ter - ing fold,

25  
 out of my sin - ness and in - to thy self,  
 out of dis - tress in - to on jub - i - lant psalm,  
 up - ward for - ev - er on wings like a dove,  
 ev - er thy glo - ri - ous face to be - hold,

29  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.  
 Je - sus, I come to thee.

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us"

1. How deep the Fa - ther's love for us, how  
 2. Be - hold the man up - on a cross, my  
 3. I will not boast in an - y - thing: no

2  
 vast be - yond all meas - ure, that he should give his on - ly Son to  
 sin up - on his shoul - ders; a - shamed, I hear my mock - ing voice call  
 gifts, no pow'r, no wis - dom; but I will boast in Je - sus Christ: his

4  
 make a wretch his treas - ure. How great the pain of sear - ing loss; the  
 out a - mong the scof - fers. It was my sin that held him there un -  
 death and res - ur - rec - tion. Why should I gain from his re - ward? I

6  
 Fa - ther turns his face a - way as wounds which mar the cho - sen One bring  
 til it was ac - com - plished; his dy - ing breath has brought me life; I  
 can - not give an an - swer; but this I know with all my heart: his

8  
 man - y sons to glo - ry.  
 know that it is fin - ished.  
 wounds have paid my ran - som. Why

12  
 should I gain from his re - ward? I can - not give an an - swer; but

14  
 this I know with all my heart: his wounds have paid my ran - som.

In this the love of  
 God was made  
 manifest among  
 us, that God sent  
 his only Son into  
 the world, so that  
 we might live  
 through him. In  
 this is love, not  
 that we have loved  
 God but that he  
 loved us and sent  
 his Son to be the  
 propitiation for  
 our sins.  
 1 John 4

**We live as the Church, witnessing to Jesus Christ, 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.*

**We pray for God to make us witnesses to Christ, not in our strength, but by his grace to us**

Heavenly Father,

you have given us the riches of the glory of the mystery of Christ —  
the wonder of Christ in us, the hope of glory.

We do not deserve this hope and can not earn it,  
but, by your grace, it is ours in Christ.

Mold our lives according to this eternal reality  
that our every word, our every action flows from it  
and pours it out upon everyone around us.

Father, forgive us for our lack of love for those around us,  
for not loving them well with this mystery,  
for not making the most of the time  
for more often than not revealing us, not Christ.

Lord, open doors in the hearts of our family, friends, neighbors, and community  
as you call them to know your love in Christ.

Take our lives as your instruments.

Use our love for these people in our lives  
to declare the mystery of Christ clearly.

As you open to us doors for your word,  
grant us wisdom in our speech and how we live  
that by our words and actions  
we may answer each person, each life  
with your grace in Jesus Christ.

Father, this we ask in the power and the glory,  
the grace and the wonder of the mystery of Christ in us.

Amen.

And I, when I  
came to you,  
brothers, did not  
come proclaiming  
to you the  
testimony of God  
with lofty speech  
or wisdom. For I  
decided to know  
nothing among  
you except Jesus  
Christ and him  
crucified.  
1 Corinthians 2

# GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

**We cry out for God to tune our hearts to sing his praise at all times and in every**

**way**

*"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"*

1. Come, thou fount of ev-'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy  
2. Here I raise my Eb-en - e - zer; hi - ther by thy help I'm  
3. O to grace how great a debt - or dail - y I'm con - strained to  
grace; streams of mer - cy, ne - ver ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est  
come; and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at  
be; let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan - d'ring heart to  
praise. Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by  
home. Je - sus sought when a strang - er, wan - dering  
thee. Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to  
flam - ing tongues a - bove; praise the mount! I'm fixed up -  
from the fold of God: he, to res - cue me from  
leave the God I love: here's my heart, O take and  
on it, mount of God's un - chang - ing love.  
dang - er, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.  
seal it, seal it for thy courts a - bove.

For from his  
fullness we have all  
received, grace  
upon grace.  
John 1

## God proclaims his promise and his blessing upon his people in Christ

**Leader:** Now may the God of your salvation, according to his steadfast love and his abundant mercy, create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. May the Lord restore to you the joy of your salvation and uphold you with a willing spirit that your tongue will sing aloud of his righteousness and your mouth will declare his praise.

**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.*

based on Psalm 51



## 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



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Millie Kate Barnard, *voice, piano*; Meredith Stevens, *voice*; Shane Stevens, *percussion*; Beth Almquist, *voice, piano*

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The reality of God's presence at work in his people was so great that Simon tried to buy the ability to give it. Do you see his gift as that great?

broken people  
bound together in Christ  
for God's glory