

January 12, 2020

A Faithful Witness

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

It's all about soul.
It's all about faith and a deeper devotion.

Billy Joel, "All about Soul"
singer-songwriter

Faith is not just believing that Christ did something important for us many years ago; it includes the recognition that Christ is now living in us and that we are now living in him. Faith grasps not just a Christ for us, but also a Christ in us... Faith is looking away from self, and leaning wholly on Christ for salvation.

Anthony Hoekema
20th century Reformed theologian

Therefore,
since we have been
justified by faith, we have
peace with God through our
Lord Jesus Christ. Through him
we have also obtained access
by faith into this grace in
which we stand, and we
rejoice in hope of the
glory of God.

Romans 5:1-2

Let not the foreigner
who has joined himself to the
LORD say, "The LORD will surely
separate me from his people"; and let
not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry
tree." For thus says the LORD: "To the
eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who
choose the things that please me and hold
fast my covenant, I will give in my house
and within my walls a monument and a
name better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting
name that shall not be cut off.

Isaiah 56:3-5

When the Spirit of
truth comes, he will guide
you into all the truth, for he will
not speak on his own authority, but
whatever he hears he will speak, and
he will declare to you the things that
are to come. He will glorify me, for
he will take what is mine and
declare it to you.

John 16:13-14

H o w
then will they call on him
in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of
whom they have never heard? And how
are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are
sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet
of those who preach the good news!" But they
have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah
says, "Lord, who has believed what he has
heard from us?" So faith comes from
hearing, and hearing through the
word of Christ.

Romans 10:14-17

The purposes of God often
seem strange to us, particularly
when we are in possession of only
a fragment of the total picture...
Sometimes God may lead along a
path that to us seems pointless,
but that is because we can see
only the small picture and
not the bigger one.

Derek Thomas
Presbyterian pastor

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: What is man's primary purpose?

People: To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Leader: So make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God!

People: It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Leader: Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

People: For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Westminster Shorter
Catechism #1
Psalm 100

We, the sheep of his pasture, enter his courts with praise

"Now unto Jehovah"

Now un - to Je - ho - vah, ye sons of the migh - ty, all

5 glo - ry and strength and do - min - ion ac - cord; as - cribe to him glo -

10 - ry, and ren - der him hon - or. In beau - ty of ho - li - ness wor - ship the Lord!

17

1. The voice of Je - ho - vah comes down on the wa - ters; in thun - der the God
2. The voice of Je - ho - vah is migh - ty, is migh - ty; the voice of Je - ho -
3. Each one in his tem - ple his glo - ry pro - claim - eth. He sat on the flood;

23

- of the glo - ry draws nigh. Lo, o - ver the waves of the wide - flow - ing
- vah in maj - es - ty speaks: the voice of Je - ho - vah the ce - dars is
he is King on his throne. Je - ho - vah all strength to his peo - ple im -

29

wa - ters Je - ho - vah as King is en - thron - ed on high!
break - ing; Je - ho - vah the ce - dars of Leb - a - non breaks.
part - eth; Je - ho - vah with peace ev - er bless - eth his own.

In Scripture, the call to worship comes from God. We need to be called because it is not our natural impulse to come to him. The call reminds us of God's pursuing love toward us.

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

The beauty of God's holiness calls us to sorrow over our lack of holiness

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."

Isaiah 57

In sorrow for our sin we cry out for God to abide with us

"Abide with Me"



1. A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven -
2. Thou on my head in ear - ly youth didst
3. I need thy pres - ence, ev - 'ry pass - ing
4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to
5. Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing



tide; the dark - ness deep - ens; Lord with me a -
and, though re - bel - lious, and per - verse mean -
hour; what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's
bless: ills have no weight, tears lose their bit - ter -
eyes; shine through the gloom, and point me to the



bide. When oth - er help - ers fail, and com - forts
while, thou hast not left me, though I've oft left
pow'r? Who like thy - self my guide and stay can
ness. Where is thy sting, death? Where, grave, thy vic - to -
skies. Heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows



flee, help of the help - less, a - bide with me.
thee; on to the close, Lord, a - bide with me.
be? Through cloud and sun - shine, a - bide with me.
ry? I tri - umph still; a - bide with me.
flee: in life, in death, Lord, a - bide with



me; in life, in death, Lord, a - bide with me.

contrite

[kən'trīt, 'käntrīt]

feeling remorse—
guilt, regret, and
sorrow—for our sin

God proclaims that he sent his Son to bear our sin on himself

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

Isaiah 53

Faced with the horrific nature of our sin, we rest by faith in the good news that Jesus Christ took our sin on himself to bring us peace

“Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted”

1.Strick - en, smit - ten, and af - flict - ed, see him dy - ing on the tree! 'Tis the
2.Tell me, ye who hear him groan - ing, was there ev - er grief like his? Friends, through
3.Ye who think of sin but light - ly nor sup - pose the e - vil great here may
4.Here we have a firm foun - da - tion, here the ref - uge of the lost; Christ's the

5 Christ by man re - ject - ed; yes, my soul, 'tis he, 'tis he! 'Tis the
fear, his cause dis - own - ing, foes in - sult - ing his dis - tress; man - y
view its na - ture right - ly, here its guilt may es - ti - mate. Mark the
Rock of our sal - va - tion, his the name of which we boast. Lamb of

9 long ex - pect - ed Proph - et, Da - vid's son, yet Da - vid's Lord; by his
hands were raised to wound him, none would in - ter - pose to save; but the
sac - ri - fice ap - point - ed, see who bears the aw - ful load; 'tis the
God, for sin - ners wound - ed, sac - ri - fice to can - cel guilt! None shall

13 Son God now has spo - ken: 'tis the true and faith - ful Word.
deep - est stroke that pierced him was the stroke that Jus - tice gave.
Word, the Lord's A - noint - ed, Son of Man and Son of God.
ev - er be con - found - ed who on him their hope have built.

*What is your only
comfort in life and
in death?*

That I am not my
own, but belong—
body and soul, in
life and in death—
to my faithful

Savior Jesus Christ.
He has fully paid
for all my sins with
his precious blood,
and has set me

free from the
tyranny of the
devil... Because I
belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy
Spirit, assures me
of eternal life and

makes me
wholeheartedly
willing and ready
from now on to
live for him.

Heidelberg Catechism #1

...by grace you
have been saved
through faith. And
this is not your own
doing; it is the gift
of God, not a result
of works, so that no
one may boast.

Ephesians 2

"Not What My Hands Have Done"

Slowly

1. Not what my hands have done can save my guilt - y soul;
2. Thy work a - lone, O Christ, can ease this weight of sin;
3. Thy grace a - lone, O God, to me can par - don speak;
4. I praise the God of grace; I trust his truth and might;

3
not what my toil - ing flesh has borne can make my spir - it whole.
thy blood a - lone, O Lamb of God, can give me peace with - in.
thy pow'r a - lone, O Son of God, can this sore bond - age break.
he calls me his, I call him mine, my God, my joy, my light.

5
Not what I feel or do can give me peace with God;
Thy love to me, O God, not mine, O Lord, to thee;
No oth - er work, save thine, no oth - er blood will do;
Tis he who sav - eth me, and free - ly par - don gives;

7
not all my prayers and sighs and tears can bear my aw - ful load.
can rid me of this dark un - rest, and set my spir - it free!
no strength, save that which is di - vine, can bear me safe - ly through.
I love be - cause he lov - eth me, I live be - cause he lives,

10
1, 2, 3 4
I love be-cause he lov-eth me, I live be-cause he lives!

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁸And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ³⁹But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Acts 8:26–40

In the beginning
was the Word, and
the Word was with
God, and the Word
was God... And
the Word became
flesh and dwelt
among us, and we
have seen his
glory, glory as of
the only Son from
the Father, full of
grace and truth...
No one has ever
seen God; the only
God, who is at the
Father's side, he
has made him
known.
John 1

‡ Verse 37 is found only in a few later manuscripts and is most likely an addition by a scribe who felt that the Ethiopian would not have been baptized without such a confession of faith. It responds to the question in v.36 and reads: And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Sermon

Rev. Per Almquist

A Faithful Witness The Church that God Built

Preaching is not a
conversation, a
chat about some
interesting ideas...

No! This is God
speaking! He
speaks through the
stammering lips of
the preacher
where that
preacher's mind is
on the text of
Scripture and his
heart is in the
presence of God.
God, as Luther put
it, lives in the
preacher's mouth.

David Wells

We come to God in faith

“Speak, O Lord”

1. Speak, O Lord, as we come to you, to re - ceive the food of your
2. Teach us Lord, full o - be - di - ence, ho - ly re - ver - ence, true hu -
3. Speak, O Lord, and re - new our minds; help us grasp the heights of your

4
ho - ly Word. Take your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and
mi - li - ty. Test our thoughts and our at - ti - tudes in the
plans for us. Truths un - changed from the dawn of time, that will

7
fash - ion us in your like - ness. That the light of Christ might be
ra - di - ance of your pur - i - ty. Cause our faith to rise, cause our
e - cho down through e - ter - ni - ty. And by grace we'll stand on your

10
seen to - day in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
eyes to see your ma - jes - tic love and au - thor - i - ty.
prom - is - es; and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

13
Speak, O Lord, and ful - fill in us all your
Words of pow'r that can ne - ver fail; let their
Speak, O Lord, till your church is built, and the

15
pur - pos - es for your glo - ry.
truth pre - vail o - ver un - be - lief.
earth is filled with your glo - ry.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.
Hebrews 1

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

The sacraments are reminders of the historical reality of Christ's redemption. They embody concretely the reality of our faith... By faith the sacraments present to our senses the touch of the unseen, the foretaste of heaven's feast with the Lord.
Edmund Clowney

We respond to the good news about Jesus by proclaiming it and having it sealed and applied to us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper

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, you proclaim that you are in covenant relationship with God, 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.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.

As many were astonished at you —
his appearance was so marred, beyond
human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the children of
mankind —

so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of
him,

for that which has not been told them they see,
and that which they have not heard they
understand.

Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD
been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at
him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with
grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us
peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own
way;

and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is
silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong
his days;

the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be
satisfied;

by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my
servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the
many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the
strong,

because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the
transgressors.

Like the Ethiopian eunuch God calls us to declare our faith in him by how we live,
so we give our tithes and offerings to him to declare that our lives are his

"All to Jesus I Surrender"

C F C G' Em G' C F C G' Em C

1. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, all to him I free - ly give;
2. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, hum - bly at his feet I bow,
3. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, make me, Sav - ior, whol - ly thine;
4. All to Je - sus I sur - ren - der, Lord, I give my - self to thee;

Musical notation for the first system of the hymn, featuring a treble and bass staff with chords and lyrics.

F C G⁷ Em G⁷ C F C G⁷ Em C

may I ev - er love and trust him, in his pres - ence dai - ly live.
world - ly plea - sures all for - sak - en, take me, Je - sus, take me now.
may thy Ho - ly Spir - it fill me, may I know thy pow'r di - vine.
fill me with thy love and pow - er, let thy bless - ing fall on me.

Musical notation for the third system of the hymn, featuring a treble and bass staff with chords and lyrics.

REFRAIN
C F C G G G⁷ C

I sur - ren - der all, I sur - ren - der all, I sur - ren - der all.

Musical notation for the fourth system of the hymn, featuring a treble and bass staff with chords and lyrics.

F C F C/G G⁷ C

All to thee, my bless - ed Sav - ior, I sur - ren - der all.

Musical notation for the fifth system of the hymn, featuring a treble and bass staff with chords and lyrics.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
Matthew 16

Prayer is more than
a wish turned
heavenward: it is
the voice of faith
directed Godward.
Billy Graham

We seek God in faith, coming to him in prayer through Jesus Christ

*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.*

GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

We sing out of our faith, that our lives are found only in Jesus Christ

"Upon A Life I Have Not Lived"

1. Up - on a ___ life I have not lived, up - on a

4 death I did ___ not die; an - oth - er's life, an - oth - er's death, I stake my whole e - ter - ni - ty.

7

2. Not on the tears which I ___ have shed, not on the
3. Lord, I be - lieve; O deal ___ with me as one who

9 sor - rows I ___ have known; an - oth - er's tears, an - oth - er's ___ griefs; on these I
has thy Word be - lieved; I take the gift, Lord look on ___ me as one who

11 rest, on these ___ a - lone. O ___ Je - sus, Son of God, I
has thy gift ___ re - ceived.

13 build on what thy cross has done for ___ me. ___

15 There both my life and death I read, my guilt, my par - don

17 there I ___ see, ___ there I ___ see. **D.S. al Fine**

God declares his promised blessing upon all who come to him by faith in Christ

Leader: Now may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3

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.*



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
Paul Martin
Ken Morris
Ben Van Dyke



Credits

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I struggle with this image I created. I think I struggle because compositionally the image doesn't seem to have a focal point. The more I look at the image, however, I realize that what I was most drawn to in this text was the water. The focus ended up being the background of swirly, energetic waves of water.

In this text we meet a eunuch who is a court official of the Queen of Ethiopia. I imagine the eunuch is surrounded by opulence in the comforts of his chariot, but within this space he is wrestling and confused. His eyes wander through the theological quandaries of Isaiah—the prophecy, the metaphor, the language, the words, the letters, the punctuation—and he invites Philip to join him in this questioning space. What does it all mean? He asks Philip questions and Philip answers them, but the point of clarity comes when the landscape shifts. Instantly, the eunuch moves from questioning to a sense of awe, excitement, wonder, and maybe even a bit certainty. “Look there is water! What is to keep me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:37). The answer is nothing—not his status, not his questioning, not even his position in society as a sexual minority. Absolutely nothing keeps him from the water, and it seems as though he knows this truth deep into the very cells of his existence. Nothing holds him back from baptism. Courageously diving headfirst into a wonderfully mysterious and certainly uncertain life of following Christ, the eunuch emerges from the water drenched in the truth that nothing will keep him from the love of God.

Lauren Wright Pittman

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory