

February 2, 2020

We're Surrounded. That Simplifies Things.

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

We're Surrounded. That Simplifies Things.

Lewis "Chesty" Puller
US Marine Corps lieutenant general
most decorated Marine in US history

"My presence
will go with you,
and I will give you
rest."

Exodus 33:14

God
is our refuge
and strength, a
very present help
in trouble.

Psalms 46:1

You
hem me in,
behind and
before, and lay your
hand upon me.

Psalms 139:5

We learn to live not by our feelings about God
but by the facts of God. I refuse to believe my
depressions; I choose to believe in God...
Neither when my faith fractures or my feelings
bruise does God cast me off or reject me...
Discipleship is a decision to live by what I
know about God, not by what I *feel* about him
or myself or my neighbors.

Eugene Peterson
Presbyterian pastor, author, and poet

God is immovable. And as a
consequence, God's people are
immovable, and there's absolutely
nothing that can separate God's
people from the love of God
which is in Jesus Christ.

Derek Thomas
Welsh Presbyterian pastor

A thorn was given me in the
flesh, a messenger of Satan to
harass me, to keep me from becoming
conceited. Three times I pleaded with the
Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he
said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for
my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

Trust in the Lord does not involve a mere general
acknowledgement of God as the governor of the universe.
It implies incomparably more. It is a deep conviction of His
special providence, of His incessant attention to every
minute concern of His own peculiar people.

Charles Simeon
18th-19th century English evangelical Anglican clergyman

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

People: **Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,**

Leader: Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

People: **O LORD, my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.**

Leader: He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; he makes his messengers winds; his ministers a flaming fire.

Psalms 103 & 104

We bless the Lord

"How Great Thou Art"

1. O Lord, my God, when I in awe - some won - der con - sid - er
2. When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der, and hear the
3. And when I think that God, his Son not spar - ing, sent him to
4. When Christ shall come with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion and take me

all the worlds thy hands have made; I see the stars, I hear the rol - ling
birds sing sweet - ly in the trees; when I look down from loft - y moun - tain
die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross, my bur - den glad - ly
home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in hum - ble ad - o -

thun - der, thy pow'r through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played. Then sings my
gran - deur, and hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze.
bear - ing, he bled and died to take a - way my sin.
ra - tion, and there pro - claim, my God, how great thou art!

soul, my Sav - ior God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art! Then sings my

soul, my Sav - ior God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!

As God reminds us of who he is, we hear what he requires from us—our worship. The fear of God is recognizing both his awesome power and the wonder of his love for us.

"Glorious and Mighty"

1. Maj-es-ty, your glo - ry is shin - ing bright - er than the
 2. Maj-es-ty, you fash-ioned the heav - ens, your de - crees can
 3. Maj-es-ty, we'll sing with cre - a - tion when you come a -

4 moon and the stars. Mar-vel - ling, we ho - nor and fear you a -
 nev - er be changed. O - ver all the plans of the na - tions your
 gain in the clouds. Ev - 'ry knee will bow down and wor - ship the

7 bove all gods. Glo - ri-ous and might - y, you're awe-some in beau - ty;
 judg-ments reign. one true God.

13 joy - ful songs we raise. Glo - ri-ous and might - y, you're awe-some in

19 beau - ty, great - ly to be praised!

Sing to the LORD,
 bless his name;
 tell of his salvation
 from day to day.
 Declare his glory
 among the
 nations, his
 marvelous works
 among all the
 peoples!...
 Splendor and
 majesty are before
 him; strength and
 beauty are in his
 sanctuary.
 Psalm 96

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

God cries out to us of our sin and calls us to come to him through Jesus Christ

"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...But...we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 3
1 John 2

We confess our sin and our attempts to handle it on our own

Father in heaven, we have not done what is right and good. We have not sought you. We have turned from you to our own ways and so fall far, far short of your glory. We need to be forgiven.

We have tried to heal ourselves. Instead of trusting in the death of Jesus Christ, we have tried to work off our guilt. We have tried so hard to pile up good deeds that outweigh our sins. When this doesn't work, we quickly turn to denial and distraction.

Instead of trusting in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have tried to change through our own efforts. We have tried to change our hearts through sheer willpower. This has left some of us arrogant. This has left most of us anxious and depressed.

Forgive us for trying to heal ourselves. Forgive us for neglecting your grace. Forgive us for looking to the good you have done within us as the payment of our hands for salvation. Forgive us, not for our name's sake, but for your name's sake, that you will be glorified as your grace is made perfect in our weakness through Jesus Christ. This we ask in his name. Amen.

On the cross, Jesus became the perfect sacrifice and bore the wrath of God on our behalf. As Isaiah tells us, "upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace" (Isaiah 53).

God assures us that because he has dealt with our sin we have peace with him through Jesus Christ

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. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

Colossians 1

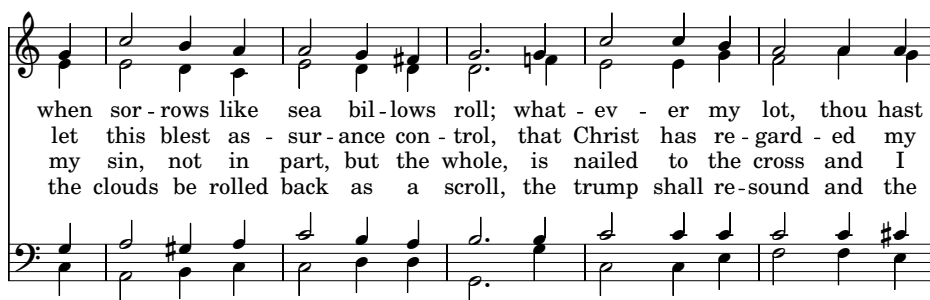
The joy of faith in Jesus Christ is that we can cry "It is well with my soul" with perfect assurance, knowing that it is only because of his life and death that it can be well with our souls no matter the circumstances of life.

We rest in the peace of God that passes understanding

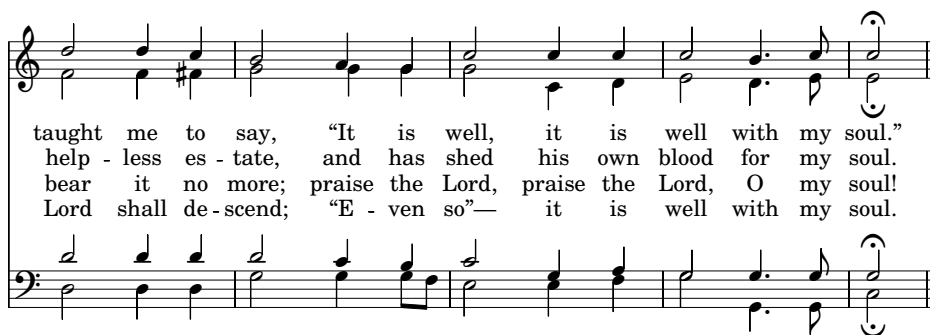
"It Is Well with My Soul"



1. When peace, like a riv - er, at - tend - eth my way,
 2. Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come,
 3. My sin— O the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought!—
 4. O Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,



when sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll; what - ev - er my lot, thou hast
 let this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ has re - gard - ed my
 my sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I
 the clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trump shall re-sound and the



taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."
 help - less es - tate, and has shed his own blood for my soul.
 bear it no more; praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
 Lord shall de - scend; "E - ven so"— it is well with my soul.

REFRAIN



It is well with my soul; it is well, it is well with my soul.
 It is well with my soul;

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

A Song of Ascents.

¹Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Psalm 125

²As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the LORD surrounds his people,
from this time forth and forevermore.

³For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
on the land allotted to the righteous,
lest the righteous stretch out
their hands to do wrong.

⁴Do good, O LORD, to those who are good,
and to those who are upright in their hearts!

⁵But those who turn aside to their crooked ways
the LORD will lead away with evildoers!
Peace be upon Israel!

Sermon

Rev. Per Almquist

We're Surrounded. That Simplifies Things.

The word of the living God makes things happen. As we sing in the hymn, "He speaks, and listening to his voice, new life the dead receive; the mournful, broken hearts rejoice; the humble poor believe."

This testimony was written to state what the church finds essential to be confessed today. It was written with the prayer that it may help the church to live by faith in God's world, and that some of these words may assist in giving reason for the hope that we have through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We declare our immovable trust in the Lord

As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world— which some seek to control, and others view with despair—we declare with joy and trust: Our world belongs to God!

From the beginning, through all the crises of our times, until the kingdom fully comes, God keeps covenant forever: Our world belongs to God! God is King: Let the earth be glad! Christ is victor: his rule has begun! The Spirit is at work: creation is renewed! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Our hope for a new creation is not tied to what humans can do, for we believe that one day every challenge to God's rule will be crushed. His kingdom will fully come, and the Lord will rule. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

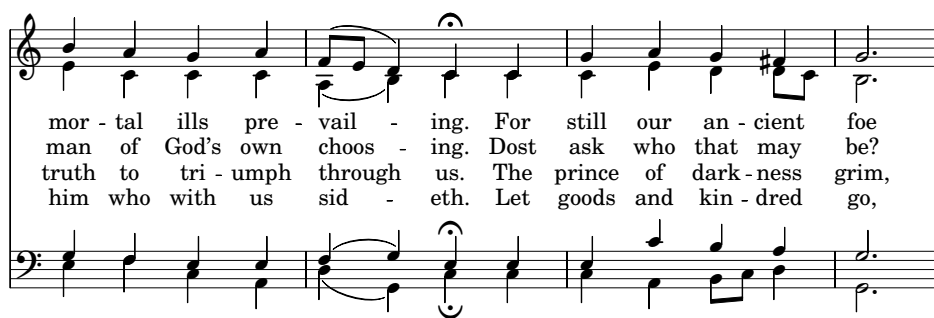
God assures us of our security in his presence as his Spirit works in us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper

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.

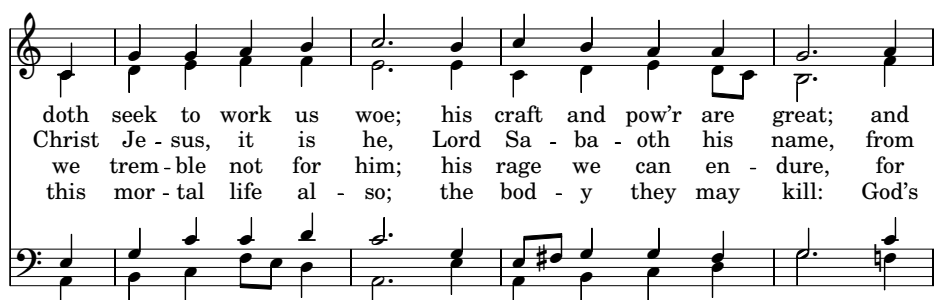
"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

1. A might - y for - tress is our God, a bul - wark nev - er
2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, our striv - ing would be
3. And though this world, with dev - ils filled, should threat - en to un -
4. That Word a - bove all earth - ly pow'rs, no thanks to them, a -

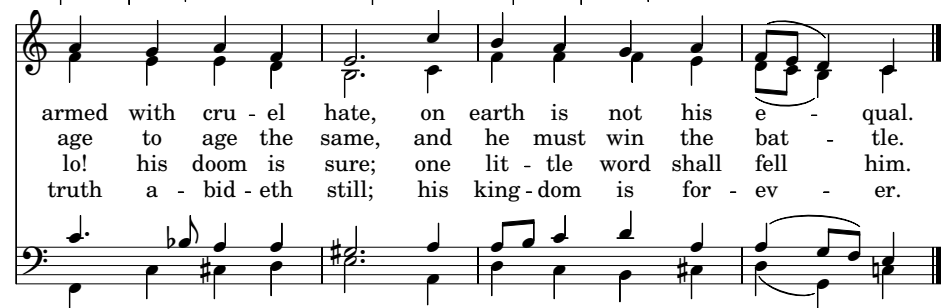
fail - ing; our help - er he a - mid the flood of
los - ing; were not the right man on our side, the
do us, we will not fear, for God hath willed his
bid - eth; the Spir - it and the gifts are ours through



mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing. For still our an - cient foe
 man of God's own choos - ing. Dost ask who that may be?
 truth to tri - umph through us. The prince of dark - ness grim,
 him who with us sid - eth. Let goods and kin - dred go,



doth seek to work us woe; his craft and pow'r are great; and
 Christ Je - sus, it is he, Lord Sa - ba - oth his name, from
 we trem - ble not for him; his rage we can en - dure, for
 this mor - tal life al - so; the bod - y they may kill: God's



armed with cru - el hate, on earth is not his e - qual.
 age to age the same, and he must win the bat - tle.
 lo! his doom is sure; one lit - tle word shall fell him.
 truth a - bid - eth still; his king - dom is for - ev - er.

God is our refuge
 and strength, a
 very present help
 in trouble.

Psalm 46

"Call Jehovah Your Salvation"

Bm A G A F#m G

1. Call Je - ho - vah your sal - va - tion, rest be - neath th'Al - migh - ty's shade;
 2. From the sword at noon-day wast-ing, from the noise-some pes - ti - lence,
 3. Since, with pure and firm af - fec - tion you on God have set your love,

Bm A G A F#m Bm

in his se - cret hab - i - ta - tion dwell, and ne - ver be dis - mayed:
 in the depth of mid - night blast - ing, God shall be your sure de - fense:
 with the wings of his pro - tec - tion he will shield you from a - bove:

G D/F# A Bm G F#m A Bm

there no tu - mult shall a - larm you, you shall dread no hid - den snare:
 he shall charge his an - gel le - gions watch and ward o'er you to keep;
 you shall call on him in trou - ble, he will hear - ken, he will save;

G D/F# A G D/F# F#m Bm

guile nor vi - o - lence can harm you, in e - ter - nal safe - guard there.
 though you walk through hos - tile re - gions, though in des - ert wilds you sleep.
 here for grief re - ward you dou - ble, crown with life be - yond the grave.

Because he holds
 fast to me in love, I
 will deliver him; I
 will protect him,
 because he knows
 my name. When
 he calls to me, I
 will answer him; I
 will be with him in
 trouble; I will
 rescue him and
 honor him. With
 long life I will
 satisfy him and
 show him my
 salvation.

Psalms 91

We declare our immovable trust in the Lord by giving our tithes and offerings

"He Will Hold Me Fast"

1. When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast; when the
2. Those he saves are his de-light, Christ will hold me fast; pre-cious
3. For my life he bled and died, Christ will hold me fast; jus-tice

tempt-er would pre-vail, He will hold me fast. I could nev-er
in his ho-ly sight, he will hold me fast. He'll not let my
has been sat-is-fied; he will hold me fast. Raised with him to

keep my hold through life's fear-ful path; for my love is of-ten
soul be lost; his Prom-is-es shall last; bought by him at such a
end-less life, he will hold me fast 'til our faith is turned to

cold; he must hold me fast.
cost, he will hold me fast. He will hold me fast, he will hold me
sight, when he comes at last!

fast; for my Sav-ior loves me so, he will hold me fast.

The kingdom of God is power, God's ruling power present to heal all the curse of sin. It moves the people of God to meet psychological, social, physical needs, bringing God's kingly blessing as far as the curse is found.

Tim Keller

We declare our immovable trust in the Lord by crying out 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

GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

We praise God for our security, our rock and fortress

"For All the Saints"

1. For all the saints who from their
2. Thou wast their rock, for - tress,
3. O may thy sold - iers faith - ful,
4. The gol - den eve - ning brigh - tens
5. But lo! there breaks yet more
6. From earth's wide bounds, from o - cean's

la - bors rest, who thee by faith be - fore the
and their might; thou, Lord, their Cap - tain in the
true, and bold fight as the saints who no - bly
in the glo - rious - west; soon, soon to faith - ful war - riors
glo - rious - day; the saints tri - um - phant rise in the
far - thest coast, through gates of pearl streams in the

world con - fessed; thy name, O Je - sus, be for -
well - fought fight; thou, in the dark - ness drear, their
fought of old, and win with them the vic - tor's
comes their rest; sweet is the calm of par - a
bright ar - ray; the King of glo - ry pass - es
count - less host, sing - ing to Fa - ther, Son, and

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

e - ver blessed: Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu.
one true light: Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu.
crown of gold: Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu.
dise the blest: Al - le - lu - ia Al - le lu!
on his way: Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu.
Ho - ly Ghost: Al - le - lu - ia Al - le lu.

10 6
lu - - - - - ia.

"Blessed indeed,"
says the Spirit,
"that they may rest
from their labors."
Revelation 14

God proclaims his blessing upon his people: peace and security in him

Leader: As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people from this time forth and forevermore... He hems you in, behind and before, and lays his hand upon you... May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth!

Psalms 125, 139, & 134

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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Connor Crawford, voice; Wagner Sgobbi, piano; Beth Almquist, voice

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Given my performance so far, why
do I keep insisting that my security
is based on being sure of myself
instead of God's being sure of me?

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory