



January 9, 2022

Arriving Where We Started

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

"Little Gidding" by T.S. Eliot
20th century American poet

Behold, a throne stood
in heaven, with one seated on
the throne. And he who sat there had
the appearance of jasper and carnelian,
and around the throne was a rainbow that
had the appearance of an emerald... Then I
saw another mighty angel coming down
from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a
rainbow over his head, and his face
was like the sun, and his legs like
pillars of fire.

Revelation 4:2-3; 10:1

It is indeed a phenomenon that may be accounted for by natural laws; but the laws of nature are truly the appointment of God and it is just in its conformity to natural law that the rainbow is a pledge that the order of nature shall continue. And is there not to every law of nature a background pointing to the mysteries of the Divine nature and will? The label of the rainbow is sufficiently legible. Shining upon a dark ground...it represents the victory of the light of love over the fiery darkness of wrath. Originating from the effect of the sun upon a dark cloud, it typifies the willingness of the heavenly to penetrate the earthly. Stretched between heaven and earth, it is as a bond of peace between both, and, spanning the horizon, it points to the all-embracing universality of the Divine mercy.

Franz Delitzsch

19th century German theologian and Hebraist

"This is like the days
of Noah to me: as I swore
that the waters of Noah should
no more go over the earth, so I have
sworn that I will not be angry with you,
and will not rebuke you. For the
mountains may depart and the hills be
removed, but my steadfast love shall
not depart from you, and my covenant
of peace shall not be removed,"
says the LORD, who has
compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:9-10

If you, O
LORD, should mark
iniquities, O Lord, who
could stand? But with you there
is forgiveness, that you may be
feared...O Israel, hope in the
LORD! For with the LORD there
is steadfast love, and with him
is plentiful redemption.

Psalms 130:3-4, 7

The deepest "aha's" spring from an encounter and then a return. Repeating the encounter fuses it into one's awareness. One of the biggest mistakes a teacher can make is to forego the return or repetition. The learning process is one of slow engagement with ideas; gradually the engagement builds to a critical mass when the student actually acquires the idea. Repetition matters because it can hasten and deepen the engagement process. If one cares about quality of learning, one should consciously design repetitive engagement into courses and daily teaching.

Robert Bruner

Dean emeritus of the Darden Graduate School of Business
Administration at the University of Virginia

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

People: **For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.**

1 Chronicles 16

Leader: Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth;

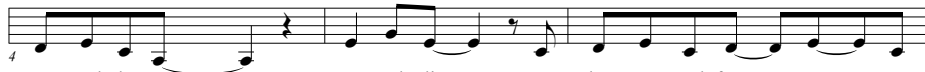
People: **Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"**

We sing to the Lord and ascribe to him glory and strength

"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!

God calls us to worship him by reminding us of his glory. When we truly accept who he is, we have no choice but to respond in worship.

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

God sends the radiance of his glory to call sinners to repentance

Luke 5

Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Romans 3

"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.

To the world,
repentance is
looking backwards
in shame, remorse,
and regret at what
our sin and failures
cost us. For the
Christian,
repentance is
looking forward to
the one who took
all that as his own
and gave us
himself instead. To
the world
repentance is
about sorrow; to
the Christian it is
about joy.

We repent, admitting that we are not righteous, that we are sinners for whom Jesus came

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

God declares his great mercy to us in our sin

1 Peter 1

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...For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5

We rejoice in God's mercy to us in Jesus Christ

"A Debtor to Mercy Alone"

A musical score for the hymn "A Debtor to Mercy Alone". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The score is divided into six systems, each starting with a measure number (1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15). The lyrics are: "A debt - or to mer - cy a - lone, of the
The work which his good-ness be - gan, the
My name from the palms of his hands e -
cov - e - nant mer - cy I sing; nor fear, with thy
arm of his strength will com-plete; his prom - ise is
ter - ni - ty will not e - raise; im - pressed on his
righ - teous-ness on, my per - son and of - f'ring to bring. The
yea and a - men, and nev - er was for - feit - ed yet. Things
heart it re - mains, in marks of in - del - i - ble grace. Yes,
ter - rors of law and of God with me can have no - thing to do;
fu - ture, nor things that are now, not all things be - low nor a - bove,
I to the end shall en - dure, as sure as the ear - nest is giv'n;
my Sav - ior's o - be - dience and blood hide
can make him his pur - pose for - go, or
more hap - py, but not more se - cure, the
all my trans - gres - sions from view.
sev - er my soul from his love.
glo - ri - fied spir - its in heav'n.

In the strange mercy of God the cup of his righteous wrath is given into the hands, not of his enemies, but of his beloved Son. And he will drink it, down to the dregs until the moment comes when "I thirst" gives place to "It is finished".
Lesslie Newbigin

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

The steadfast love
of the LORD never
ceases; his
mercies never
come to an end;
they are new every
morning; great is
your faithfulness.
"The LORD is my
portion," says my
soul, "therefore I
will hope in him."
Lamentations 3



1. Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;
2. Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest,
3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,



there is no shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est
sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove, join with all
thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide, strength for to -



not, thy com - pas - sions, they fail not; as thou hast been thou for -
na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness,
day and bright hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten



ev - er wilt be.
mer - cy, and love. Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!
thou - sand be - side!



Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see: all I have need - ed thy



hand hath pro - vid - ed— Great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me!

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

Genesis 8:20-9:17

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

¹And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ²The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

⁶"Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.

⁷And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹²And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

*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

Arriving Where We Started

The Grand Design

Rev. Per Almquist

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

We rejoice that God keeps his covenant because of his love despite our covenant breaking

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"

1. Je - sus, lo - ver of my soul, let me to thy bo - som fly,
 2. Oth - er ref - uge have I none, I help - less hang on thee;
 3. Thou, O Christ, art all I want; here more than all I find;
 4. Plen - teous grace with thee is found, grace to cov - er all my sin;

5 while the near - er wa - ters roll, while the tem - pest still is high:
 leave, oh leave me not a - lone, still sup - port and com - fort me!
 raise the fall - en, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.
 let the heal - ing streams a - bound; make and keep me pure with - in:

9 hide me, O my Sa - vior, hide, 'till life's storm is past;
 All my trust on thee is stayed, all help from thee I bring;
 Just and ho - ly is thy name; I am all un - right - eous - ness;
 thou of life the foun - tain art, let me take of thee;

13 safe in - to the ha - ven guide, re - cieve my soul at last.
 cov - er my de - fense - less head in the shad - ow of thy wing.
 false and full of sin I am, thou art full of truth and grace.
 spring thou up with - in my heart, for all e - ter - ni - ty.

17 1-3 D 4 D A

"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

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

What the believer feeds upon, then, is not Christ's body as such but the redemptive benefits that he offers through his saving death.
Richard Phillips

God renews his covenant again, sealing us in his love through the death of Jesus Christ 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.

We respond to God's gracious covenant by proclaiming his love in Christ by our lives: our tithes, our offerings, and our love for one another

Leader: How do we know the wondrous covenant love of God?

People: **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.**

Leader: How do we live in that glorious love?

People: **If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us...By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?... Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**

1 John 3, 4

We run to our covenant God in prayer to rest in his love as we live his love to our world

*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 rest in God's covenant love that never fails

"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

God repeats the promise signed and sealed by the rainbow

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.

People: Amen

Please stay and join us for a time of 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.

Ephesians 3



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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Meredith Stevens, *voice*; Shane Stevens, *djembe*; Beth Almquist, *piano*

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There is no little guy in green with a
pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.
However, there is a great big God with
an eternal love behind every rainbow.

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory

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