

January 7, 2024

Strength for Today
Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

God in his almightiness is looking at you with a holy love and knows your every need. He hears your every sigh and loves you with an everlasting love.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
20th century Welsh pastor

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:10–11

B u t he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9–10

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:1

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Hebrews 11:32–34

You have a hope that can't be put out, a light when all other lights go out. You are God's own inheritance. He is your God and you are his people...You have the incalculably great power of God at work in you and for you. These things are already yours in Christ

Ligon Duncan
Presbyterian pastor and CEO/Chancellor of
Reformed Theological Seminary

I know that I have myself failed over and over again, that I am a moral and spiritual weakling. But here also it is true that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. The Church is not an organization of spiritual giants. It is broken men and women who can lead others to the Cross... For what is the work of the ministry if it is not to lead others in following Jesus on the way to the Cross?

Lesslie Newbigin

British theologian, author, and missionary to India

We cannot prevail with God but in his own strength. It is his Spirit who intercedes in us, and helps us in our weakness.

Matthew Henry
17th century British pastor

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Do you not know? Have you not heard?

People: **The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.**

Isaiah 40

Leader: He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

People: **He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.**

Leader: Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

People: **They will soar on wings like eagles; they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.**

We hope in the Lord and rejoice in him

"The God of Abraham Praise"

1. The God of A - braham praise, who reigns en - throned a - bove, An -
 2. The God of A - braham praise, at whose su - preme com - mand from I
 3. He by him - self has sworn, I on his oath de - pend; I
 4. The whole tri - um - phant host gives thanks to God on high; "Hail

Em G C G Em G D G

5
 cient of ev - er - last - ing days and God of love. Je -
 earth I rise, and seek the joys at his right hand. I
 shall, on ea - gles' wings up - borne, to heav'n as - cend. I
 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost!" they ev - er cry. Hail

G Em D Em G B

9
 ho - vah! Great I AM! by earth and heav'n con - fessed; I
 all on earth for - sake, its wis - dom, fame, and pow'r, and
 shall be - hold his face, I shall his pow'r a - dore, and
 Ab - braham's God and mine! I join the heav'n - ly lays; all

Em D G Am Em B Em

13
 bow and bless the sa - cred name, for - ev - er blest.
 him my on - ly por - tion make, my shield and tow'r.
 sing the won - ders of his grace for - ev - er more.
 might and ma - jes - ty are thine, and end - less praise.

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.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 5

"Heavenly Hosts in Ceaseless Worship"

1. Heaven-ly hosts in cease-less wor-ship, "Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly!" cry;
2. All cre-a-tion, all re-demp-tion join to sing the Sa-vior's worth;

5 "He who is, who was, and will be, God Al-migh-ty, Lord Most High.
Lamb of God whose blood has bought us, kings and priests to reign on Earth.

9 Praise and ho-nor, power and glo-ry be to him who reigns a-lone."
Wealth and wis-dom, power and glo-ry, ho-nor, might, do-min-ion, praise

13 We, with all his hands have fa-shioned fall be-fore the Fa-ther's throne.
now be his from all his crea-tures and to e-ver-last-ing days!

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and common time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics placed below the notes. The first staff contains the first two lines of the lyrics. The second staff contains the next two lines. The third staff contains the next two lines. The fourth staff contains the final two lines. The score ends with a double bar line.

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

God declares that our might, our ability is worthless

His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Psalms 147

For the LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Psalms 14

We acknowledge our sin, seeking our good in ourselves

Leader: Father, you know us better than we know ourselves. You know when we sit down and when we get up.

People: You know when we go out and when we lie down to sleep. You understand our thoughts before we have them.

Leader: There is nowhere we can go to be apart from you. How could we hide our sin from you?

People: We confess that our hearts are plagued with sin. We have sought our own good over the good of others, and of your kingdom. Forgive us.

Leader: We praise you, Lord, that knowing fully our sinful state you sent your Son, Jesus, to rescue us.

People: Amen

To live by grace means to acknowledge my whole life story, the good and the bad. In admitting my bad side, I learn who I am and what God's grace truly means.

God declares his steadfast love: that he sent his Son as our Good Shepherd

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 10

But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
Matthew 9

We come as sinners and rest in God's might that holds us and saves us

"Come, Ye Sinners"



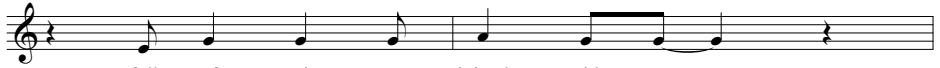
1. Come, ye sin - ners, poor and wretch - ed,
2. Come, ye need - y, come and wel - come,
3. Come, ye wea - ry, hea - vy la - den,
4. Let not con - science make you lin - ger,
5. Lo! the in - car - nate God, a - scend - ed,



weak and woun - ded, sick and sore;
God's free boun - ty glo - ri - fy;
bruised and bro - ken by the fall;
nor of fit - ness fond - ly dream;
pleads the mer - it of his blood;



Je - sus read - y stands to save you,
true be - lief and true re - pen - tance,
if you tar - ry till you're bet - ter,
all the fit - ness he re - qui - res
ven - ture on him, ven - ture whol - ly,



full of pi - ty joined with power.
ev - r'y grace that brings you nigh.
you will ne - ver come at all.
is to feel your need of him.
let no oth - er trust in - trude.



He is a - ble, he is a - ble,
With - out mon - ey, with - out mon - ey,
Not the righ - teous, not the righ - teous;
This he gives you, this he gives you,
None but Je - sus, none but Je - sus



he is will - ing; doubt no more.
come to Je - sus Christ and buy.
sin - ners Je - sus came to call.
'tis the Spir - it's ris - ing beam.
can do help - less sin - ners good.

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

¹⁸...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:18–23

Sermon

Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III

Strength for Today

50th General Assembly

1. The Substance of Paul’s Prayer (**18-19a**)
2. The Foundation of Paul’s Prayer (**19b**)
3. The Illustration of Paul’s Prayer (**20-23**)

Ligon Duncan is the Chancellor/ CEO of Reformed Theological Seminary. He is a ninth generation Presbyterian elder.

We cry out for the strength that comes from God's great might "Be Thou My Vision"



1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2. Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3. Rich - es I heed not, nor man's emp - ty praise,
 4. High King of hea - ven, my vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou mine in - her - it - ance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach hea - ven's joys, O bright hea - ven's Sun!



thou my best thought by day or by night,
 thou my great Fa - ther and I thy true son;
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wa - king or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 thou in me dwell - ing, and I with thee one.
 High King of hea - ven, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vis - ion, O Rul - er of all.

This hymn is based on an Irish poem, believed to have been written between the 6th and 8th centuries.

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

By giving our tithes and offerings to God, we declare that our strength comes only from his power and glory working according to his steadfast love

Psalm 63

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,
when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

As we say these verses together, we profess our faith in the God who spoke in them and his faithfulness to the promise they offer. We proclaim our faith in their fulfillment in Christ's coming that we celebrate at Christmas, and in his coming again.

We pray that that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened to know the glorious reality that is ours in 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 BY HIS GRACE

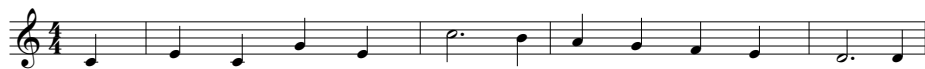
He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Hebrews 3

We sing out in joy at the almightiness of God displayed in Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of the Father

"Rejoice, the Lord is King"



1. Re - joi - ce, the Lord is King: your Lord and King a - dore! Re -
2. Je - sus the Sa - vior reigns, the God of truth and love; when
3. His king - dom can - not fail, he rules o'er earth and heav'n; the
4. He sits at God's right hand till all his foes sub - mit, and
5. Re - joi - ce in glor - ious hope! Our Lord, the Judge, shall come, and



6. joi - ce, give thanks, and sing, and tri - umph ev - er more.
he had purged our stains, he took his seat a - bove.
keys of death and hell are to our Je - sus giv'n.
bow to his com - mand, and fall be - neath his feet.
take his ser - vants up to their e - ter - nal home.



10. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joi - ce, a - gain I say, re - joi - ce!

We go out to live in the promise of the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

from Revelation 7

Leader: Go now, that your walking and your waiting, your singing and your suffering, the very fullness of your lives may declare the power of the King. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and might be to our God forever and ever!

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.

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

July 2023 - March 2024

Free Grace is not a business. We do not seek to make a profit. We are broken people bound together in Christ for his glory. We glorify him as we love him and our neighbor.

Our finances are merely a means to that end. Our income reflects our knowledge of our brokenness and our experience of his grace. The more we know our brokenness, the more the fullness of his grace and love in Jesus Christ washes over us. The more his grace and love sweep us off our feet, the more of us we give to him.

Our expenses are how we live that out together. They reflect our values. We spend our money on what is important to us. Much of our expenses are simply the cost of existing in today's world: rent, utilities, insurance, etc.

The wonder of this report is that Ministry line. This is money that is spent directly on things like missions, discipleship, outreach, fellowship, and worship. The amount shown here is four times what we have ever spent in the period before! It reflects more activity on our part, particularly in outreach. Almost half of this is due to the mission trips to Romania and Nepal. But there are also significant increases in direct support for Jordan's Bridge, taking our ownership of that ministry more seriously, mercy ministry to cover some significant needs, discipleship with new home groups and the youth group starting up, and outreach to our community. We want to be doing these things, so we rejoice that we are.

Join your elders in giving thanks for God's work of grace in and through us. And pray that he will continue to work and provide all we need abundantly for his glory.

INCOME

Offerings	\$133,834
Outside Partners	\$29,228
Other Income	\$20

TOTAL INCOME **\$163,082**

EXPENSES

Administrative (rent, utilities, etc.)	\$47,173
Other Expenses (reimbursed expenses, etc.)	\$1,694
Ministry	\$43,488
Personnel	\$76,296

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$168,651**

BOTTOM LINE **\$5,569 deficit**

CHURCH FINANCE 101

Where does our money go:

Administrative: This is the cost of existing: rent, utilities, insurance, etc.

Ministry: This is what we spend directly on the work we do as a church: missions, outreach, worship, fellowship, etc.

Personnel: This covers paying our staff and all the associated costs of having employees (e.g., taxes, health insurance, etc.).

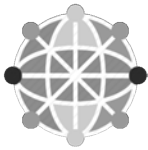
Other: This is primarily expenses we incur that are reimbursed to us by others (e.g., Presbytery or General Assembly)



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. Dr. Per Almquist (pastor)
Brian Cosgrove
Ken Morris
Ben Van Dyke



Credits

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<https://paulrichmondstudio.com/>

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Abi Lee, *violin*; Shane Stevens, *percussion*; Meredith Stevens, *voice*; Beth Almquist, *piano*

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"Heavenly Hosts in Ceaseless Worship" ©1975 Hope Publishing Co. Words: based on Revelation 4-5, Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1972. Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824.

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"Rejoice, the Lord is King" Public Domain. Words: Charles Wesley, 1746; alt. Music: John Darwall, 1770.

The sense of the honey's sweetness on the tongue brings a fuller knowledge of honey than any rational deduction. In the same way, it is one thing to believe in a God who has attributes such as love, power, and wisdom; it is another to sense the reality of that God in your heart.

Tim Keller
Presbyterian pastor

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory