



February 1, 2026

Faith Under Trial

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

Save me, O
God! For the waters
have come up to my
neck... "Let not the flood
sweep over me, or the deep
swallow me up, or the pit
close its mouth over me.

Psalm 69:1, 15

Having a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ does not mean that somehow we will escape all of life's troubles. On the contrary, Christians suffer the same natural disasters, the same sinful abuse, and the same misfortunes as everyone else... we can be "in the center of God's will," as people say, and yet still find ourselves at the center of the storm...

Phillip Graham Ryken
Theologian and pastor of 10th Presbyterian Church

I scarcely know of an apter picture of a church than a ship upon the treacherous Galilean Sea with Jesus and His disciples sailing in it..... Every sail of the good ship which bears the flag of the High Admiral of our fleet must be beaten with the wind, and every plank in her must be tried by the waves.

Charles Spurgeon
19th-century English pastor and preacher

Beloved, do
not be surprised at
the fiery trial when it
comes upon you to test
you, as though
something strange were
happening to you.

1 Peter 4:12

You rule the
raging of the sea;
when its waves rise,
you still them.

Psalm 89:9

Count it
all joy, my brothers,
when you meet trials of
various kinds, for you know
that the testing of your faith
produces steadfastness. And let
steadfastness have its full effect,
that you may be perfect and
complete, lacking in
nothing.

James 1:2-4

Christians do not arrive at perseverance when they sit still and do nothing. We come to the end by running, to victory by fighting, and to heaven by enduring.

Thomas Watson
17th century, English Puritan pastor and theologian

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

Psalms 29

People: **Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**

Leader: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory! Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!

Isaiah 6
Revelation 4

People: **Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.**

We declare that Jesus has all authority and power! "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

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.

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

"My Maker and My King"

My Ma - ker and my King, to thee my all I owe; thy
 The crea - ture of thy hand, on thee a - lone I live; my
 Lord, what can I im - part when all is thine be - fore? Thy
 O let thy grace in - spire my soul with strength di - vine; let

sover - eign boun - ty is the spring whence all my bless - ings flow; thy
 God, thy ben - e - fits de - mand more praise than I can give; my
 love de - mands a thank - ful heart, the gift, a - las! how poor, thy
 ev - 'ry word and each de - sire and all my days be thine; let

sover - eign boun - ty is the spring whence all my bless - ings
 God, thy ben - e - fits de - mand more praise than I can
 love de - mands a thank - ful heart, the gift, a - las! how
 ev - 'ry word and each de - sire and all my days be

flow.
 give.
 poor.
 thine.

Oh come, let us
 worship and bow
 down;
 let us kneel before
 the LORD, our
 Maker!
 Psalm 95

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

God proclaims that we have profaned his name as we put our trust in other gods

For 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." Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you.

Isaiah 30

"Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them."

Ezekiel 36

We confess that we place our faith in others to save us from the storms of life

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 trample the blood of the Son of God under foot if we think we are forgiven because we are sorry for our sins. The only explanation of the forgiveness of God, and of the unfathomable depth of His forgetting, is the Death of Jesus Christ.

Oswald Chambers

God assures that no storms will sink the one who is found "in Christ Jesus"


By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities...There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death...For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isaiah 53

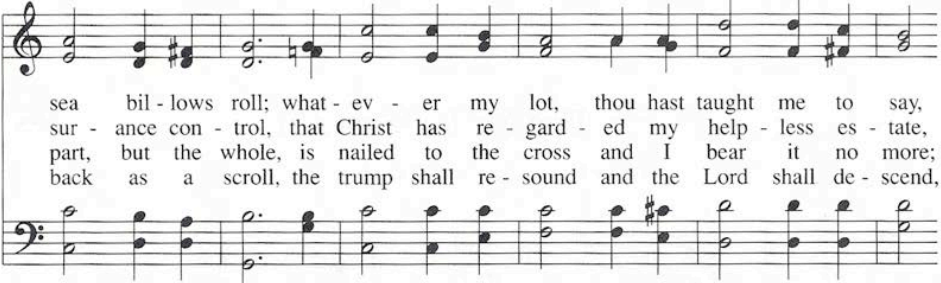
Romans 8

Though the storms rage, we rest in his promise of assurance

"It is Well with My Soul"



1. When peace, like a riv - er, at - tend - eth my way, when sor - rows like
 2. Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, let this blest as -
 3. My sin— O the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought!—my sin, not in
 4. O Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled



sea bil - lows roll; what - ev - er my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
 sur - ance con - trol, that Christ has re - gard - ed my help - less es - tate,
 part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more;
 back as a scroll, the trump shall re - sound and the Lord shall de - scend,



REFRAIN
 "It is well, it is well with my soul."
 and has shed his own blood for my soul. It is well
 praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! It is well
 "E - ven so"— it is well with my soul.



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

You keep him in
 perfect peace
 whose mind is
 stayed on you,
 because he trusts
 in you.
 Isaiah 26

Continue to the next page.

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

Luke 8:22-25

[22] One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, [23] and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. [24] And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. [25] He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Faith Under Trial

That You May Be Certain

Because Jesus is the Lord of creation who rules even over our trials, we are to trust him;

Intro:

1) **Though they come suddenly** (vs22-23)

2) **Though they become severe** (vs23-24)

3) **Though he seems silent** (vs24-25)

We cry out to the one who came and dwelt among us

"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

God is our refuge
 and strength,
 a very present
 help in trouble.
 Therefore we will
 not fear though
 the earth give way,
 though the
 mountains be
 moved into the
 heart of the sea...

Psalms 46

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

We celebrate the Lord's supper, communing with Christ

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 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 are acknowledging 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.

"Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul"

Dear refuge of my weary soul,
On thee, when sorrows rise.
On thee, when waves of trouble roll,
My fainting hope relies.
To thee I tell each rising grief,
For thou alone can heal.
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief,
For every pain I feel.

But oh! When gloomy doubts prevail,
I fear to call thee mine.
The springs of comfort seem to fail,
And all my hopes decline.
Yet gracious God, where shall I flee?
Thou art my only trust.
And still my soul would cleave to thee
Though prostrate in the dust.

Hast thou not bid me seek thy face,
And shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of sovereign grace,
Be deaf when I complain?
No still the ear of sovereign grace,
Attends the mourner's prayer.
Oh may I ever find access,
To breathe my sorrows there.

Thy mercy seat is open still,
Here let my soul retreat.
With humble hope attend thy will,
And wait beneath thy feet.
Thy mercy seat is open still,
Here let my soul retreat.
With humble hope attend thy will,
And wait beneath thy feet.

In part, the wonder of the Table is this: we neither drag Christ back down to earth nor 'celebrate his absence,' but rather find ourselves drawn up by the Spirit and united to the heavenly Christ.
John Calvin

We profess that our confidence is easily shaken, but can be made sure

Westminster
Larger Catechism
Questions 80-81

Leader: Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?

People: Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

Leader: Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?

People: Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet they are never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

Leader: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

People: 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. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

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 Confession
Question 1

When we come to
the end of
ourselves, we
come to the
beginning of God.
Hudson Taylor

In prayer, we cry out to Christ who entered our boat bearing our infirmities

*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

We proclaim our trust in Christ as he leads us through deep waters

"On Jordan's Stormy Banks"

On Jor - dan's stor - my banks I stand, and
All o'er those wide ex - ten - ded plains shines
No chill - ing winds nor pois - onous breath can
When shall I reach that hap - py place, and

3
cast a wish - ful eye to
one e - ter - nal day; there
reach that health - ful shore;
be for - ev - er blessed; when

5
Ca - naan's fair and hap - py land, where
God the Son for - ev - er reigns, and
sick - ness, sor - row, pain, and death are
shall I see my Fa - ther's face, and

7
1 2, 3, 4 Chorus:
my pos - ses - sions lie. I am
scat - ters night a way.
felt and feared no more.
in his bos - om rest.

10
bound, I am bound, I am bound for the prom - ised Land. I am

14
bound, I am bound, I am bound for the prom - ised Land.

But as it is, they
desire a better
country, that is, a
heavenly one.
Therefore God is
not ashamed to be
called their God,
for he has
prepared for them
a city.
Hebrews 11

God declares that he will sustain us by his grace

Leader: Now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

Isaiah 43

People: Amen

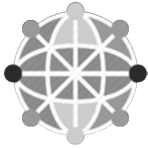
Please stay and join us for a time of enjoying each other's company.

*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*



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
Brian Cosgrove
Rev. Adam Lee
Ken Morris
Ben Van Dyke



Credits

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Our Daily Worship

A through-the-week devotional



The following pages are provided for you with a desire to “lead you beside still waters”.

May they assist you in your walk with Christ through week, as you practice his presence, feed upon his word, and reflect upon how both impact your weekly life.

SUNDAY

Scripture – *Colossians 1:15-17*

Reflection: The disciples were still learning a truth that would take time to grasp: Jesus is not only their teacher and master; he is the Lord of creation because he is the Creator himself. Colossians pulls back the curtain and lets us see who he is before he ever steps into a boat. He is “the image of the invisible God” — the perfect, visible revelation of the One no human eye can see. To look at Jesus is to look at God’s own face turned toward us.

Then Paul says something staggering: *“By him were all things created... all things were created by him, and for him.”* Every mountain ridge that gathers the clouds into a heap, every drop of water that makes up the sea, the wind that lifts the waves, every unseen command that drives a storm into fury exists because the Son of God willed it into being. And all of it exists not only by him, but **for** him — for his glory, his purposes, and his reign.

And it does not stop at creation. *“By him all things consist.”* He does not merely start the universe and step back. He holds it together and they submit to him.

When we come to Luke 8, this is the identity now sitting in a fishing boat. The voice that will soon rebuke the storm is the same voice that first called the sea into existence. The disciples are about to learn, not just that Jesus can calm storms, but that storms exist because he is their Lord.

Our Common Weakness: We forget who Jesus truly is and begin to fear as though creation were out of control.

Christ Connection: The one who created the Universe, steps into it to live as a human, and become a high priest who understands our weaknesses.

Psalm 89:9- *Who is the One that Scripture says rules the raging of the sea?*

Job 38:11 & Psalm 104:9- *Why are the waves of the sea predictable in how far they rise?*

Job 38:25, 28- *Who alone gives birth to the rain and directs its path?*

Consider- *The disciples in the boat did not yet know what we know. They had not heard Paul say that all things were created by Christ and for Christ. They did not yet know that “by him all things consist.” They knew him as Master, but they were still learning that he is Lord of creation. And so when the storm came suddenly, when it grew severe, when he seemed silent, they were afraid and confused. But we stand on the far side of the resurrection and the full witness of Scripture. We know who is in the boat. Therefore, when our storms come suddenly, when they become terrifying, and when Christ seems quiet, we are not left to wonder who he is. We are called to trust him—because the One who leads us into the storm is the very One who created it, governs it, and will bring us safely through it.*

Prayer Lord Jesus, you are not only with us in the storm — you are Lord over it. Help us to trust your rule when our hearts feel overwhelmed. Teach us to rest in your sovereign care and sustaining power. Strengthen our faith to see your glory even in the waves— Amen.

MONDAY

Scripture – *Luke 8:22-23*

Reflection: The storm in Luke 8 does not build slowly on the horizon. It comes down on the lake without warning. One moment the disciples are sailing in calm obedience; the next, their boat is filling with water and their lives are in danger. No time to prepare. No gradual adjustment. No space to brace themselves. And it is important to see why they are in that boat: they are there because they obeyed. Jesus told them where to go, and they went. Their danger is not the result of rebellion, but of faithful following.

This is how many of our hardest trials arrive. A phone call. A diagnosis. A job loss. An arrest. A betrayal. A collapse we did not see coming. Life can change in a single sentence, a single knock, a single report. Storms that are sudden are far more frightening because we are not only weak; we are unready. The clouds were hidden from the disciples by the mountains, but they were never hidden from Christ. He was not surprised by what was coming. He led them onto the water knowing the wind that would soon descend. And so the suddenness of the storm did not mean the absence of Christ's rule. The path of obedience did not bypass the storm, but it did place them under the care of the One who governs it. When Christ leads us forward and the trial breaks suddenly, we are not being abandoned to chaos; we are being called to trust the Lord who saw the storm before we ever felt the first wave.

OCW: We assume that obedience should lead to predictability and safety, so when life turns suddenly and painfully, we are tempted to think something has gone wrong—either with us or with Christ's care for us.

CC: Christ leads us into the storm and rules over it completely.

Isaiah 45:2- What does God do as he goes before us, even when we cannot see ahead?

Matthew 6:34- Based on this passage, which storm clouds of life should we be concerned with?

Psalms 139:10 - How does God describe his care for us when our path suddenly becomes dark and dangerous?

Consider- *The disciples could not see the storm forming, but Christ could. They were caught off guard; he was not. Their obedience led them straight into danger, yet that danger was never outside his knowledge or control. In the same way, we live without sight of tomorrow's winds and waves, but we follow a Savior who already walks ahead of us. We are often lulled into spiritual sleep by seasons of ease, quietly assuming that the stability and comfort we enjoy will simply continue. But Scripture teaches us to expect trials, not be shocked by them. The question is not whether storms will come suddenly, but whether our hearts will be anchored in the truth that Christ goes before us, holds our future, and will lead us even when the path grows dark and the waters rise.*

Prayer Lord Jesus, you see what we cannot see and know what is coming before it arrives. Teach us to trust you when life changes without warning— Amen.

TUESDAY

Scripture – Luke 8:23-24

Reflection: The storm on the Sea of Galilee was not an inconvenience; it was a genuine threat to life. Luke tells us the boat was filling with water and the disciples cried out, “We are perishing!” This was not panic exaggeration—it was an honest assessment. The waves were strong enough to sink them, and they knew it. Faith does not pretend danger is small. It does not call drowning “a mild inconvenience.” It names the storm for what it is.

And this matters, because Scripture never teaches us to deny the reality of death. The curse of sin has made this world a place where bodies fail, waters drown, storms kill, and even the people of God face real peril. Redemption has not yet removed the brokenness of creation. The presence of Christ in the boat did not mean the storm could not toss them. Believers are not exempt from the consequences of living in a fallen world. The disciples’ cry, “We are perishing,” is the language of creatures who know that death is still an enemy, and that it presses close even to those who follow the Lord.

Yet the severity of the danger does not mean the absence of Christ’s care. The disciples were not wrong about the storm’s power—but they were still learning who was in the boat with them. The trial was real, the threat was real, the fear was understandable. But over it all stood the Lord who commands wind and wave. The storm could destroy them; it could not outrule him.

Our Common Weakness: We forget that Christ’s authority is greater than what threatens us.

Christ Connection: Christ has authority to silence it and save his people from perishing.

***Psalm 69:1–2-** How does the Psalmist describe the trouble he is in?*

***2 Cor 1:8–9-** How does Paul describe the troubles he faced due to obedience to the gospel?*

***Psalm 46:1–2-** Where does the Psalmist turn in his distress? Where do you?*

***Consider-** The storm that struck the disciples was not mild or manageable; the boat was filling with water, and they were in real danger of perishing. Obedience had not spared them from severity. In fact, following Christ placed them directly in the path of something beyond their strength to handle. This teaches us that faith does not mean a life protected from overwhelming trials, but a life held by a sovereign Savior in the midst of them. Severe storms expose what lesser troubles can hide: our limits, our fears, and our need for a Lord who is greater than the forces that threaten to undo us. Christ does not promise that the waters will never rise, but he does promise that they will never rise beyond his rule.*

Prayer Lord Jesus, when the danger feels overwhelming and our strength is gone, fix our eyes on you. Teach us to trust your authority when the storm threatens to undo us. Remind us that our safety rests not in calm seas, but in your sovereign care. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture – *Luke 8:24–25*

Reflection: The most troubling part of the storm for the disciples was not only the wind and the waves, but the silence of Jesus. While the water filled the boat and death seemed near, he slept. From their perspective, the Lord who had led them there appeared inactive, unconcerned, and distant. Mark tells us the cry beneath their panic: “Do you not care that we are perishing?” The storm had become a theological crisis. Was Christ powerful but indifferent? Present but uninvolved?

Jesus’ question exposes the real issue: “Where is your faith?” Their problem was that they still had a small understanding of who Christ is. They knew him as Master; they were learning that he is Lord of creation. His silence was not absence. His delay was not indifference. He had not lost control; he was revealing it. By leading them into a moment where all visible help failed, he was teaching them to place their confidence not in circumstances, not in their own skill, but in his person.

Storms that seem to hide Christ’s care often exist to teach us something about Him that we do not yet know. When he finally speaks, the wind and water obey instantly, and the disciples are left asking the right question: “Who then is this?” The storm was the classroom in which they learned his true identity.

Our Common Weakness: When God seems silent in suffering, we assume his heart has grown distant and his care has grown cold.

Christ Connection: Jesus entered the boat of humanity, endured the silence of the cross, so we would not have to experience such silence.

Psalm 10:1- *What question seems to be common to all believers at some point in life?*

Isaiah 50:10- *What are we called to do when we cannot see what God is doing?*

2 Cor 4:8–9- *What does Paul say is not true, even when circumstances feel crushing?*

Consider- *The disciples mistook Christ’s silence for neglect, just as we often do. Yet Scripture teaches us that God’s hiddenness is never the same as God’s absence. The Lord may delay, but he never deserts. He may be quiet, but he is never indifferent. And because we now know what the disciples did not yet fully grasp—that Jesus is the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer—we are called to interpret silence more rightly. When the storm rages and prayer seems unanswered, faith does not ask first, “Why?” but, “What?” What are you teaching me about yourself that I still need to learn?*

Prayer Lord Jesus, when you seem silent and our hearts are afraid, keep us from judging your care by our circumstances. Teach us to trust who you are when we cannot see what you are doing. Strengthen our faith to rest in your presence and your power, even in the dark. Amen.

THURSDAY

Scripture – Luke 8:25

Reflection: After the wind is rebuked and the waves are stilled, Jesus asks a single, searching question: “Where is your faith?” He does not ask about their seamanship, their effort, or even their fear. He asks about their confidence—where it was resting when the storm raged and when he seemed silent. The storm exposed what the disciples were still learning: they had trusted Jesus enough to follow him into the boat, but not yet enough to rest in who he truly is when everything felt out of control.

This is the question every trial eventually brings to the surface. Not simply, “How bad is the storm?” but, “Where is my faith anchored?” When life is calm, it is easy to assume our trust is firmly in Christ. But when the waters rise, when help seems delayed, when the future feels uncertain, the heart reveals what it is leaning on for security—control, health, savings, stability, approval, or safety. Jesus’ question is not meant to crush, but to clarify. He is drawing their faith away from circumstances and fastening it to his person. The storm is not only something to survive; it is a means by which Christ teaches his people to place their full confidence in him as Lord.

Our Common Weakness: We often discover in hardship that our confidence has been resting more in stability than in the Savior.

Christ Connection: Jesus is the rock in which the anchor will hold firm.

***Psalms 73:25-** When everything else is stripped away, who alone remains as our true hope?*

***John 6:68-** When the trials of life come, what conclusion does Peter make?*

***Psalms 56:3-** What simple decision does the psalmist make in the moment of fear?*

***Consider-** When Jesus asks, “Where is your faith?” he is not merely asking what we believe in theory, but where we run in practice. Storms reveal our reflexes. Who do you call first? What do you reach for first? Whose voice do you need to hear before you can breathe again? We often exhaust human strategies, financial cushions, medical answers, political hopes, relational control, and emotional self-management before we finally turn to God in prayer. But Christ’s question presses past surface belief to functional trust: when the waves rise and the wind howls, where do you actually go for life, stability, and peace? The disciples learned that the only One who could speak to the storm was the One who created it. And so the narrowing question comes to us: when all other supports fail, will we still say, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life?”*

Prayer Lord Jesus, show us where our faith is truly resting. Turn our hearts from false securities and anchor us in your sovereign care. Teach us to trust you when the waves rise and the future is unclear. Keep our confidence fixed on you alone. Amen.

FRIDAY- CONFESSION CORNER

Westminster Confession of Faith 18.4 – *True believers may have the assurance of their salvation various ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived; and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.*

Reflection: The Confession speaks with tender realism about the Christian life. It tells us that true believers may have their assurance “shaken, diminished, and intermitted.” To be clear, it is speaking about “assurance” not salvation itself. Faith may be wounded by sin, pressed by temptation, or clouded when God, in his wise providence, withdraws the light of his felt presence and allows his children to “walk in darkness and to have no light.”

Yet the Confession is equally clear about what never happens. Even in such darkness, believers are “never utterly destitute” of the seed of God, the life of faith, love for Christ, sincerity of heart, and a conscience that still clings to duty. The storm may shake assurance, but it cannot uproot the life God has planted. The sense of God’s nearness may fade, but the bond of union with Christ does not. The Savior who may seem silent is never absent. This is precisely what we see in Luke 8. The disciples cry out, “Master, Master, we are perishing,” and Jesus asks, “Where is your faith?” He is not saying, “You have no faith,” but, “Your faith is being tested, stretched, and taught to rest more deeply in who I am.” Their assurance is shaken, but their relationship to him is not broken. He is still in the boat. He still rises. He still speaks. And the same Lord who calms the sea is the Lord who preserves the faith of his people from utter despair.

WCF 18.4 teaches us to interpret seasons of darkness not as abandonment, but as discipline and deepening. The Lord may, for a time, hide the light of his countenance, but he never withdraws his covenant love. He may allow the storm to rage, but he sustains the faith that will, in due time, rise again with clearer sight and stronger confidence in Christ.

Consider these passages and how they relate to the above truths-

Assurance may be shaken

Psalm 77:1–12

Song of Solomon 5:2–6

Psalm 31:22

Psalm 88 (esp. vv. 1–18)

Psalm 30:6–7

Supported from utter despair

Psalm 77:1–12

Micah 7:7–9

Psalm 42:5, 11

Psalm 43:5

Lamentations 3:31–33

Isaiah 57:15–18

Hosea 6:1–3

Yet never utterly destitute

1 John 3:9

Luke 22:32

Job 13:15

Psalm 73:15

Isaiah 54:7–10

FINANCIAL REPORT

The first half of our current fiscal year has now closed. At this point, we are showing a shortfall of **\$3,274**. While a deficit is always something to take seriously, this shortfall is not simply the result of poor stewardship. Much of it reflects intentional ministry expansion and increased discipleship activity as the Lord has opened doors for care, outreach, and shepherding. The decision of your elders to spend from our reserves is an expression of our calling to love Christ's sheep and bear one another's burdens.

However, one trend does require sober reflection. **Partner Giving continues to decline and is expected to keep doing so.** As noted in previous reports, these are the long-standing supporters who helped launch Free Grace and Jordan's Bridge many years ago. Their faithfulness has sustained us for nearly two decades, but as life circumstances change, this stream is naturally diminishing. That means the responsibility for sustaining and advancing the ministry of this congregation must increasingly rest with us as members and regular worshipers.

This is not a call to panic—but it is a call to prayer, ownership, and thoughtful generosity. As your elders, we ask you to consider before the Lord: How has God provided for you? How might He be calling you to participate more fully in the shared work of His church? How can our giving reflect not only maintenance, but mission?

The Lord has placed us here to do ministry, and we will continue to do so in faith, with whatever resources He entrusts to us, trusting Him to provide through His people for all that He calls us to do.

A Special Appeal: The Deacon's Fund

We are facing an unusual and growing number of mercy needs, particularly connected to the current immigration situation. Families in our community are experiencing fear, instability, loss of income, housing pressures, and legal uncertainty. The Deacon's Fund exists for precisely such moments. We ask you to prayerfully consider making a *designated* gift to the Deacon's Fund in the coming weeks. These resources allow us to respond quickly and compassionately—providing food, housing assistance, emergency aid, and practical support in the name of Christ. The Lord has been relentlessly faithful to this congregation. He has never failed to provide what was needed, and He continues to do so through the willing, joyful generosity of His people. May our giving be an act of worship, trust, and shared participation in the work He is doing among us and through us.

INCOME	
Member Giving	\$81,641
Visitor Giving	\$12,730
Partner Giving (FG & JB)	\$15,995
JB Fee Income	\$28,356
Interest	\$19
TOTAL INCOME	\$138,741
EXPENSES	
Overhead/ Admin	\$37,647
Ministry	\$11,516
Personnel	\$92,852
Total	\$142,015
NET	\$3,274

This Week In Focus:

Monday, February 2nd

Ladies Discipleship Meeting – 6:00-8:00pm – *At the church (See Shannon FMI)*

Tuesday, February 3rd

Free Grace English @ The Root Cellar – 6:30-7:30pm

Friday, February 6th

First Friday Fellowship – 5:45pm – *Game night at the VanDykes*

Upcoming Events

February 27-28th

Ladies Retreat – *At the Church (See Linda Morris for details.)*

Regular Rhythms of Grace

Weekly Gatherings

Ladies Discipleship Meeting – *Mondays 6:00-8:00pm – At the church (See Shannon for details.)*

Free Grace English @ the Root Cellar – *Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm*

Youth Group – *Fridays 7:00pm – At the church*

Monthly or Biweekly Gatherings

First Friday Fellowship – 5:45pm – *Game night at the VanDykes*

Second Sunday Discussions – *2nd Sunday, 15 minutes after worship ends – (Family-style conversations on a rotating topic.)*

Women's Breakfast – *2nd Saturday, 9:30am – Cosgrove Family Home CANCELLED UNTIL APRIL*

Praying for Prodigals – *3rd Sunday, 8:30am – Church building*

If you do not know the address of any event, or the contact information for any event, please contact either Pastor Adam at adam.lee@freegrace.us or Linda at the email address below.

If you would like to be added to our church-family email where you can keep in touch through the week, or if you would like to be added to the church directory, please email Linda at linda.morris@freegrace.us

If you are a member of Free Grace and are not using the church directory app, you are missing out on a very useful tool. Please reach out to Linda to see how to download it to your phone.

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory