



**March 15, 2026**

**First, Do No Harm**

*Free Grace Presbyterian Church*

## SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.

**Proverbs 12:18**

He will also judge those who cause divisions. Void of the love of God, they look to their own advantage and not to the unity of the church; for small and trifling reasons they rend the great and glorious body of Christ into pieces.

St. Irenaeus

2nd-century bishop and theologian in Lyons  
(modern-day France)

Modern man starts with the rights of the individual. The Bible does not. God always addresses his word to a people. That word applies to individual persons insofar as they are part of the group. Biblical religion always involves a covenantal relationship between God and the covenant community.

Michael Williams  
21st century Theologian  
professor of Systematic Theology  
Covenant Theological Seminary

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

**Proverbs 16:24**

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

**Colossians 4:6**

With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

**James 3:9-10**

Nothing so grieves the Spirit of God as division in the church. Even if we perform countless good works, if we tear the body of Christ we will be judged as those who destroy it."

John Chrysostom  
4th-5th century archbishop and preacher

## GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

**Leader:** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

Psalms 19

**People:** **The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.**

**Leader:** Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

Psalms 145

**People:** **I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.**

**We confess the might and majesty of our God**      "God, My King, Thy Might Confessing"



1. God, my King, thy might confessing, ever will I bless thy name;  
2. They shall talk of all thy glory, on thy might and greatness dwell,  
3. Full of kindness and compassion, slow to anger, vast in love,



day by day thy throne addressing, still will I thy praise proclaim.  
speak of thy great acts the story, and thy deeds of wonder tell.  
God is good to all creation; all his works his goodness prove.



Honour great our God befitting; who his majesty can reach?  
Nor shall fail from memory's treasury's treasure works by love and mercy wrought:  
All thy works, O Lord, shall bless thee; thee shall all thy saints adore.



Age to age his works transmitting; age to age his power shall teach.  
works of love surpassing measure, works of mercy passing thought.  
King supreme shall they confess thee, and proclaim thy sovereign power.

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.

Psalms 103

"O for a Thousand Tongues"

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The first system contains six measures of music with the following lyrics: 1. O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Re-deem-er's praise, the 2. My gra-cious Mas-ter and my God, as - sist me to pro claim, to 3. Je - sus, the name that charms our fears, that bids our sor - rows cease; 'tis 4. He breaks the pow'r of reign - ing sin, he sets the pris 'ner free; his 5. He speaks and, list-'ning to his voice, new life the dead re - ceive; the 6. Hear him, ye deaf, his praise, ye dumb, your loos-en'd tongues em - ploy; ye

The second system contains five measures of music with the following lyrics: 6. glo - ries of my God and King, the tri - umphs of his grace. spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of thy name. mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace. blood can make the foul - est clean, his blood a - vailed for me. mourn - ful bro - ken hearts re - joice, the\_ hum - ble poor be - lieve. blind, be - hold your Sav - ior come; and\_ leap, ye lame, for joy!

Sing praises to the  
 LORD, who sits  
 enthroned in Zion!  
 Tell among the  
 peoples his deeds!  
 Psalm 9

## We call out asking God to speak to us through his preached word

“Speak, O Lord”



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



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



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



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



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



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

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4

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## GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

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Ephesians 4:17-24, 29

[17] Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. [18] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. [19] They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. [20] But that is not the way you learned Christ!—[21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. [25] Therefore...[29] Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon**

Rev. Adam Lee

**First, Do No Harm**

Living as the New Creation

**Intro & Review of Ephesians**

*Because Christ has made us new and united us as one body, we must:*

1) **Refuse speech that weakens the body**

2) **Speak in ways that bring health to the body**

3) **Echo the voice of Christ to one other**

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## GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

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Jeremiah 30

### **God proclaims that our sin is like rot and decay which brings death**

For thus says the LORD: Your hurt is incurable, and your wound is grievous. There is none to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you. All your lovers have forgotten you; they care nothing for you; for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy, the punishment of a merciless foe, because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant. Why do you cry out over your hurt? Your pain is incurable. Because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant, I have done these things to you.

### **We confess our need of a physician to make us whole**

Heavenly Father, gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry,  
too real to hide, and too deep to undo.

Forgive what our lips tremble to name  
and what our hearts can no longer bear.

Trouble us with the greatness of your call  
And with our slowness to obey.

Trouble us with the greatness of your steadfast love, O God;  
And with the loss of our first love, our fervent love for you.

Trouble us with the struggles of your church;  
and grant us faith in the midst of our struggles.

In your steadfast love, you have not left us,  
though we have often left you.

In your grace, you have set us free from a past that we can not change;  
and given us a future in which we are changed,  
transformed by your Holy Spirit.

In your mercy, you have reconciled us to yourself,  
placing our sin upon your Son, Jesus Christ,  
that in his death we might have peace.

Grant us rest in the promise that we are yours in Christ,  
bought with his blood,  
and you will hold us fast.

Amen

As we confess our sins to him, God shows the depth of his love for us by reminding us of his answer for our sin—Jesus Christ. His coming to us—his birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection—is the ultimate display of love.

Jeremiah 30

### **God assures that he will remove the corruption of our hearts**

For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the LORD, because they have called you an outcast: 'It is Zion, for whom no one cares!' Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be. Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small. Their children shall be as they were of old, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all who oppress them. Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst; I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me, for who would dare of himself to approach me? declares the LORD. And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

**We respond to the assurance of pardon declaring our satisfaction in His word.**

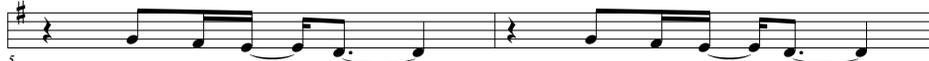
"Satisfied"



1. All my life long I had pant - ed  
 2. Feed - ing on the filth a - round me  
 3. Poor I was and sought for rich - es,  
 4. Well of wa - ter ev - er spring - ing,



3 for a drink from some cool spring  
 'till my strength was al - most gone.  
 some - thing that would sat - is - fy.  
 Bread of Life so rich and free,



5 that I hoped would quench the burn - ing  
 Longed my soul for some - thing - bet - ter,  
 But the dust I gath - ered 'round me  
 un - told wealth that ne - ver fail - eth,



7 of the thirst I felt with - in.  
 on - ly still to hun - ger on.  
 on - ly mocked my soul's sad cry.  
 my Re - deem - er is to me!



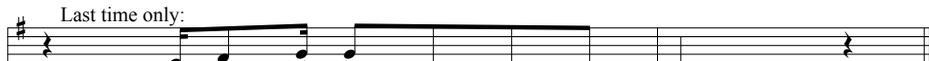
9 Hal - le - lu - jah! He has found me,



11 the One my soul so long has craved! Je - sus sat - is - fies



14 all my long - ings; through his blood I now am saved.



Last time only:

17 through his blood I now am saved.

For He satisfies the  
 longing soul, And  
 fills the hungry  
 soul with  
 goodness.  
 Psalm 107

# GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

## We celebrate the Lord's supper where Christ dispenses his grace to those who hear him

*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.*

"Amazing Love"



1. My Lord, what love is this that paid so dear - ly, that  
2. And so they watched him die, des - pised, re - ject - ed. But,  
3. And now this love of Christ shall flow like riv - ers. Come



I, the guil - ty one, may go free? A - maz - ing love, o what  
oh, the blood he shed flowed for me!  
wash your guilt a - way; live a - gain!



sac - ri - fice; the Son of God giv'n for me! My debt he paid and my



death he died, that I might live, that I might live!

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".  
Leslie Newbigin

## **We proclaim our faith in the trine God**

Leader: What is it we believe about God, the Father?

People: **We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

Leader: What is it we believe about Jesus Christ?

People: **We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of the Father before all worlds;  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;  
by whom all things were made;  
who, for us and for our salvation  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered and was buried;  
and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father;  
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.**

Leader: What is it we believe about the Holy Spirit?

People: **And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;  
who spoke by the prophets;  
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;  
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;  
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Nicene Creed

Perhaps the most widely used statement of the Christian faith, the Nicene Creed originated at the Council of Nicea in AD 325. It was formulated to answer heresies that denied the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and the person of Christ.

## **In prayer, we make our petitions known to God**

*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 depart, rejoicing in the grace lavished upon us in Christ

"Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder"

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!  
1 John 3

1. Let us love and sing and won - der,  
 2. Let us love the Lord who bought us,  
 3. Let us sing, though fierce temp - ta - tion  
 4. Let us won - der; grace and jus - tice  
 5. Let us praise, and join the cho - rus

3  
 let us praise the Sa - vior's name!  
 pit - ied us when en - - e - mies,  
 threat - ens hard to bear - us down,  
 join and point to mer - cy's store;  
 of the saints en - throned on high;

5  
 He has hushed the law's loud thun - der,  
 called us by his grace, and taught us,  
 For the Lord, our strong sal - va - tion,  
 when through grace in Christ our trust is,  
 here they trust - ed him be - fore us,

7  
 he has quenched Mount Si - nai's flame: he has  
 gave us ears and gave us eyes: he has  
 holds in view the con - qu'ror's crown: he who  
 jus - tice smiles and asks more: he who  
 now their prais - es fill the sky: "Thou hast

9  
 washed us with his blood, he has washed us with his blood, he has  
 washed us with his blood, he has washed us with his blood, he has  
 washed us with his blood, he who washed us with his blood, he who  
 washed us with his blood, he who washed us with his blood, he who  
 washed us with thy blood, thou hast washed us with thy blood, thou hast

13  
 washed us with his blood, he has brought us nigh to God.  
 washed us with his blood, he pre - sents our souls to God.  
 washed us with his blood, soon will bring us home to God.  
 washed us with his blood, has se - cured our way to God.  
 washed us with thy blood; thou art worth - y, Lamb of God!"

## God declares that he will work in us far more than we can imagine

Ephesians 3

**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.

**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 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



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Beth Almquist, *piano*; Joanne Crosby, *flute*; Abigail Lee, *violin*; Grace Lee, *viola*;  
Jocelyn Crawford, *clarinet*; Meredith Stevens, *flute*; Shannon VanDyke, *voice*

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# Preparing for the Feast

## A through-the-week devotional



### **Pastoral Invitation:**

This devotional has been prepared as a tool for you to use during the season of Lent, that you might more intentionally submit to that work. Throughout these weeks, we will focus our attention on God's Law—specifically, the Ten Commandments—and reflect on portions of the Catechism to deepen our awareness of God's holiness and our duty as his redeemed people.

Scripture speaks of transformation—*metamorphosis*—a work God accomplishes in his people as he renews the mind and conforms us to the image of Christ. May this season be such a time for us: a quiet, steady shaping from the inside out, that our lives might more clearly reflect the glory of the One who has redeemed us.

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## FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE- Q#112-114

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As we begin our study of the Third Commandment this week, I am providing you the full text of the questions and answers in case you do not have your own copy of the Catechism.

Do not feel the need to master every phrase. Instead, I would encourage you to return to these questions throughout the week as we reflect on specific portions. Read slowly. Pray as you read. Ask the Lord to show you not only where correction is needed, but where growth and life are found in Christ.

### **Q. 112. What is the Third Commandment?**

A. *The Third Commandment is: You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.*

### **Q. 113. What are the sins forbidden in the Third Commandment?**

A. *The sins forbidden in the Third Commandment are the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarrelling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any way opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.*

### **Q. 114. What reasons are annexed to the Third Commandment?**

A. *The reasons annexed to the Third Commandment, in these words, "The LORD your God," and "for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain," are because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned or abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, although many such escape the censures and punishments of men.*

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## SUNDAY

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**Ephesians 4:29** *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

**Reflection:** The apostle Paul reminds us that words are never neutral. Speech can either introduce decay into the body of Christ or strengthen the life God is cultivating within it. Because believers have been made new in Christ and joined together as one body, our words now have a new purpose. They are meant to build up, strengthen faith, and nourish the fruit of the Spirit in one another.

Yet our speech does not always serve that purpose. Words can easily drift toward criticism, impatience, careless humor, or discouragement. Instead of strengthening faith, they weaken confidence. Instead of encouraging the fruit of the Spirit, they quietly erode it. Christ speaks differently to his people. His words restore the fallen, strengthen the weak, and call sinners to repentance and life. Throughout the Gospels we see that his speech always aimed at healing and building up. As we learn Christ and are renewed by his Spirit, our speech begins to echo his—words that give grace and strengthen the body he is forming. God often uses ordinary conversations among his people as instruments of grace. A word of encouragement can strengthen love. A reminder of truth can restore one caught in a pitfall. A patient word can steady an anxious heart. In this way, the Spirit uses the speech of believers to strengthen the body Christ is building.

### **Meditate on these Scriptures:**

**Proverbs 12:18** – There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.

**Proverbs 16:24** – Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** – Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

### **Questions to Consider/Discuss:**

Look up 1 Thessalonians 4:18. What “words” does Paul tell believers to use to comfort one another? Then read through 1 Thessalonians 5. What truths lead up to verse 11 that help us understand how believers should edify one another?

Think of a time when you were strengthened by the words of another believer. How might their example help you strengthen the faith of someone else this week?

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## MONDAY

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**Malachi 3:16** – *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on his name.*

**Reflection:** We have considered how our words can strengthen or weaken the body of Christ. Because Christ has made us one body, our speech is meant to build up those who hear. This week we turn our attention to the Third Commandment. The sermon focused on speech that builds up the church, while the Third Commandment concerns the name of God. Yet these themes are deeply connected. What we believe and say about God is perhaps the quickest way to build up—or decay—the faith of others and even our own.

Consider the instruction Paul gives to the church in Thessalonica. In 1 Thess 4:18, he tells believers to “comfort one another with these words.” What words? The truths he has just taught about the return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. In other words, believers strengthen one another by speaking the truth about God and his promises. In 1 Thess 5, Paul continues by urging the church to encourage and edify one another in light of these realities. When we think of the Third Commandment, it is easy to focus only on obvious misuses of God’s name—phrases such as “Oh my God,” the use of “Jesus Christ” as a curse word, or other careless expressions. These things do matter, and Scripture calls us to treat God’s name with reverence. But the commandment reaches deeper than avoiding certain words. It also concerns what we truly believe about God and what we communicate about him to others. Every time we speak about God—his promises, his faithfulness, his commands—we are shaping the faith of those who hear us. Our words can direct hearts toward trust in him, or they can quietly weaken confidence in his character. For this reason, the Third Commandment calls us not only to avoid misusing God’s name, but to speak of him in ways that strengthen faith and encourage reverence among his people.

### **Meditate on these Scriptures:**

**Psalms 34:3** – *Oh magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

**Nehemiah 8:8–12** – *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.” And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.*

**Question:** What truths about God could you speak this week that would encourage another believer?

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## TUESDAY

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**Exodus 20:7** – *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*

**Reflection:** The Third Commandment teaches us that God's name is not to be treated lightly. The Westminster Larger Catechism explains that this commandment forbids *"all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes himself known."* In other words, the commandment addresses far more than careless expressions of his name or titles. It concerns every way in which God's name, truth, and character may be treated with irreverence.

The commandment also warns against speaking wrongly about God himself. It forbids twisting his Word, misrepresenting his character, or claiming that God has said or done things he has not. The Catechism even warns against misapplying God's decrees and providence—speaking with certainty about what God is doing when he has not revealed it.

This can happen in very practical ways. A careless claim about God's will, a harsh distortion of his character, or a hypocritical life that contradicts his truth can lead others to think poorly of the Lord whose name we bear. Sometimes people confidently declare that a tragedy—such as the deaths of people in a hurricane or other disaster—is a specific act of God's judgment, even though God has not directly revealed such a thing. At other times believers may speak of God in ways that make him appear cruel, distant, or arbitrary. A believer may never speak God's name lightly with his own lips, yet by misrepresenting God's character or acting in ways that contradict his Word, he may place that very irreverence on the lips of others. For this reason, the Third Commandment calls us not only to guard our words about God, but also to represent him faithfully before those who are watching our lives.

Scripture shows how serious this can be. When Jesus performed his works by the power of the Spirit, the Pharisees claimed that his power came from Satan. In doing so, they falsely attributed the work of God to the work of the devil. Their words were not merely mistaken—they were a grievous misuse of God's name and work.

### Meditate on these Scriptures:

**Matthew 12:24** – Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

**Job 42:7** – And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

**Romans 2:24** – For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

**Question:** In Job 42:7, God rebukes Job's friends for speaking wrongly about him. What does this teach us about the seriousness of speaking confidently about God where he has not spoken?

**Question:** Read Romans 2:17-23. What leads Paul to write v24?

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## WEDNESDAY

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**Exodus 20:7** – *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*

**Reflection:** After warning us about the many ways God’s name may be misused, the Westminster Larger Catechism also teaches what this commandment positively requires. The Third Commandment calls God’s people to the *“holy and reverent use of God’s names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.”* In other words, believers are called not only to avoid dishonoring God’s name, but to honor it actively.

This means speaking of God with reverence and truth. When we speak about his character, his promises, and his works, our words should reflect the greatness and holiness of the Lord we serve. The way believers speak about God helps shape the faith of those who hear.

The Catechism also reminds us that this commandment calls for a *“holy profession and answerable conversation.”* Our lives should match the name we bear. When our words and actions reflect the truth of who God is, they strengthen the faith of others and encourage reverence for his name.

The commandment also includes a promise. God declares that he will not hold guiltless those who misuse his name. By contrast, Scripture repeatedly shows that God delights when his people honor him with their lips and lives. When believers speak of the Lord with reverence, gratitude, and joy, his name is magnified among his people.

### Meditate on these Scriptures:

**John 4:39** – And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.”

**Mark 5:19–20** – However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

**1 Peter 2:12** – Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

### Questions to Consider/Discuss:

In **John 4:39** and **Mark 5:19–20**, how did the testimony of individuals lead others to think about Jesus differently?

According to **1 Peter 2:12**, how can the conduct of believers influence the way others think about God?

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## THURSDAY

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**Numbers 6:27** – *So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.*

**Reflection:** Names carry meaning. When we hear the name of someone we love or deeply respect, we instinctively treat it with care. We would not casually mock the name of a beloved parent, a respected teacher, or a dear friend. To do so would feel deeply wrong because that name represents the person we honor.

Scripture teaches that God’s name deserves even greater reverence. His name represents his character, his works, and his glory. Throughout the Bible, God reveals himself through his names—showing his holiness, his mercy, his power, and his faithfulness to his people.

But Scripture goes even further. God not only reveals his name to his people; he places it upon them. In Numbers 6, the Lord declares that his priests will bless Israel and that in doing so they will *“put My name on the children of Israel.”* God’s people were marked as those who belonged to him.

The same pattern continues in the New Testament. In Acts 11:26, we read that *“the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”* The name “Christian” means that believers belong to Christ and bear his name before the world. This is a remarkable privilege. Our lives testify to the nations about the character of the God whose name we carry.

Yet Scripture also gives a sober warning. When God’s people live carelessly or misrepresent his character, the result can be the opposite of what God intends. Instead of honoring the Lord, our lives may cause others to think poorly of him. As Paul warns in Romans 2, *“the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”*

For this reason, the Third Commandment calls us to take seriously the honor of bearing God’s name. Our words and our lives should reflect the goodness, truth, and holiness of the Lord we represent. When we live faithfully before others, the name we bear is not diminished but honored among those who see it.

### **Meditate on these Scriptures:**

**Read Numbers 6:22-27.** *What is God specifically doing by “placing his name” upon the people?*

**Read 2 Samuel 12:7–14.** *What happened that led Nathan to say that the enemies of the Lord would blaspheme?*

What does this teach us about how the conduct of believers (those who have his name placed upon them) can affect the way others speak about God?

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## FRIDAY

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**John 17:6** *I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.*

**Reflection:** From the beginning, humanity was created to reflect the character of God. Being made in God's image means that our lives were designed to communicate something true about the One who made us. Our words, our conduct, and our relationships were meant to show the world what God is like. *But sin has distorted that calling. Instead of representing God rightly, human beings often misrepresent him. When we speak carelessly about God, twist his Word, or live in ways that contradict his character, we do more than make personal mistakes—we dishonor the name of the One whose image we were created to bear.*

Jesus Christ came as the perfect answer to that failure. Scripture calls him “the image of the invisible God.” Where humanity failed to reflect the Father's character, Jesus revealed it perfectly. In his words, his actions, and even his thoughts, he honored the Father's name without fault. Everything he did made the Father known.

Yet the One who perfectly revealed God endured the very dishonor our sin deserves.

Throughout his earthly life people misused God's name in relation to him. Some accused him of being empowered by Satan rather than by the Spirit of God. Others mocked his claims and ridiculed the works he performed in the Father's name. The religious leaders even charged him with blasphemy when he spoke the truth about his identity. In these ways the very people who claimed to defend God's honor repeatedly broke the Third Commandment against the Son of God himself.

Yet in the midst of this hostility, Jesus never misrepresented the Father. His speech was always true, reverent, and faithful. He taught the Word of God without distortion. He spoke of the Father with perfect knowledge and trust. Even in suffering he honored God's name, praying, “Father, forgive them,” and entrusting himself to the Father's will.

Through Christ, however, the story does not end in failure. Scripture tells us that believers have “learned Christ.” In coming to him we not only receive forgiveness, but begin to be reshaped by the One who perfectly reveals the Father. Those who are united to Christ are being renewed in the image of God, putting on the new self created according to God in righteousness and holiness. As we abide in him, his Spirit renews our hearts, our minds, and even our speech, so that our lives increasingly reflect the character of the God whose name we bear.

**Prayer:** *Father in heaven, your name is holy and your glory fills heaven and earth. We confess that our words and our lives have not always honored the name we bear. Forgive us for the ways we have spoken carelessly or misrepresented your character. We thank you for your Son, who perfectly revealed your name and honored you in all things. Through his cross cleanse us from our sin and restore us to fellowship with you. Teach us to learn Christ more fully and to walk in the life he has given. By your Spirit renew our hearts, our minds, and even our speech. Help us to live as faithful bearers of your name before the world. May our words give grace to those who hear and bring honor to you. Amen.*

### This Week In Focus:

#### Monday, March 16th

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

#### Friday, March 20th

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

#### Sunday, March 22nd

**Praying for Prodigals** – 8:30am *in the pastor's office*

### Upcoming Events

#### Friday, April 3rd

**Good Friday Service** – 7:30pm *at the church*

#### Sunday, April 5th

**Resurrection Feast** – *Potluck after the service. (See Sarah, Belinda, or Kim for details.)*

### Regular Rhythms of Grace

#### Weekly Gatherings

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

**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.)*

**Praying for Prodigals** – *3rd Sunday, 8:30am – Pastor's office*

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](mailto: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](mailto: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