

The Purpose of Grace Presbyterian Church

is to glorify God by equipping individuals and families with the Word of God so that by God's grace they will grow in their service and worship of God, cultivate a genuinely loving fellowship, and influence the world for Jesus Christ.

Sunday and Wednesday Worship Schedules:

Sunday

9:15 am Sunday School
An Overview of the Minor Prophets

Foundations of a Biblical Worldview from Genesis 1-3

10:30 am Morning Worship

The Perplexity and Passion of Faith:
Habakkuk's Prophecy

6:00 pm Evening Worship

The Gospel of Mark:
The Suffering King Has Come to Save

Wednesday

6:00 pm Youth Group resumes meeting Aug 12

Children's Catechism and Adult Small Groups resume Sept 2

The Session

Caleb Cangelosi
(Teaching Elder),
Brad Bleasdale,
Dennis Parker
(Clerk of Session),
Darryl Richards,
Robert Row (Director of Family Ministries)
Quinton Bain (Elder Emeritus)

The Diaconate

Todd Burks,
Chuck Craig,
David Cunningham,
Jamey Farris,
Jason Morse (Treasurer),
John Rust (Chairman),
*Michael Savage,
Wes Stevens
*Deacon for August

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Ask the Pastor

Caleb Cangelosi

What do we mean when we confess in the Apostle's Creed, "He descended into hell"?

That's a good question. First, let's state what we do not mean, i.e., what the Bible does not teach. Remember, a confession or creed is only as good as it is biblical, and we Presbyterians believe that the Apostle's Creed, Nicene Creed, and Westminster Standards are biblical – or else we wouldn't affirm them. Our explanation of the phrases of the creeds must be based upon Scripture. When we say that Jesus descended into hell: 1) We do *not* mean that the soul of Jesus went to a physical hell until the resurrection; rather, the Bible teaches that the human body of Jesus went into His grave, and His human soul went immediately into heaven to be with His heavenly Father. As He told the thief on the cross, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). He had committed His soul into the hand of the Father (Luke 23:46). 2) We do *not* mean that the soul of Jesus went into hell to release Old Testament saints from spiritual captivity or to give unconverted souls a second chance to hear the gospel again from Him or to declare His triumph over the forces of darkness. This understanding of the phrase flows from a misunderstanding of 1 Peter 3:18-22 (as well as 1 Peter 4:6 and Ephesians 4:9-10). 1 Peter 3:18-22 is speaking of the preaching of Jesus to the people of Noah's day, *during* Noah's day, and *through* Noah (cf. 1 Peter 2:5). The spirits are now in prison, but Jesus' proclamation to them occurred when they were still alive on earth.

So what does the phrase mean? Well, there have been at least two main ways to understand the phrase biblically, depending on whether you take the word "hell" as referring to. Some refer it to the spiritual anguish and hellish torments which He suffered, particularly on the cross (e.g., Calvin, *Institutes*, II.xvi.10 – "If Christ had died only a bodily death, it would have been ineffectual. No – it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God's vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment...[T]he Creed sets forth what Christ suffered in the sight of men, and then oppositely speaks of that invisible and incomprehensible judgment which

he underwent in the sight of God in order that we might know not only that Christ's body was given as the price of our redemption, but that he paid a greater and more excellent price in suffering in his soul the terrible torments of a condemned and forsaken man."). Others maintain that it is driving home the reality of Christ's death and pertains to His state of death, the time between His death and resurrection from the dead (e.g., the Westminster Larger Catechism #50 – "Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried (1 Cor. 15:3-4), and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:24-27, 31; Rom. 6:9; Matt. 12:40); which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, he descended into hell."). The latter fits better with the word "hades/sheol," upon which the language of a descent into hell (or more properly translated, "the grave/place of the dead") is based (see Psalm 6:5; 16:10; Acts 2:31). But Francis Turretin (1623-1687), an Italian theologian in Geneva a century after Calvin, has noted that this is a disagreement in which we do not need to take sides: "If it is asked which of these two opinions ought to be retained, we answer both can be admitted and be made to agree perfectly with each other. Thus by the descent into hell may be understood the extreme degree of Christ's suffering and humiliation, both as to soul and body; and as the lowest degree of humiliation as to the body was its detention in the sepulcher [grave], so as to the soul were those dreadful torments he felt. And thus this last article will be apposite [fitting] for expressing the last degree of Christ's humiliation, whether as to disgrace of body or as to anguish of soul" (*Institutes*, Q.xvi).

To confess that you believe that Christ descended into hell is to say that Christ has suffered fully and perfectly for your sins, taking upon Himself the wages of sin that we earned, that we might know life abundant and eternal. He has been humiliated to the uttermost, that we might be exalted with Him on high. Confess this truth with your lips and your heart and rejoice that you have such a Savior!

Is there something you would like to ask the pastor? Send in your questions to newsletter@jrmorse.com.

Pastor's Corner

Caleb Cangelosi, Pastor

It was good to be back with you in the pulpit this past Sunday. I can't wait to start preaching through Habakkuk this coming Lord's Day. Those of you who have been in the Minor Prophets Sunday School class can attest, I hope, to the relevance and power of the message of these servants of God. It can be difficult to keep straight where the prophets fit in to the history of Israel, to whom they preached, what they had to say, etc. Habakkuk preached and wrote before the exile of Judah (the southern kingdom) into Babylon (that exile occurred in 587, and Habakkuk probably wrote his book in the last decade of the 600s B.C.). Even if you can't keep this information in your head, the point of Habakkuk's book is one we all are dealing with or have dealt with: How do we reconcile the holiness and goodness of God with the sin and suffering and evil we see all around us? Where is God when life hurts? How are we to respond to dark providences? What is God up to in His world? It seems like things are falling apart all around us – is He concerned at all? These are some of the questions that we will be seeking to answer from God's word through Habakkuk.

Speaking of providence, I have been reading Daniel *The Horse and His Boy*, by C. S. Lewis (the third book in the Chronicles of Narnia series, chronologically speaking). There is a wonderful dialogue between Shasta, the main character, and Aslan, the Christ-figure. Shasta has gone through an incredibly difficult journey with two horses and a young lady named Aravis, and is now all alone and is feeling sorry for himself. He finds himself speaking to someone/something in a dark forest (he can only hear a voice). Listen to how what we see as bad luck or unfortunate circumstances is all under the sovereign reign and rule of King Jesus:

Shasta told how he had never known his real father or mother and had been brought up sternly by the fisherman. And then he told the story of his escape and how they were chased by lions and forced to swim for their lives; and of all their dangers in Tashbaan and about his night among the tombs and how the beasts howled at him out of the desert. And he told about the heat and thirst of their desert journey and how they were almost at their goal when

another lion chased them and wounded Aravis. And also, how very long it was since he had had anything to eat.

"I do not call you unfortunate," said the Large Voice.

"Don't you think it was bad luck to meet so many lions?" said Shasta.

"There was only one lion," said the Voice.

"What on earth do you mean? I've just told you there were at least two the first night, and--"

"There was only one: but he was swift of foot."

"How do you know?"

"I was the lion." And as Shasta gaped with open mouth and said nothing, the Voice continued. "I was the lion who forced you to join with Aravis. I was the cat who comforted you among the houses of the dead. I was the lion who drove the jackals from you while you slept. I was the lion who gave the Horses new strength of fear for the last mile so that you should reach King Lune in time. And I was the lion you do not remember who pushed the boat in which you lay, a child near death, so that it came to shore where a man sat, wakeful at midnight, to receive you."

"Then it was you who wounded Aravis?"

"It was I."

"But what for?"

"Child," said the Voice, "I am telling you your story, not hers. I tell no one any story but his own."

We all desire, I imagine, for Jesus to tell us our stories; to show us the back of the tapestry of our lives, how He has woven together its various threads; to see His purposes for our suffering, our poor choices, our foolish sins. We want to be, as J. I. Packer noted, in the room that shows how all of the trains are laid out along the tracks, how they are moving and why. But as the father of a pre-adolescent Corrie Ten Boom answered her questions regarding the birds and the bees, that is luggage too heavy for creatures like us to carry right now. In due time, what God wants us to know will be revealed; all our questions will be resolved; and even if that doesn't mean that we get the answers we're looking for, our hearts will rest contented in the knowledge that our God does all things well. And like Habakkuk, may God enable us to rest joyfully in His providence, no matter how dark and despairing our circumstances might be.

Your Pastor, Caleb

Titus 2 Tuesday: Raising Boys

Ladies, come and join us for our "Titus 2 Tuesday" held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Kandice Vick's home. It is a wonderful time of prayer, fun, and fellowship. Previous topics have included bulk cooking, mentoring and discipleship, and cleaning tips. On August 25th, the topic will be "Raising Boys." If you have any specific questions, please contact Kandice. The time has changed: We will be starting at 7:30 pm. Hope to see you there!



Mission Corner

Tommy Roberts

The Missions Committee hopes that you found Dave Simmon's presentation informative. If the Session approves, we plan a long-term relationship with Third Millennium Ministries. We expect the relationship to be fruitful for GPC in our classes, as well as helping equip the saints worldwide. You might want to review the Third Mill website at www.thirdmill.org to see what curriculum they have. If you see something interesting, let us know. Perhaps it can be offered as a class at GPC.

The committee has received 13 proposals for GPC involvement in missions for 2010. We will evaluate these proposals in August and make recommendations to the Session by 1 September. Please continue to pray for our missions and for the Missions Committee as we formulate our recommendations to the Session.

We need more help with our missions effort. If you are interested in being involved as a worker or managing one of the missions, please see Tommy Roberts.

Teachers Needed

Will you teach our covenant children during Sunday School or during Wednesday night catechism? Contact Robert Row for more details.

Please serve on the Greet Fleet

There are many ways to serve our congregation and our community...one way is by meeting and greeting visitors and members to our church. If you'd like to be included on the Greeter rotation schedule, please contact JoAnn Wilbourn at JoAnnW@American-Way.com. Many thanks to all of you who have served in this capacity.

Nursery Volunteers and Greeters

	8/9	8/16
SS Babies	A. Wienke	H. Morse
AM Worship Babies	Steele	Cunningham
AM Worship Toddlers	Ben & Joanna Bleasdale	Cunningham
PM Worship Babies	Vick	K. Farris
Greeters	R. Craig/M. Gleason	D & K Cunningham

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8/9 Birthday! Cecil Edenfield Karen Fesler	8/10 12 noon Calvin's Institutes Church Office 6:00 pm Session Meeting	8/11 All day: Presbytery in Columbia Birthday! Tammy Wachsmuth	8/12 Anniversary! Ferrell 6:00 pm Youth Group resumes meeting At Algood School	8/13 6:00 pm Young & Happy El Tapatio	8/14	8/15
8/16 Welcome Reception for the Wilkins Birthday! Bill Ferrell Josh Headrick Anniversary! Morse	8/17 12 noon Calvin's Institutes Church Office Birthday! Jeff Gleason	8/18 Birthday! Sarah Seitzinger	8/19 Birthday! Tricia Lee	8/20	8/21	8/22

Adult Small Groups on Wednesday Nights

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul reminds us that we are to “encourage one another and build up one another.” One of the best ways to do this is in a small group of believers. Sunday morning and evening worship, and Sunday School, are wonderful times of instruction and corporate encouragement. But we need to be stimulating one another to love and good deeds in a more intimate setting as well (Heb. 10:24-25). Small groups are a great opportunity to know one another better, to have a place to ask questions and discuss things we’ve been learning, and to be iron sharpening iron to one another (Prov. 27:17). Here are the offerings this semester on Wednesday, beginning September 2nd (we had thought that we would start earlier, but we decided to start the same time as last year).

1. *War of Words*, by Paul David Tripp. John Rust will lead this video series and discussion of our communication, and how the gospel affects the way we speak to one another.
2. *Transforming Grace*, by Jerry Bridges. Dennis Parker will lead discussion of this classic book on living confidently in the grace of God as we struggle to pursue holiness in the fear of God.
3. *Prayer Meeting*. Caleb Cangelosi will lead anyone interested in approaching God’s throne of grace on behalf of individuals, the church, and the world.

Children’s Catechism will also begin on September 2nd and continue through December 2nd. Stay tuned for more details!

Scenes from VBS 2009



GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

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