

Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church

Pastor: Elder Will Martin

www.macedoniapbc.org

2nd Quarter Newsletter, 2009

Morning Thoughts

By: Elder Philip Conley

Ephesians 1:6, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

This morning, there is seemingly much in the world to shout about. With the troubled economic times and political climates, a lot of folks would like to shout in anger and frustration. With the spiritual coldness and decline in zeal and fervor to God's service, a lot of ministers and God's faithful would like to shout in desperation. Then, with the moral decay and general crumbling of values, decent people would like to shout in vexation. To be sure, these items need to stir us up, for if they do not, then we have fallen into a state of being lukewarm ourselves. However, our stirring up about these things needs to instill something in us other than frustration, desperation, or vexation. Seeing all these things needs to light a fire of zeal to be more productive for His names' sake, honour, and glory. Fighting an evil with another evil only equates us to what we are fighting. Fighting an evil with increased acknowledgment of God's goodness in an effort to serve Him better equates us to showing forth the light of His salvation that He planted within our hearts.

Without labouring the point over-much again as we have in times' past, it is always truly amazing to me to hear people object to the doctrines of grace that the Bible teaches by saying that they imply a do-nothing religion. Folks assaulted Paul with the same mindset (Romans 3:6-8), and folks today are no less condemning of those that try to hold to what Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles taught. When studying the Bible, consider all the places where the heaviest doctrinal truths are found. Consider all those "rubbed slick as a mink" texts and passages. How are they followed? What is shown in glimpses through their pages? Either filtering through their thoughts or immediately following their thoughts, our course is plainly laid out. Consider grace as we understand it to be: free, plus nothing, unmerited, and full. The best place to show what we believe the Bible to teach on that wonderful subject is Ephesians 2:8-9. In fact, we rub those two verses frequently in our thoughts on grace. What is immediately following? Verse 10 is a clear, unequivocal command of how we should live in accordance with the knowledge of grace and its effects.

What about the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Many today use the subject to scare people into "getting right or getting left." If you are unaware of what that means, do not despair as I had to ask for a translation myself, "Get right with God or get left behind." However, compare that scare tactic with the word of God. How does Paul follow the clearest teaching on the second coming I Thessalonians 4? The last verse of the chapter includes the command to comfort one another with these words (not scare them into something). Then chapter 5 follows up the teaching with how we, as children of the day, should live and act like children of the day.

What about passages that have glimpses of the practical through heavy doctrinal subjects? Our verse above is a good example of this, but first consider Romans 8. We love the strong positional doctrinal language and teachings therein. Paul will eventually move on in that book to the practical structure (particularly starting in chapter 12), but even through the "heavy doctrine," he gives glimpses of the import this should have on our lives. Romans 8:13 is a good glimpse of what Paul's teaching through this chapter should do in our lives. We should look at our position in Christ as the ample and only motivation necessary to truly live according to our state and mortify

our members and deeds that are on the earth. So, knowing the structure of language and interaction between doctrine and practice that the Bible uses, let us examine this verse briefly in its context to see what we can and should make of its teaching.

Paul has laboured through his opening remarks to show a grand thought to the Ephesian brethren. Our position started through election before the world began when the Father chose us in His Son. This choosing put us (by covenant) to be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Verse 4) This was legally rendered by Christ upon the cross of Calvary (Verse 7), and to this choice, we were predestinated to the adoption of children. (Verse 5) In accordance with this covenant choice (election), legal work (redemption) , position (in Him), and relationship (adoption-sons) , we are further told why He did it: He was pleased to do it. (Verse 5) No other motive can or should be attributed to this work other than it pleased God by His love, mercy, and grace to pity us and take us into His wonderful family.

Therefore, knowing all these things about where we stand, how we got there, and why we got there, what purpose do we have? Paul will get detailed about our purpose in the latter three chapters of this same book, but he foreshadows the obvious question with the glimpse of the answer here in our verse. Reading these marvellous doctrinal statements many times will make us say, "Well what is there for me to do?" I believe that a more fitting response to these thoughts by us (that Paul's statement adequately addresses as well as the former question) is, "Marvellous grace! I am ready; tell me what to do." Paul's thought here answers the fitting reply and the question together. Our lives should be fashioned to the praise of the glory of His grace. We should be seeking His honour, not our own. We should be seeking to elevate His praise, not our own. Our lives should have but one central point of worship: Him.

These conclusions should be obvious from all the language that precedes them, but carnal man despises not being the one in control and the one that makes the decisions. If he cannot make the decision to get saved, stay saved, or save others, then there is no praise, obviously, coming in his direction. If he is forced to realize that God alone has, can, and does save, then all his "cookies" are taken from him. But, when we can, by faith, understand all these things have been done for us, then how fitting can our lives be molded to His praise, honour, and glory! If He has fought the long, hard battle alone and won the victory, what does He deserve that we feel cannot be given Him? Is it time? Is it money? Is it affection? Is it effort, zeal, study, thanks, public assembly, love, respect, compassion for others? All of these and more are taught abundantly that we should give and do in our labours here, and are summed up briefly as our whole duty in Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Ministers, preaching is to the praise of the glory of His grace. Fathers and mothers, children are an heritage to the praise of the glory of His grace. Churches, knowledge of His work is to the praise of the glory of His grace. Any other group that could be considered should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Too many times, we talk about "what great children we have," "what a great preacher we have," or "what a great church we have." Look at where the emphasis of the phrase is for praise and glory. The emphasis is on the children, preacher, and church, but a more fitting phrase is "the Lord has blessed with wonderful children, preachers, and churches."

Paul sums this glorious sentence that stretches from verses 3-6 by putting the icing on the cake. Lest anyone think that our praises of Him and to Him for His glory and of His glory in thanks for His grace and by His grace merit our standing in any shape or form, states that God has made us accepted in the beloved. Not much plainer language could be offered as to how we ended up here. In this single sentence, Paul attributes the active quality of the work to God no less than five times, with this one being the final one. Who does the accepting? Who does the placing? He does

on both counts. He accepted us, and He placed us in His beloved family. Our course is clear from the brief glimpse. Live to His glory. Do all with the thanksgiving of His grace. The specifics are drawn in chapters 4, 5, and 6, but this foreshadowing shows that even the heaviest of doctrinal discourses have the shades of reverent beauty pouring through that we should offer to Him with the knowledge of His grace unto us.

In Hope,

Bro Philip

Elder Philip Conley is the pastor of Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church in Ackerman, Mississippi. I appreciated the thoughts he expressed in this writing. I hope that you take the time to look up the passages that he references in the writing, as it will be a great blessing to you.

The message of God's Grace is something that is not only applicable (or comforting) when discussing how the Lord saved his people from their sins; it is a message that will help a dear child of God in their daily walk and struggles.

In His Love,



Elder Will Martin

Church Announcements:

1. Macedonia is thankful to have added 4 members during the 1st quarter of 2009. Brother Chase, Sister Katie, Brother Brad and Sister Trina Hansard had been attending Macedonia for sometime. We are thankful for them and look forward to many good times of fellowship with these dear Saints of God.
2. Starting Sunday, April 5th, we will eat lunch on 1st and 3rd Sundays throughout the warm weather months (or through October).
3. Saturday April 18th: Macedonia will be hosting the Marietta Old School Union Meeting. Services will begin on Saturday morning with lunch and afternoon services following.
4. Sunday May 3rd: Following morning worship, we will have lunch and reconvene for Communion around 1:30-2:00. Elder Randall Cagle has agreed to come and preach the communion service for us.
5. Saturday May 9th: Dinner and fellowship at Macedonia around 5:00. We are thankful that there are 3 couples connected to Macedonia Church who are to be married in the coming months. We look forward to the time of fellowship so we can offer encouragement and celebrate with these couples and their families.
6. Friday, July 10th and Saturday, July 11th: Macedonia will host her bi-annual meeting. Our scheduled speakers are Elder Lonnie Mozingo Jr. and Elder Hugh Sanders. There will be services on Friday night at 7:00, Saturday morning at 10:30 and Saturday afternoon at 2:00. Lunch will be served between services on Saturday.

Church Photos:



What a blessing it was to get to sing at the Dabbs' home. Maybe next time we go, we can get Sister Polly in the picture. Please continue to pray for Brother Owen and Sister Polly.



I think the picture turned out great. The joyous countenance on the faces of the saints of Macedonia Church is a great encouragement to me. I thank the Lord for you.