

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

TREES & WHY WE LOVE THEM

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Years ago I read an article by Dr. Machen entitled “Mountains and Why We Love Them.” That title came to mind during our anniversary trip in Sequoia National Park as I gazed upon those gigantic trees. “Trees and why we love them...”

Standing next to one of those ancient giants, there was an overwhelming sense of stability. Having grown in the same spot for over 2000 years, those Sequoias were a monument to endurance, steadiness and durability. Having weathered storms, fire and drought, they stand immovable.

In the ancient world, the most imposing trees were the cedars of Lebanon.

Though not as big as the giant Sequoias, those cedar trees were formidable in their own right. Reaching a height of 120 feet and having trunks up to nine feet in diameter, they too were impressive for their solidity.

This comparison is not without its spiritual significance. In Psalm 92, we read “*The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green*”

Just as a great tree gradually grows to its full height and maturity, so we are to slowly and steadily mature into the peo-

ple God wants us to become. Isaiah 61:3 states concerning believers, “*So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.*” As we reach our full stature, God



will be glorified!

Another wonderful fact about these big trees regards the organic unity between their tiny seeds and the full grown mature trees. The mighty Sequoia springs from a seed about 1/2 the size of a single flake of dry oatmeal. Comparing that small seed with that grand tree, you would think they have little in common.

Not so, the forestry experts tell us. Everything that will one day be manifest in the mighty oak tree is already present – in seed form – in that little acorn.

Or in the case of Sequoias, everything that will develop in such massive magnificence in the Sequoia is already there in that tiny seed.

Here the comparison is more oriented toward the kingdom of Christ. That kingdom started small – like the tiny grain of mustard seed. In due time, it will become massive and will dominate the planet. Jesus’ kingdom will become the greatest tree in the garden, and the birds of the air will nest in its branches. Right now the kingdom has not yet reached its full maturity. It grows gradually as Christ deliberately develops it. Everything that will one day be so impressive and imposing is already here, in seed form.

Volume 6, Issue 9

September 2011

Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor’s Article</i>	1
<i>Decrees by Thomas Boston</i>	2
<i>Pine Haven Annual Meeting</i>	3
<i>September Birthdays</i>	3
<i>Reformation Conference 2011</i>	4
<i>September Calendar</i>	4
<i>Thank You</i>	5
<i>Worldview Movie Night</i>	6
<i>Comments on Finance by Joel Moody</i>	7
<i>Special Sunday Speaker</i>	7
<i>Women’s Presbyterial</i>	8
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	11
<i>Pine Haven Fall Festival</i>	12
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	12
Mnemonics...	
• <i>Session Meeting, Sept. 20th</i>	
• <i>Worldview Movie Night, 23rd</i>	

Important Lessons Drawn from the Decrees of God

by Thomas Boston

1. Has God decreed all things that come to pass? Then there is nothing that falls out by chance, nor are we to ascribe what we meet with either to good or bad luck and fortune. There are many events in the world which men look upon as mere accidents, yet all these come by the counsel and appointment of Heaven. Solomon tells us, Prov. 16:33. that “the lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.” However disordered and fortuitous things may be with respect to us, yet they are all determined and directed by the Lord. When that man drew a bow at random, 1 Kings 22:34, it was merely accidental with respect to him, yet it was God that guided the motion of the arrow so as to strike the king of Israel rather than any other man. Nothing then comes to pass, however random and uncertain it may seem to be, but what was decreed by God.

2. Hence we see God’s certain knowledge of all things that happen in the world, seeing his knowledge is founded on his decree. As he sees all things possible in the telescope of his own power, so he sees all things to come in the telescope of his own will; of his effecting will, if he hath decreed to produce them; and of his permitting will, if he hath decreed to allow them. Therefore his declaration of things to come is founded on his appointing them Isa 44:7, “And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them.” He foreknows the most necessary things according to the course of nature, because he decreed that such effects should proceed from and necessarily follow such and such causes: and he knows all future contingents, all things which shall happen by “chance,” and the most

free actions of rational creatures, because he decreed that such things should come to pass contingently or freely, according to the nature of second causes. So that what is casual or contingent with respect to us, is certain and necessary in regard of God.

3. Whoever may be the instruments of any good to us, of whatever sort, we must look above them, and see the hand and counsel of God in it, which is their first source, and be duly thankful to God for it. And whatever evil of suffering or afflictions befall us, we must look above the instruments of it to God. Affliction does not rise out of the dust, or come to men by chance; but it is the Lord that sends it, and we should recognize and reverence his hand in it. This is what David did in the day of his extreme distress; 2 Sam 16:11 “Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him.” We should be patient under whatever distress comes upon us, considering that God is on our side, Job 2:10 “Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” This would be a happy means to quiet our complaining at adverse dispensations. Hence David says, “I was mute, I did not open my mouth, because it was you who did it,” Psa 39:9

4. See here the evil of murmuring and complaining at our lot in the world. How apt are you to quarrel with God, as if he were in the wrong to you, when his dealings with you are not according to your own desires and wishes? You demand a reason, and call God to an account, Why did this happen to me? Why am I so much afflicted and distressed? Why am I so long afflicted? And why such an affliction rather than another? Why am I so poor and another so rich? Thus your hearts rise up against God. But you should remember, that this is to defame the counsels of infinite wisdom, as if

*“...Let the
people
of God
comfort
themselves
in all cases
by this
doctrine...”*

Decrees Concluded...

God had not ordered your affairs wisely enough in his eternal counsel. We find the Lord reproving Job for this, chap. 40:2 “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?” When you murmur and brood under cross and afflictive dispensations, this is a presuming to instruct God how to deal with you, and to reprove him as if he were in the wrong. Indeed, there is a kind of implicit blasphemy in it, as if you had more wisdom and justice to arrange your circumstances, and to carve out your own portion in the world. This is what you really mean when you say, “If I been on God’s counsel, I would have ordered this matter better; things would not be with me as they are now.” Oh presume not to correct the infinite wisdom of God, seeing he has decreed all things most wisely and judiciously.

5. There is no reason for people to excuse their sins and failing, from the doctrine of the divine decrees. Wicked men, when they commit some wicked or atrocious crime, might attempt to excuse themselves, saying, “Who can help it? God would have it so; it was appointed for me before I was born, so that I could not avoid it.” This is a horrid abuse of the divine decrees, as if they might constrain men to sin. This is impossible. The decree is an immanent act of God, and so can have no influence, physical or moral, upon the wills of men, but leaves them to the liberty and free choice of their own hearts; and what sinners do, they do most freely

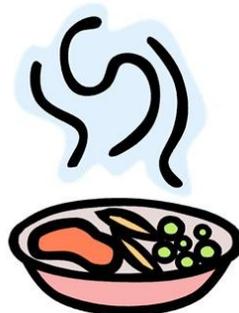
and of their own choice. It is a horrid and detestable wickedness to cast the blame of your sin upon God’s decree. This is to charge your villainy upon him, as if he were the author of it. It is great folly to cast your sins upon Satan who tempted you, or upon your neighbor who provoked you: but it is a far greater sin, nay, horrid blasphemy, to cast it upon God himself. A greater affront than this cannot be offered to the infinite holiness of God.

6. Let the people of God comfort themselves in all cases by this doctrine of the divine decrees; and, amidst whatever befalls them, rest quietly and submissively in the bosom of God, considering that whatever comes or can come to pass, proceeds from the decree of their gracious friend and reconciled Father, who knows what is best for them, and will make all things work together for their good. O what a sweet and pleasant life would you have under the heaviest pressures of affliction, and what heavenly serenity and tranquility of mind would you enjoy, would you cheerfully acquiesce in the good will and pleasure of God, and embrace every dispensation, how no matter how sharp it may be, because it is determined and appointed for you by the eternal counsel of his will!

*Taken from the collection of writings by Thomas Boston in The Beauties of Boston
<http://www.puritansermons.com/boston/bost8.htm>*

Pine Haven Meeting

Pine Haven’s Annual Meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. Mon., Sept. 19 at Breaking Bread Banquet Facility. Though there is no cost for the meal a donation box will be available to help us cover the cost of the dinner. Complimentary tickets will be needed to attend. You may obtain the tickets by contacting Jean



Loepfe or the business office . We will be providing exciting news about program improvements & God’s faithfulness in leading our Board of Directors in its desire to strengthen our mission for Christ Centered Care. Everyone is welcome to attend.

September Birthdays



Reformation Conference 2011

This year's **Reformation Conference** will be held on Saturday, October 29th and Sunday, October 30th. The speaker this year will be the Rev. Alan Strange. He will be speaking on the following topics:

Saturday Morning

9:00-10:15 a.m.

The Composition and Work of the Westminster Assembly

10:30-11:45 a.m.

The Life and Work of J. Gresham Machen

He will also preach for us on Sunday. His topics are...

Morning Sermon - Renewal in the Church

Evening Sermon - Renewal through the means of grace





Grace OPC

September 2011

*Showing forth the
excellencies of
Jesus Christ*



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	6	7 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	8	9	10
11 Missions Sunday	12 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	13	14 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	15	16 Fall Presbytery Meeting	17 Fall Presbytery Meeting
18	19 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	20 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	21 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	22	23 Worldview Movie Night, 7:00 p.m.	24
25 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	26 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	27 Trustee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	28 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	29	30	



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website:

graceopcsheboygan.com

Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

THANK YOU

Dear Grace Orthodox Presbyterian
Church of Sheboygan,

As you may be enjoying much time outside this summer, delighting in God's creation, maybe you have thought of the Psalmist directing the earth to "Praise the Lord, you...Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds!" And the call is to us, too, to praise Him for "He has raised up a Horn [as of a great ox, and therefore Someone of great strength] for His people, praise for all His saints, for the people of Israel who are *near to Him*. Praise the Lord!" How blessed we are to have been brought near to God through our strong Deliverer Jesus Christ!

Thank you, Grace OPC, for supporting us. The students like to interact and ask questions. In one class the problem of evil arose, with the usual questions like, why did God *allow* evil to enter the world. One zealous student surprisingly proposed to his fellow students that they pray and fast --maybe God would give them an answer to that question! A question closer to "home" arose in the class on revelation, and the need for special revelation. The students' minds quickly turned to their ancestors who did not have the special revelation of the Scriptures; what about their souls? The Scriptures are clear, aren't they, that all men have sufficient revelation to leave them inexcusable for turning away from the living and true God to follow their sinful idolatries and lives of knowing sinfulness. But these are hard things to receive.

We have been praying about where the Lord

would use Brian's gift to preach. Because we do not have a car yet, we have attended the church within (close) walking distance. Their pastor preaches only once a month because he has other churches and preaching points to serve. Other Sundays two other men have been preaching. We have been saddened not to hear much about *grace* and *how* one can live the Christian life. This Sunday Brian has been asked to preach and we pray for the Lord to feed His sheep.

Grace congregation, thank you again for making this ministry possible and for your consistent prayers for us. How wonderful and how absolutely necessary! We rejoice to pray for you, that the Lord would provide for all your needs, spiritually and physically, that you may glorify Him together and in your individual lives.

Your missionaries,
Brian and Dorothy Wingard



Worldview Movie Night

Worldview Movie Night will be held on Friday, September 23rd starting at 7:00 p.m. at the church. The movie will be “High Noon” starring Gary Cooper. Feel free to bring a treat to munch on during the film.



Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for July totaled \$17,213.24 as compared to the budget of \$14,637.03, while General Fund disbursements for July totaled \$8,577.74. July year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$90,781.75 as compared to the budget of \$90,749.53 (an excess of \$32.22), while July year to date disbursements of \$82,937.61 were \$7,811.92 below budget. Through the end of July, the General Fund has increased by \$8,016.61. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. General Fund receipts through July were 8.3% above last year's total (or 4.9% higher on an equivalent Sunday basis), while disbursements were 0.0% above the prior year. Please note that when comparing the current year to the prior year through the end of July, that there was one more Sunday this year than last year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for July totaled \$1,233.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,483.33. Year to date benevolence receipts through July totaled

\$8,744.75, while the budget amount was \$10,383.33 (a shortfall of \$1,566.67). Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. During September, Christian Scholarship monies are scheduled to be disbursed to families within our local church provided that appropriate receipts are provided and based on the guidelines established for this purpose.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project through July has reached \$54,436.41. The outstanding Mortgage and Promissory Notes balance was \$90,983.30 as of the end of July 2011. Assuming that mortgage payments continue to be made as scheduled, the mortgage will be paid off near the end of 2012. The promissory notes have specific terms of repayment for each particular note and we plan to pay those back accordingly.

Special Sunday Speaker

Women's Presbyterial

This year the Women's Presbyterial of the Midwest will be meeting on Saturday, September 24th at Christ Presbyterian Church, located at 3625 Sky view Dr. in Janesville, WI. Please mark the date on your calendars for an exciting day of fellowship and prayer with your sisters in Christ.

Pastries, coffee, & juice will be served at 9:00 a.m. with our meeting beginning at 9:30 a.m. lasting until about 3:00 p.m.

If there is a need for lodging please contact me, Julie DeArmitt for the names of hotels or possibly some of our church families that have some room.

This is a great time of fellowship and what blessing it is to attend!



STUFFED GREEN PEPPER SOUP

- ★ 2 lbs. lean ground beef
- ★ 2 quarts water
- ★ One 28 oz. can diced tomatoes, undrained
- ★ One 29 oz. can tomato sauce
- ★ 1/2 cup long-grain white rice (if you use brown rice, you may need to simmer a little longer)
- ★ 2 cups chopped green bell peppers (about 2 large peppers— you can use frozen chopped peppers if fresh aren't available)
- ★ 2 beef bouillon cubes
- ★ 1 diced small onion or onion flakes to taste (opt.—I added this to the original recipe)
- ★ 2-3 Tbsp. brown sugar (to taste)
- ★ 1 tsp. salt (to taste)
- ★ 1 tsp. ground black pepper

In a 6-quart pan or Dutch oven, brown the beef and drain well. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover & simmer for 30-40 minutes or until rice and peppers are tender. Plan to cook an additional 10-15 minutes with brown rice.

About 16 servings— freeze leftovers in smaller batches for a quick lunch or supper.

This is a very warming soup on a cold day.

Shary De Troye



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You
give them
their food in
due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

Guidance

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” (Psalm 73:24)

The Psalmist felt his need of divine **guidance**. He had just been discovering the foolishness of his own heart, and lest he should be constantly led astray by it, he resolved that God’s counsel should henceforth **guide** him. A sense of our own folly is a great step towards being wise, when it leads us to rely on the wisdom of the Lord. The blind man leans on his friend’s arm and reaches home in safety, and so would we give ourselves up implicitly to divine **guidance**, nothing doubting; assured that though we cannot see, it is always safe to trust the all-seeing God. “*Thou shalt,*” is a blessed expression of confidence. He was sure that the Lord would not decline the condescending task. There is a word for thee, O believer; rest thou in it. Be assured that thy God will be thy counsellor and friend; he shall **guide** thee; he will direct all thy ways. In his written Word thou hast this assurance in part fulfilled, for holy Scripture is his counsel to thee. Happy are we to have God’s Word always to **guide** us! What were the mariner without his compass? And what were the Christian without the Bible? This is the unerring chart, the map in which every shoal is described, and all the channels from the quicksands of destruction to the haven of salvation mapped and marked by one who knows all the way. Blessed be thou, O God, that we may trust thee to **guide** us now, and **guide** us even to the end! After this **guidance** through life, the Psalmist anticipates a divine reception at last—“*and afterward receive me to glory.*” What a thought for thee, believer! God himself will receive *thee* to glory—*thee!* Wandering, erring, straying, yet he will bring thee safe at last to glory! This is thy portion; live on it this day, and if perplexities should surround thee, go in the strength of this text straight to the throne.

Morning, September 1 Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON



Pine Haven Fall Festival

The Pine Haven Autumn Festival will be held on Saturday, Sept. 10th, from 1:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the Pine Haven Christian Home in Sheboygan Falls. Join them for a tour of the new memory care unit, & for fellowship, fun and food (brats, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, potato salad, ice cream, pie and cake). Crafts, baked goods, produce, and home-canned preserves will also be on sale.

Crafts, baked goods, produce, and home-canned preserves will also be on sale. Any donations of these items are always greatly appreciated. Court-yard entertainment will be from 2:00 to 3:15, along with Root Beer Floats and Taffy Apples!

