



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

There for the Taking

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Amos 3:8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

The events unfolding all around us are impossible to ignore – something significant is happening in our society. Indeed, throughout the whole world, God is roaring in such a way to strike fear into the hearts of men!

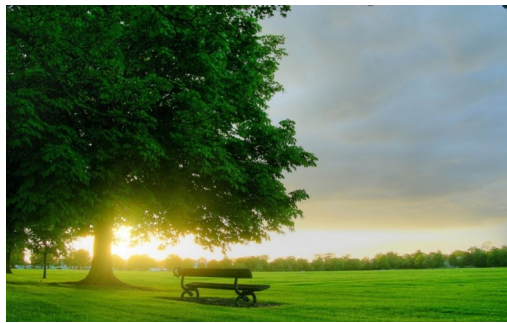
A tiny virus – invisible to the unaided eye of man – has caused many to become seriously ill, and even more to go into quarantine. The world economy has been rocked and millions find themselves suddenly out of work.

As scientists, doctors, and politicians scramble to find answers and make plans, we are all powerfully reminded that the Sovereign God is in control, and we are not. We literally do not know what tomorrow will bring. We cannot control our circumstances in even basic ways. Man is abased, and all of his vaunted pride falls worthless to the ground.

Numerous lessons that are being offered to us on a silver platter, if we have a mind to take what is offered. James 4:4-10 contains several of them:

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it

says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” ⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.



First of all, we are being reminded that God opposes the proud, but he grants grace to humble people. The lesson is simply this: humble yourself under God’s mighty hand, lest you find yourself being resisted by Him!

A second imperative is to draw near to God, and the promise is that He will then draw near to you. Have we become too independent for our own good? Do we live an autonomous existence, as if the God of heaven is uninvolved in our day to day affairs? Have we drifted away from our Creator, Sustainer and Friend? This crisis marks an excellent opportunity for us to draw near to Him in faith, and to stop trusting in our own power and ability. It is good to know your limitations and your weaknesses – if you also recognize God’s almighty omnipotence.

Thirdly, we ought to stop flirting with the world – as if friendship with

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, April 14th*

John Ploughman

Chapter 5: On Patience

Patience is better than wisdom: an ounce of patience is worth a pound of brains. All men praise patience, but few enough can practice it. It is a medicine which is good for all diseases: therefore, every old woman recommends it, but it is not every garden that grows the herbs to make it with. When one's flesh and bones are full of aches and pains, it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose. But nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth? If a soldier fights no better than a plowboy, off with his red coat. We expect more fruit from an apple tree than from a thorn, and we have a right to do so. The disciples of a patient Savior should be patient themselves. Grin and bear it is the old-fashioned advice, but sing and bear it is a great deal better. After all, we get very few cuts of the whip, considering what bad cattle we are; and when we do smart a little, it is soon over. Pain past is pleasure, and experience comes by it. We ought not to be afraid of going down into Egypt when we know we shall come out of it with jewels of silver and gold.

Impatient people water their miseries and plow up their comforts; sorrows are visitors that come without invitation, but complaining minds send a wagon to bring their troubles home in. Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed; they chew the bitter pill which they would not even know to be bitter if they had the sense to swallow it whole in a cup of patience and water. They think every other man's burden to be light and their own feathers to be heavy as lead. They are hardly done by in their own opinion: no one's toes are so often trodden on by the black ox as theirs, the snow falls thickest round their door, and the hail rattles hardest on their windows. Yet, if the truth were known, it is their fancy rather than their fate which makes things go so hard with them. A little sprig of the herb called content, if put into the poorest soup will make it taste as rich as the Lord Mayor's turtle. John Ploughman grows the plant in his garden, but the late hard winter nipped it terribly, so that he cannot afford to give his neighbors a slip of it; they had better follow Matthew 25:9, and go to those who sell and buy for themselves. Grace is a good soil to grow it in, but it wants watering from the fountain of mercy. To be poor is not always pleasant, but worse things than that happen at sea. Small shoes are apt to pinch, but not if you have a small foot; if we have little means it will be well to have little desires. Poverty is no shame, but being discontented with it is. In some things, the poor are better off than the rich; for if a poor man has to seek meat for his stomach, he is more likely to get what he is after than the rich man who seeks a stomach for his meat. A poor man's table is soon spread, and his labor spares his buying sauce. The best doctors are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman, and many a godly plowman has all these gentlemen to wait upon him. Plenty makes dainty, but hunger finds no fault with the cook. Hard work brings health, and an ounce of health is

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worth a sack of diamonds. It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness. There is more sweet in a spoonful of sugar than in a cask of vinegar. It is not the quantity of our goods, but the blessing of God on what we have that makes us truly rich. The parings of a pippin are better than a whole crab; a dinner of herbs with peace is better than a stalled ox and contention therewith. better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith A little wood will heat my little oven; why, then, should I murmur because all the woods are not mine?

When troubles come, it is of no use to fly in the face of God by hard thoughts of providence; that is kicking against the pricks and hurting your feet. The trees bow in the wind, and so must we. Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful, and every time we complain we miss a blessing. Grumbling is a bad trade, and yields no profit, but patience has a golden hand. our evils will soon be over. After rain comes clear shining; black crows have wings; every winter turns to spring; every night breaks into morning.

Blow the wind never so fast,
It will lower at last.

If one door should be shut, God will open another; if the peas do not yield well, the beans may; if one hen leaves her eggs, another will bring out all her brood. There's a bright side to all things, and a good God everywhere. Some where or other in the worst flood of trouble there always is a dry spot for contentment to get its foot on; if there were not, it would learn to swim.

Friends, let us take to patience and water gruel, as the old folks used to tell us, rather than catch the miserables and give others the disease by wickedly finding fault with God. The best remedy for affliction is submitting to providence. What can't be cured must be endured. If we cannot get bacon, let us bless God that there are still some cabbages in the garden. "Must" is a hard nut to crack, but it has a sweet kernel. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Whatever falls from the skies is, sooner or later, good for the land: whatever comes to us from God is worth having, even though it be a rod. We cannot by nature like trouble any more than a mouse can fall in love with a cat, and yet Paul by grace came to glory in tribulations also. Losses and crosses are heavy to bear, but when our hearts are right with God, it is wonderful how easy the yoke becomes. We must go to glory by the way of Weeping Cross; and as we were never promised that we should ride to heaven in a feather bed, we must not be disappointed when we see the road to be rough, as our fathers found it before us. All's well that ends well; and, therefore, let us plow the heaviest soil with our eye on the sheaves of harvest, and learn to sing at our labor while others murmur.



From the Fields



In Indonesia, MERF partners with Palu, Sulawesi churches to run a Trauma Center for tsunami victimized families

Pastor Armin - Sulawesi, INDONESIA Team - All glory and praise to God who guides and sustains the continuing gospel broadcasts in Bugis, Makassar and Toraja languages, children's ministry and biblical training and seminars. We praise Him for the ministry to families still recovering from losing everything in the tsunami just over a year ago at the Trauma Healing Center in Palu, Central Sulawesi. Please also pray for the unity of Indonesian churches fac-

ing the challenge of radical Islamic groups.

Tommy - Java, INDONESIA Team - Praise God for opportunities to share with and serve victims of recent flooding. Please pray for Sunday school teacher training and outreach activities of the Jakarta center. Also, pray for the literature translation projects underway into Bahasa Indonesian.

Farsi Media Ministry Team Iranians, Afghanis and other Farsi-speaking peoples live

where there are few or no opportunities to hear the true gospel of Christ other than over the internet. Praise God for the tens of thousands of visits to our direct and indirect gospel online radio sites and YouTube channels each month with more visiting every day. We are so thankful that the expansion of our team made much ministry growth possible. Our site links along with Bible quotes are shared again and again over various social media by those inspired by God's Truth.

Pray for those who hear the gospel and believe to grow in the Word and find good fellowship.

ETHIOPIA Team - We thank God that we now have three new websites for the Amharic, Oromo and Somali radio ministries. Pray for the development of evangelistic as well as teaching materials. Many believers are isolated in remote villages. We are thankful to be able also to train other believers to visit and care for them.

Simon - Lokichoggio KENYA Team - The MERF-Loki compound opened in 2003 for Bible training of South Sudanese and producing broadcasts for South Sudan. Yet, the Lord opened the door for us to reach our Kenyan Turkana neighbors. Most live as primitive herders in this very dry region and are very needy, but they are open to the gospel and hungry for the Word of God. We are thankful for MERF's ministry to both body and soul. Along with the gospel, we share safe drinking water from our well and also grain when there is drought. This to us is what Christ calls us to do. We thank God for good relations with the local community as South Sudanese, Tanzanians and Kenyans, including Turkana, receive biblical training here. They go to serve among their own people.



Simon maintaining MERF's Ministry Center in Lokichoggio, Kenya

Arabic Media Team - Khartoum, SUDAN (north) - We are excited that now we have more freedom than before to share the gospel over radio and TV under the new authori-



Arabic media ministry team-Egypt at Work

ties after the removal of the fanatical Islamic government. We now need to train more volunteers, especially in the use of text messaging and social media to communicate with the growing number of Sudanese contacts.

Arabic Media Team - EGYPT - Emad - The new Issa-alMasih YouTube and Facebook segments are bearing much fruit. We need much prayer for the use of the discipleship and catechizing program in our follow-up efforts. Dany - We are thrilled with the new equipment to produce evangelistic dramas. Now we can upload new videos to our two websites and also to YouTube. Isaac - It is a blessing for us and the rest of the team to record and produce radio and video segments touching the lives of hundreds of thousands of Arabic-speaking people. Martha - I thank God for the growing number of volunteers helping in writing segments and voicing.

George - LEBANON Team - We thank the Lord for

the freedom we continue to enjoy in carrying out our ministries and for the opportunities to share God's Word with others. Our country's culture reflects enslavement to materialism and greed, especially among young people. We need prayer that the Lord will use the present political and economic difficulties to drive people to turn to Christ and trust Him for true security and peace. We also need prayer for believers and churches to be more committed to God's Word and avoid being influenced by the culture.

JORDAN - We give thanks for the printing and wide distribution of MERF booklets. Pray for the training and equipping of local believers to do one-to-one catechizing of new converts. Pray for local churches receiving new believers to wisely and lovingly tend to their needs.

Lahore Bible-believing Churches, PAKISTAN (Westminster Biblical Missions) - Although Christians are a small minority in this strongly

Islamic country, praise God for special Bible study events held safely in the churches in Lahore, Faisalabad, Islamabad and nearby towns over the holiday season. It is also encouraging that over three hundred people are learning to read the Bible in the Bible Literacy Centers. Bible literacy courses are usually the first step in church planting. Pray for abundant spiritual fruit and the Sovereign Lord's protection of His people in Pakistan.

Ameer & Lily - CYPRUS Team - We are thankful for the Lord's calling for service with MERF teams as we assist in media work and local outreach and also help Pastor Victor and Sister Lisa in office administration.



Ameer and Lily

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!"

— Psalm 66:1-2

SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES 2020

February 14, 2020	Taco / Game night	Ladies Group
March 1, 2020	Evening Fellowship / Appetizers	Ladies Group
April 5, 2020	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group
May 14, 2020	Anchor of Hope Baby Shower	Ladies Group
June 3, 2020	Bay Beach	Deb / Wendy
June 7, 2020	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group
June 25, 2020	Mini Golf	Wendy
June 29, 2020	Caitlin Ver Velde Bridal Shower	Ladies Group
July 4, 2020	Golf – Sunset Hills	Roger & Deb
July 12, 2020	Men Serve Fellowship Lunch	Pastor Brian & Crew
July 17, 2020	Fire on North Beach	Jeff
July 20 – 23, 2020	Camp Westminster	
August 13, 2020	Church Picnic	Ladies Group
September 10-12, 2020	Church Campout / pitch in supper	Pastor Brian
September 25, 2020	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
October 9, 2020	Sub / Game night	Sara / Wendy
October 31, 2020	Reformation Conference - Snack	Ladies Group
November 1, 2020	Reformation Conference Lunch	Ladies Group
November 14, 2020	Harvest Home	Ladies Group
November 26, 2020	Thanksgiving Football Game	Jonny Arndt
December 6, 2020	Evening Fellowship / Soup & Bread	Ladies Group
January 8, 2021	Bowling / Pizza / Game night	Pastor Brian
February 12, 2021	Taco / Game night	Ladies Group

April Birthdays

Jay Buyze 1st
 Warren Gillmer 4th
 Pastor Brian De Jong 5th
 Nancy Harmelink 7th
 Randy Jensema 10th
 Mary Gillmer 12th
 Audrey Voskuil 17th
 Gail Moody 18th
 Sue Gross 20th



Sara TenPas 21st
 Toni Barthels 22nd
 De Lou De Jong 22nd
 Jeff Froh 22nd
 Emile Blasczyk 24th
 Chris Kaeiser 24th
 Christian De Jong 28th
 Rodney Nyhof 28th

April Anniversaries

Jason & Emily Will
 April 8th, 4 years

Josh & Stephanie Arndt
 April 13th, 7 years

Joe & Heidi Mamazza
 April 20th, 8 years





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

April 2020



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website:
graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
revbriandjong@gmail.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Session Meeting	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Carrot Sheet Cake

Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups shredded carrots
- 2/3 cup chopped California Walnuts

Frosting:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2/3 cup chopped California Walnuts

Directions:

- In a bowl, beat eggs, oil and sugar until smooth. Combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and salt; add to egg mixture and beat well. Stir in carrots and walnuts. Pour into a greased 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 35 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.
- For frosting, beat cream cheese, butter and vanilla in a bowl until smooth; beat in sugar. Spread over cake. Sprinkle with nuts. Decorate as desired.



*“For He
has satisfied
the thirsty
soul,
and the
hungry soul
He has filled
with what
is good.”*



Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
revbriandjong@gmail.com

Spurgeon Corner

“They took Jesus, and led him away.”

John 19:16

He had been all night in agony, he had spent the early morning at the hall of Caiaphas, he had been hurried from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate; he had, therefore, but little strength left, and yet neither refreshment nor rest were permitted him.

They were eager for his blood, and therefore led him out to die, loaded with the cross. O dolorous procession! Well may Salem’s daughters weep. My soul, do thou weep also.

What learn we here as we see our blessed Lord led forth? Do we not perceive that truth which was set forth in shadow by *the scapegoat*? Did not the high-priest bring the scapegoat, and put both his hands upon its head, confessing the sins of the people, that thus those sins might be laid upon the goat, and cease from the people? Then the goat was led away by a fit man into the wilderness, and it carried away the sins of the people, so that if they were sought for they could not be found. Now we see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce him guilty; God himself imputes our sins *to him*, “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;” “He was made sin for us;” and, as the substitute for our guilt, bearing our sin upon his shoulders, represented by the cross; we see the great Scapegoat led away by the appointed officers of justice. Beloved, can you feel assured that he carried *your* sin? As you look at the cross upon his shoulders, does it represent *your* sin? There is one way by which you can tell whether he carried your sin or not. Have you laid your hand upon his head, confessed your sin, and trusted in him? Then your sin lies not on you; it has all been transferred by blessed imputation to Christ, and he bears it on his shoulder as a load heavier than the cross. Let not the picture vanish till you have rejoiced in your own deliverance, and adored the loving Redeemer upon whom your iniquities were laid.

Morning, April 3rd, C.H. Spurgeon

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Front Page Concluded...

the world is acceptable for the believer in Christ. Actually, such friendship is hatred toward God. He wants our hearts to be wholly devoted unto Him, and not to be given to ourselves.

So we would not be wrong to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts. Much is being made lately of handwashing – and for good reason. Thorough and careful handwashing is good for preventing the spread of viruses. One way we can “flatten the curve” is by practicing such handwashing. Spiritual handwashing is equally good for the soul, and the prevention of the spread of sin in our own lives, and in the

lives of those around us. Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts! We all need to do our duty!

The good news of James’ rather stern words is this: if we will humble ourselves, weeping and mourning over our sin and misery, then God will exalt us! This may not be the “end of life as we know it...” It may be the start of something exalted and glorious, as God uses a crisis to wake His people and draw them near to Himself. Let us open our arms wide to the work of God in our lives. Let us take in these good lessons that He is providing for us, and let us store them up for the future.