



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



July 2016

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast Texas

CONTRIBUTORS PEN:

Gifts Bestowed Upon Us

Sean Drennan

Now I would like those of you who do not know or have never heard of the Trinity to raise your hand. The Trinity could be described as God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all unified, yet separate. But what is the Trinity? How do we fully understand it when that word has never mentioned in the Bible anywhere?

This is not what should be asked; we as Christians should be focusing on HOW the Trinity works in our lives and what are the gifts bestowed upon us.

Let's try to understand what our scripture reading from Romans 5:1a which says: "Therefore since we have been justified by faith". How are we justified by faith? Justification within Christian theology, is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while simultaneously declaring a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. So through our faith, God removes the guilt and penalty of sin.

The next part of the scripture, Romans 5: 1b says "we have peace with God through Jesus Christ". The reason we have this peace with God through Jesus is because the price was paid when Jesus was crucified on the cross. Meaning God's justice towards us is eternally satisfied. Jesus suffered for our sins, to grant us everlasting peace with the father. Since this type of peace can only come through our Lord Jesus Christ. He and his work done is our entire foundation of peace. Essentially, Jesus is our peace. If you notice in the Bible, it never says that we have peace with the devil, peace with the world, with the flesh, or sin. We Christians still battle, but it is no longer against God. But we are fighting for him.

From Romans 2:b, "Into this grace we stand", Grace, God's unmerited favor, is given through Jesus and gained by faith. What does it exactly mean to be standing in grace? It means that:

-we don't have to prove we are worth of God's love.

-God is our friend, someone or something we can always go to talk to when we feel our loneliest.

From Romans 2a: "Through him we have also obtained access by faith", we know our access into this standing grace is only by faith and through the work of Jesus. We ourselves cannot work in this standing. We access through the heavenly courts by standing in this grace. This is a blessing beyond peace with God.

We have access which is a perfect verb tense of have access also indicates that within this standing or permanent possession. Because our standing is based on grace, we know our access is a permanent possession. It cannot be taken away at a later time. In other words, the moment we pledge ourselves to God and take up the cross, we have access to heaven. But if we choose not to, then there is always a time to repent our sins and be forgiven.

And again from Romans 2:b, we "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God". Rejoice is a word normally translated to BOAST. A triumphant, rejoicing confidence. We Christians rejoice in hope of the glory of God by boasting about how great he is through singing hymns and songs such as "*How Great is our God*"

Whenever I go to youth events and experience those weeks and weekends, I come home and tell all my friends and family how much fun I had. I realize that the Holy Spirit filled everyone's hearts with love. For example, every time I went to SHYC or SYNOD, I noticed that during the mission projects, everyone is full of energy and is eager to make a difference in someone's life (whether it is making natural disaster buckets, hygiene kits, or cleaning up a garden for underprivileged kids). Whenever I'm at these events, the Holy Spirit

within us really shines through. You see right there is what the scripture is talking about. How I just exclaimed all those things about youth events.

Romans 3a: "But we rejoice in our sufferings" is a part of the scripture that confuses me. It is hard to see that someone can rejoice during a hard time, Like, oh yay! I'm in the hospital battling cancer, or my arm is broken, whoopee!

But it is way more common than you think. Not only in our own lives, when you find the time to think happier thoughts, but for other people that they attempt to be happy. Look at Paul and Silas, in Acts 16:16- 40. They are thrown in prison for speaking the word of the Lord. While in their cell they started singing hymns and praises. Even after they had the chance to leave from an earthquake that happened enabling them to escape, they stayed in their cell teaching the jailer about God.

The only way I see this from being possible is through the Holy Spirit. Yes we, get a lot from reading about God and learning, but it takes that extra push, that extra mile for us to really sink it in. Which is the Holy Spirit. That is what helps us see the bright side of things through hard times. Not God alone. But what God sends to us, what he breathes into us.

Romans 5:3-4: "Suffering produces endurance; perseverance and endurance produces character, and character produces hope." Every Christian doubts God from time to time. It is natural; it's part of the growing process. By persevering into this faith, we come to find character and hope. After the doubts, sufferings, and trials, our character is developed. Every time my Dad and cousin get together, they always mess with me. They tell me to do this or that because it produces "Strength and character"!

I remember one time I said I need to find a job, so they told me to go down the road and talk to the dairy farmer and tell him "I'll shovel manure for money." Well the definition of character is 'the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.' I don't know how shoveling manure would help me in realizing what my moral qualities are. But I'll say this, I never went down there. So I guess I'll never know.

What are the moral and mental qualities we acquire through Jesus Christ? They are hope, faith, perseverance, love, peace, and grace. The gifts given to us. How do we have these then? Through Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, whom was created by God.

Romans 5:5 "Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us". We all have experienced this. The love of God being poured in. Even though the book of Romans is devastating, it doesn't lack emotion or passionate experiences with God. Note it doesn't say God's love was given as slow as a trickle but poured in heaps.

I'm sure most of us in this congregation were baptized at one time. Do you remember how it felt? The feel of the water being poured or for some cases being submerged. The feeling as the water touched you, that it was also God's love you were being submerged in or had poured on you. Or when you got up out of the water and opened your eyes feeling fuller? The Bible says that the Holy Spirit was given to us. This is how God's love is communicated. Through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9 states that everyone who is a Christian has the Holy Spirit. But it is up to us to live in the fullness of it.

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Sean Drennan used H .P. Hosey's special Benediction to close the Trinity/Youth Sunday worship service:

Now take these words, these prayers and these songs and hold them to your heart, not to call your own but to add to all the words, prayers and songs you have heard in his name. That together they may squeeze a new tune from your lips or lift a phrase of yours to heaven unheard before. Take a deep breath and see if God's nourishment isn't more than you expected. Breathe in his spirit and see how much of it makes its way into your heart. Walk this way with others who have walked this way before you and see if your steps don't grow bolder. Stand very close to the presence of love and mercy and see how very hard it is to ever be the same again. Amen

ATTENTION: NEW PRAYER REQUESTS MONTHLY

In order to keep our prayer requests current, our prayer list will start fresh at the beginning of each month. To keep your prayer request in the bulletin, either write it on the back of your offering envelope (please make sure your name is on the envelope) or contact the church office, firstpres@peoplescom.net or 903-342-3011. We do not need the reason, unless it is death or an accomplishment, which go under a different heading. Also, please give relationship to you so others know who they are praying for. And PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.

As our prayers are answered, we give God thanks. For those with continued needs, we continue to pray.

Pastor

Session members:

Class of 2016
Jane Els, Larry Pendergrass
Class of 2017
Bob Kelm and Chris Holloman
Class of 2018
Rick Drennan, Ralph Gore and Leeann Moos
Treasurer
Jerry Poe

Contact us:

Tina Hammer, Secretary
PO Box 493
301 S. Walnut St.
Winnsboro, TX 75404
Office: 903-342-3011
Fax: 903-342-3011
Email: firstpres@peoplescom.net
Office hours: M-Th, 9-noon

FPC Website:

www.easttexasgrace.org

Cross and Crown articles:
firstpres@peoplescom.net

Attendance:

May 29—36
June 5—24
June 23—23
June 19—35
June 26—35



Noisy Offering

July: K9 Unit

August: Winnsboro Senior Center

September: Harley's Helping Hands



From the Desk of Ruth Shelton

“Fear not little flock”

I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”

(Matt 16: 18, italics added).

I think that if Jesus were to return today, he might tell us to stop taking ourselves so seriously! The gates of hell are no small matter, at least for us. We’re quite anxious. We have to do something about this (*this* being whatever we’re shocked by at present). America is in moral free-fall. The media are persecuting us. Churches seem to be losing their way. Radical Islam is on the march---not to mention the perfect storm of the latest viruses (zika included), famine, and wars, and violence that is taking lives all over the world. Every time we turn on the news, our compassion or anger is aroused---to the point that we become numb to it. And people in the pews are numb to it, especially when the church places still more burdens on their shoulders.

The burden of extraordinary impact weighs heavily, first, on the shoulders of pastors. But here is the good news: it is not your ministry, church, or people. You do not have to create and protect a personal legacy, but simply to distribute and guard Christ’s legacy entrusted to his apostles. You don’t have to bind Satan and storm the gates of hell. Christ has already done this. We’re just sweeping in behind him to unlock the prison doors. You don’t have to live the gospel, be the gospel, and lead the troops to redeem culture and reconcile the world to God. We are not building a kingdom that can be convulsed with violence like other realms, but we are “*receiving* a kingdom that cannot be *shaken*” (*Heb. 12: 28, italics added*).

The disciples surely had reason to worry about the world’s opposition. It was a little flock, and their King did not allow them to carry weapons. However, Jesus simply said to them and says to us now, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12: 32).

They had less trouble believing that they were a “little flock” than do we. We’re still fairly invested in the vanishing legacy of Christendom. Many among us can remember when the church had considerable cultural and political clout. Now our solemn political pronouncements and moral sentiments are largely ignored. Yet once we are really convinced that Jesus Christ has already secured the victory of Satan, death, and hell, we can take a deep breath and be the “little flock” that he has already redeemed, doing what he has called us to do. It is marvelously liberating no longer to imagine that we have to build or preserve a kingdom that Christ was not building in the first place.

Thus, the reason for taking seriously the New Testament principles of church order is not to create a formal hierarchy, but to guard against informal ones. “For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4: 5). If Paul the apostle could say this, then surely ordinary ministers cannot claim any more for themselves. The treasure is the gospel ministry, not the minister. The weakness of it all is essential to keeping our focus where it belongs. “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Cor. 4: 7).

Exercise:

1. How do we idolize our leaders today--- in the wider culture, but especially in the church? Is there a tendency to raise them too high in our estimation and then to tear them down when they fail to satisfy our own ambitions?

2. We hear a lot in our churches today about the pastor’s personal greatness, legacy, succession plans, and so forth. Do we put more emphasis today on ministers than on the ministry? If so, how?

Taken from: OR-DI-NAR-Y: 1. Sustainable faith in a radical, restless world; MICHAEL HORTON; Ch. 6, pp119-20.



Music Notes

The hand chime choir will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings during the summer. If you are interested in playing, come on and join us.



Garnett Russell's Youth group from First Presbyterian Church in Morrilton, AR went on a mission trip to Irvine, Kentucky and stayed at Burnamwood Presbyterian Camp. The mission assisted residents in the area, painting homes, gardening and general clean-up and construction. The mission is part of the Burnamwood Appalachian Ministry, which is through the Transylvania Presbytery in Kentucky.

Garnett is now at Gilmont for the next two weeks as an Intern Counselor.

The Russell family would like to thank the FPC family for your love, prayers and support given during Ed's fall, Carrie's surgery and Marabeth and Garnett's travels and care giving!

General Fund Summary Jan -May 2016			
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	\$33,424.86	\$35,716.67	\$2,291.81
Expense	\$ 28,395.86	\$35,716.67	\$7,320.81
Net	\$5,029.00		

Note: Bank balance 5/31/2016 was \$25,612.92. Restricted funds totaled \$9,424.44 while unrestricted funds totaled \$16,188.48.

From Youth Sunday

Moments with the Seniors:

During the Trinity/Youth Sunday worship service, Christian England shared the following scripture and message with our Senior Citizens.

Psalm 71:17-18

"O God, you have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare your wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and gray headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come."

Speaking of "wondrous works", our older members are OUR "wondrous works". It is YOUR strength and determination that hold our church together. As you were brought up in God's church learning Proverbs 22: 6...

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

... you are still here, "not departing" from God's Word, but continuing to lead and teach us, the Youth, by holding up our church's cornerstones. We praise God for you.



Sean Drennan received a Reid Scholarship

Presbyterian Women

“Who is Jesus?” - What a Difference a Lens Makes

Author Judy Yates Siker invites us to join her on “a journey to expand our understanding of who Jesus was and is --- a journey of our hearts and our minds, a journey that we will take together. Being reading the Gospels starting with Mark this summer. The books have been ordered. Will get them to you as soon as possible.

Mark your calendar - Monday, September 12, 2016 – the second Monday.

See you then.



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

July 21 –23, 2016 – Synod of the Sun
P W GATHERING – First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth, TX

“I know the plans I have for you.....” Jeremiah 27: 11

Keynote Speaker – Rev Dr. Cynthia Rigby

Presbyterian Women from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas will be gathering in Fort Worth for a great time of learning, sharing, fellowship, and worship. Come sing with a couple thousand – some of your favorite songs and some new songs. Hear great speakers, attend workshops, meet the authors of our Bible study, and meet wonderful ladies.

We will stay in a motel, and then go to the church for our meetings by bus. We would leave Thursday, July 21 and can come home Saturday evening.

Many of you have attended a GATHERING. I would love to go again and hope one of you can be my roommate. Pray about it, plan some personal time for yourself. I would love to share this time with you. Marabeth Russell

Check the Bulletin Board.

PETITION FOR A SENSE OF HUMOR ABOUT OURSELVES

Most gracious God,

**There are times when we hope you have the capacity to laugh at us,
Because the situations in which we as people involve ourselves
Must be taken with a grain of humor,
Else all is really a tragedy.**

Help us also to laugh at ourselves as you laugh at us;

**To realize that we are not permanent monuments to your gospel,
That we are temporary servants in your temple.**

Give us an understanding of the mysteries that will sustain us

So that we can advise those others who come seeking your will.

And never let us think that we have the final answers.

In Jesus' name.


Amen.

From: A BOOK OF REFORMED PRAYERS; Prayers For All Seasons, by JAMES E. ANDREWS

First Presbyterian Church

Birthdays/Anniversaries

July 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Annv. - Summers Michelle Anglin	2 Noon Al-Anon
3 COMMUNION Hand Bell choir plays	4  Independence Day Office closed	5	6 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	7	8	9 Noon Al-Anon
10	11 2-4 pm Bible Study	12 <i>Session reports to office by 11 am</i> Annv Bond LilyMae Holloman	13 1:30 PM Finance Comm. Mtg. 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	14	15	16 Noon Al-Anon
17 Family Lunch Session	18 2-4 pm Bible Study	19	20 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	21 Annv. Ash	22	23 Noon Al-Anon Annv. Clark
24 Sadie Vander Schaaf	25 <i>Cross & Crown articles due by 9 AM</i> 2-4 pm Bible Study	26	27 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	28 Larry Pendergrass	29	30 Noon Al-Anon
S Y N O D Y O U T H W O R K S H O P						
31 Noisy Offering: K9 unit Nathan Clark SYNOD						