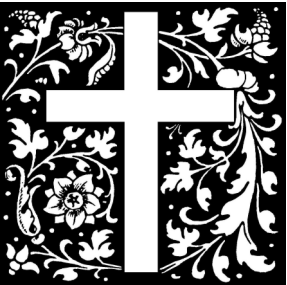




P.O. Box 5523
Hanover, NH 03755



Christ Redeemer Church

Grace. Truth. Community.

Fall 2017

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THE POWER OF FREEDOM

Pastor Don Willeman, Th.M.



Five hundred years ago this fall, the German university professor and monk Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg church door, sparking the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation refocused the church on the core teaching of the Bible: the gospel. It is called “gospel” because it is “good news”—not of what God demands— but of what he has done. It is all about what Jesus Christ has done to save us, singlehandedly. As a matter of fact, the great themes of the Reformation were the *Solas*, Latin for “alone.” Salvation is not a human work but a work of Christ Alone (*Solus Christus*) by Grace Alone (*Sola Gratia*), through Faith Alone (*Sola Fide*), and found in God’s Word Alone (*Sola Scriptura*). Finally, since God does it all, he alone gets the glory (*Soli Deo Gloria*). As the Hebrew prophet Jonah declared, “Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9).

This was very good news to Luther, but also to us today. Before understanding the gospel, Luther was trapped in a prison of performance: “Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God... I could not believe that he was placated by my [works].” As a result, Luther began to hate life, and even God. As he put it, “I did not love [but] hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly...murmuring greatly, I was angry with God.”

Some may say, “Thank God modern secular society has thrown off the

shackles of such oppressive religion!” However, I would suggest that secular society has not done away with this burden, but has only relocated it.

The New York Times ran an article on October 11th entitled, “Why Are More American Teenagers Than Ever Suffering From Severe Anxiety?” It states: “In 1985, the Higher Education Research Institute at U.C.L.A. began asking incoming college freshmen if they ‘felt overwhelmed by all I had to do’ during the previous year. In 1985, 18 percent said they did. By 2010, that number had increased to 29 percent. Last year, it surged to 41 percent.”

You can take the person out of religion, but you cannot take religion out of the person. Moral and religious performance is native to the human heart; we intuitively know that our lives will be judged, and that we must somehow justify our selves in an ultimate sense.

Luther did not find relief in denying the requirements of God’s law, nor in endeavoring a more sincere or severe religious performance. Rather, he found his solace by faith alone, trusting in the performance of Jesus for him. To him, there was only one perfect person, Christ, and this one had already been judged for him. Luther put it this way: “The Law says ‘Do this,’ and it is never done. Grace says, ‘Believe this,’ and everything is already done.”



THE BEAUTY OF GRACE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF OUR SIN *by Don Willeman*

Some people misunderstand the Bible’s dealing with the subject of sin. They assume that all the talk of sin, broken commandments, the demands of God and the threats of God’s judgement paint an all-too-dreary picture of the Christian life and an all-too-ogre-like picture of God. Can’t we just talk about the positive things? Negative things bring me down.

Well, if the negative things in the Bible were just the pointless ramblings of a discontented deity, then maybe a solid complaint could be registered. However, consistently throughout the Bible the point of all such descriptions of sin, emphases on God’s exacting demands, and warnings of the certainty of God’s judgement are the backdrop for the beautiful description of God graciousness and mercy in Christ. Therefore, such complaints are like someone com-

plaining about the darkness of the sky at the fireworks display. Someone could foolishly say, “Why do they always do fireworks so late at night? Why does it always have to be so dark? How about a little sunshine for once?” However, if it weren’t for the darkness of the sky as a backdrop, the beauty of the fireworks would lose all their glory. The glory of God’s grace shines brightest against the backdrop of our sin and God’s uncompromising justice.

Titus 3:3-5

For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov 3	First Friday Men’s Breakfast
Nov 15	Day of Fasting and Prayer
Nov 17-18	Fall Youth Conference
Nov 19	CRC Thanksgiving Dinner
Dec 1	First Friday Men’s Breakfast
Dec 13	Day of Fasting and Prayer
Dec 17	Christmas Pageant
Dec 24, 31	Sunday Worship at The Quechee Church



Summer Celebration Camp 2017



EXPERIENCING THE GRACE OF GOD

Kathleen Peters

For years I was embarrassed that I was a Christian, mostly because I didn’t understand God’s grace. I didn’t understand it, experience it or feel it. Or maybe I just did not trust it. I spent much of my time weighed down by my own sin, walking in a cloud of self-loathing and guilt because I felt so short of God’s glory. As a result, I was angry.

I could not love what I did not know; until I learned who God is, I could not experience Him. I wanted Him to miraculously and instantaneously make me understand and make me feel happy. In reality, I needed to think, study, listen, pray, and confess to both God and other believers. To my surprise, I found that I needed to engage in church.

I started with small steps. I had to come to terms with the fact that God is consistent and unchanging. I could not think he was full of grace one moment but not the next. I could not just slice and dice Him, keeping the parts that felt comfortable. The God of the Old Testament is the same God as the God of the New Testament. And the God of the New Testament is the same God as the God of today. Right now. In my life. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

God (OT) = God (NT) = God (today)
= God unchanging and constant

Despite having a graduate degree, I have a hard time reading to learn, which I thought excused me from Bible study. I struggled to learn in solitude this way, and I needed interaction, conversation and to be able to listen in order to learn. By and by, I discovered you can listen to the Bible for free online. I began attending Bible studies on a regular basis where I could talk with others about what I was learning. I began listening to sermons and podcasts, and I heard the truth of who God is over and over and over. God was gracious with Abraham, with Sarah, with Paul, with countless others in the Old and New Testaments. Since He never changes, why couldn’t He also be gracious with me? I began interacting with

truth. Slowly I was learning who the Bible says God is.

As my concept of who God is became clearer, grace came into focus. Grace is God moving heaven and earth to save me, when I could not lift a finger to save myself. The problem of my sin was way bigger and more complex than I can even imagine. The problem of my sin is so big and extreme that He didn’t just sprinkle some magic God-fix-it-dust. No. God, Himself - the maker of all things, seen and unseen - had to physically lower and personify Himself to come into this world. For me. Grace is my perfect God taking my condemnable sin on Himself, dying a horrible death and being raised again for my justification (Romans 4:24-25). I began to have hope that Christ would return (Titus 2:13), that my body would be redeemed (Romans 8:23), that there would be consummation of my righteousness (Galatians 5:5), that I would share the glory of God (Romans 5:2) and that I would inherit eternal life (Titus 1:2). Such grace, lavishly given to me, began to spur me to action.

I began to pray. I began to beg God to teach me He is good, to teach me what grace is, to help me experience grace. His grace goes beyond just paying for my sin on the cross. Additionally, he gave us the Holy Spirit so we need not be without him. God is with me. My ultimate gift of gracious salvation is yet to come, but God showers me with grace in the here and now, as well. God manifests grace through the church.

I began to experience God and his grace on a daily basis through the church. Confessing my sins and faults to others in the church has allowed me to experience this aspect of His grace. I came to realize that deceit is the action or practice of deceiving someone by concealing or misrepresenting the truth. That means that if I am simply quiet or vague, I am lying. Without confession I am actually preventing myself from being known. And without being known, I cannot experience love. Other people simply cannot love me and display God’s love for me if I do not confess. Without

confession I will not experience the grace that God so desperately desires for me to have.

The interesting thing about confession is that the more you do it, the easier and easier it becomes. It became easier for me to look someone in the eye and say “I am so sorry,” or “I had this awful thought,” or even “sometimes I just wish for this horrific thing,” or “I am so mad!” And when others say similar things to me, it is easier for me to extend grace because I have already admitted that that could be me. Christ gave us the church to feel His love now, before the fullness of salvation is granted to us. But we will not feel Christ’s love for us if we do not let ourselves be known.

This makes life in the church essential. God is a relational god, and He longs for us to be in relationship with Him and with each other. Relationships are formed by being present and participating. Go to church. Go to prayer night. Go to Bible study. Go to picnics and retreats and social events. Go to events - even ones that “aren’t your thing.” Call people. Notice people. Build relationships. Relationships make confession much easier and effective. Relationships allow grace to be felt.

God longs for us to practice humility and love. The church is the perfect place to do that. Yes, the church is made of sinful people. Yes, my sin will still have consequences and hurt other people. Yes, other’s sin will still hurt me. But in the church, all are called to love one another, to forgive one another, to serve one another, to pray for one another. And by doing so, I allow the Holy Spirit to work in me.

When I come to terms with my own sin and I humbly admit it, I disarm it. As I participate in the church and learn how gracious God is, I begin to know myself better. We are made in his image, called to be righteous and full of grace in return. Slowly, I exchange doubt, insecurities and guilt for a deep seeded faith, hope and joy that grows exponentially as God continues to prove faithful to me.

Kathleen Peters is a member at CRC. She is a mother, musician, and artist. She is also a juried member of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen in Hanover.

Friends in Focus DREW & SUSIE MATTER



We moved with our three children—Mary (9), Katherine (7), and John (5)— to Hanover from West Philadelphia in 2013 for Drew to earn a graduate degree at the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth. Drew hails from Chillicothe, Ohio, and came to know the Lord intimately during his senior year in high school through the kind letters of a friend and the Spirit-led voice of bluegrass great Ricky Skaggs. He grew in his faith while studying Mechanical Engineering at Georgia Tech, then worked as an engineer in Charlotte, North Carolina after graduation. In the early 2000s, he spent several years working with a non-profit organization in post-war Sarajevo, Bosnia, that provided social and academic programs for college students and the broader Bosnian Muslim community.

Susie was born in Short Hills, New Jersey, but grew up mostly in the East Bay of San Francisco, California. Her family, including two brothers, now calls Lewes, Delaware, home. Susie became a follower of Jesus her senior year in high school through the witness of her close friend and the guidance of a youth pastor. She attended Duke University, studying Education and Spanish, and was involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes while there. After graduation, Susie taught third grade at Trinity School in Durham, North Carolina, and will gladly recount to you her favorite lesson on the Rain Forest, including the intricacies of bromeliads.

Drew and Susie both attended Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, where they met, fell in love, got married, and earned degrees in theology and counseling. In 2006, during their seminary study, they moved to inner city Philadelphia to help plant City Church Philadelphia, a PCA church near UPenn, where Drew

served as an assistant pastor and Susie was the director of children’s ministries. Their move to the Upper Valley came with the sense that God wanted to use their vocational gifts in the marketplace. Susie has taught pre-school at the Hampshire Cooperative Nursery School for 2 years and Drew is currently the Product Development Director at Mikros, a mechanical engineering firm in Claremont, NH.

“Following Christ, for us, centers on faithfulness in parenting three young children, serving the Hanover community, and loving our neighbors with the welcome of the gospel. We feel the daily dependence on God’s wisdom to balance grace and truth as we shepherd our children and love our friends. We desperately want our home be a harbor of true gospel hospitality where the peace and joy of God’s kingdom can be tangibly felt by all those who enter. We lead our family by five values: Love, Grace, Truth, Honor and Hope. We are far from perfect at any of them, but God’s grace and forgiveness restore our strength to keep walking in them, helping us focus on others and forget about ourselves a little more each day. We are thankful to be a part of a community like CRC that reminds us of the power of the gospel and shares our burdens as we stumble toward Jesus together.”

The Matters are CRC members and 4+ year residents of the Upper Valley. They are community group leaders, and serve with children’s, music and Sunday School ministries and assist in worship service duties.



Students in the Spotlight HALLIE REICHEL

I can’t remember the first time I heard about Jesus, but I know that the story of the Bible changed my heart at a young age. Looking back on my childhood and teenage years, I remember being complimented for my sweet manners but feeling overcome by guilt whenever I made a mistake. I understood clearly that I did not measure up to God’s perfect standard of justice, but I didn’t fully grasp how Jesus’s death met that standard for me—that he removes guilt and offers boundless forgiveness.

As I struggled to accept God’s free grace to me, there were moments and seasons of clarity where I tasted the sweetness of God’s love for me, his mercy, and his peace. Near the end of high school, I began studying the book of Romans. I clung to verses like Romans 8:1 “For there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” or Romans 6:14, “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” In the overwhelming season of college admissions, God spoke to me through the Scriptures, calling me to trust him with faith, even if it felt as small as a mustard seed.

In college, I experienced Christian community like never before, and I grew significantly in my confidence of God’s grace for me. The Lord taught me to share my challenges with others, slowly breaking down my self-imposed standard of perfection. I also struggle with anxiety and, in the stressful years of college, my evident weakness has brought me far lower than I thought I’d go. It is at my lowest point that Jesus reminds me that the cross is for me, too! He calls me to surrender my false sense of control and accept not only the call to follow Him, but also to be loved unconditionally by Him.

Hallie Reichel is a Dartmouth College senior, double majoring in Government and French. Some of her favorite CRC memories are on the two student missions trips to Germany in 2014 and 2015. She serves in Christian Union at Dartmouth and is thankful for the Christian community of the Upper Valley that has encouraged and strengthened her faith throughout her years as a student.

CONTACT US

(603) 643-5588
P.O. Box 5523
Hanover, NH 03755
office@christredeemerchurch.org
Rev. Don Willeman, Lead Pastor

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