REACHING 3 BILLION UNREACHED

GRACE INSIDER

CORPORATE WORSHIP: WHY SHOULD WE BOTH

THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN

PREPARING

FOR GLORY

EASTER SERVICES SAT 5PM | SUN 8:30AM • 10:15AM • 5PM (DT ONLY)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more and/or sign up for events at graceb3.org/events

PARENTS ROUND TABLE SERIES April 2 8:30AM or 10:15AM

Parents, you've heard us say that "Grace partners with you to disciple your kids." What does it mean for you to disciple your kids? What might it look like? Come get encouraged and equipped to make disciples of the next generation in your own household – we are in this together! No sign up needed. Just come.

EASTER SERVICES April 8 5PM | April 9 8:30, 10:15AM or 5PM (DT ONLY)

Come celebrate Easter with us on Easter or the day before. Childcare provided for ages 2 and under at 8:30AM and 10:15AM services.

HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY CONFERENCE April 21 9AM-5PM

This simulcast conference is designed to equip and encourage parents and caregivers meeting the needs of children impacted by adoption and/or foster care. Topics include An Introduction to TBRI® (Trust-Based Relational Intervention®), The Church and Trauma - Competent Care, and more!

5/6 THRIVE April 23-May 7 8:30AM

This fun, interactive Thrive class is especially for 5th and 6th graders! This 5-week class will help them grow in their faith by studying God's word together.

BABY DEDICATION CLASS May 7 10:15-11:30AM

This class is designed to equip parents who wish to dedicate themselves before the church to raise their children in the Lord. It will address the biblical foundation for dedication, the parent's role, the church's responsibility, and the rationale for why we do not practice infant baptism. This class must be taken before parents can participate in the dedication ceremony.

Coming Soon • Backyard Bible Club

CIIII

keeping our cool through faith in God





By Leading Pastor Brooks Simpson

"It will all work out for good."

If you are a Christian, you have heard that statement. You have probably said it yourself. We say or hear that it will all work for the good in the midst of a trial or some painful or uncertain circumstance. The phrase comes from Paul's letter to the church in Rome.

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28 (ESV)

But all things? Really? According to Paul, yes. He is not saying all things are good. There are many things in this world which are bad, even evil. Injustice is not good. Death is not good. I remember 20 years ago hearing about a women's Bible study at Grace that discussed Romans 8:28. A widow attending the group asked, "How is it good that my husband died

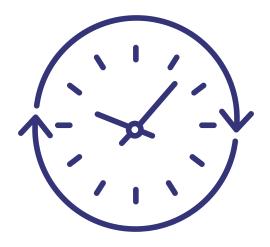
of cancer and left me alone with young children to raise?" No one in her study attempted to convince her that her husband's death was good. The death of a loved one is not good. Yet, God wants us to know that the pain, suffering, and injustice we experience, though bad, will be redeemed and be used for good.

That promise is not meant to take the pain away or trick us into thinking that something bad is good. The promise gives us hope to hang on to, to endure, to persevere and cling to the promise that the God who created us will bring us home. But how can we know? How can we be certain that the circumstance causing our pain will actually work for our good?

Paul tells the church in Corinth that the hardships we endure in this life are preparing for us an eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17). He calls these hardships light and momentary afflictions. These light afflictions, as he refers to them included sickness, injustice, persecution, and even death. But how can pain produce glory? The Bible teaches that heaven isn't a consolation given to sufferers that makes up for the pain we endure. Paul is saying the glory we will taste someday is a result of the pain we endure. God is preparing us for glory.

Your pain and suffering are not good things, but God desires to use them to prepare you for glory. Suffering is the common denominator of a broken humanity. Join us on Easter Sunday as we discover what the first disciples learned when they discovered the empty tomb. Their greatest source of pain and anguish is the proof and preparation that Jesus works all things for our good.





More Than a Routine

Corporate Worship: Part I

By Worship Director Zack Stanton

Why do we gather each week? What does the Bible say about it? What should we do? Why should I bother to come?

orporate worship — the weekly gathering of God's people — is one of the pillars of our Christian faith. It is a rhythm of life that centers our week around Jesus, an opportunity to worship, grow, and fellowship. It is also a public demonstration to our culture that we believe something deeply. The Greek word for "church," ecclesia, means "an assembly," "gathering," "a company." A church is not merely an organization, nor is it "on paper" or "in theory." It's a real gathering of Jesus' followers for worship. This means lots of different things

can happen (and should happen) when we gather. In this article series, we'll unpack what corporate worship is and its purpose and answer questions like those above along the way.

RITUALS VS ABIDING

Let's start with some context that will help us connect our previous discussion of personal worship with this new series about corporate worship. Personal worship, we said, must be all of life - there is no sacred and secular divide for the believer. In Romans 12:1, Paul says we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices in response to the gospel of Jesus. We've also discussed how our devotional practices of Scripture meditation and prayer help us to abide in Christ day in and day out. Understanding these two ideas, living sacrifice and daily abiding, is of utmost importance to understand before we move onto corporate worship. If this is missing, our weekly gathering can be mere ritual. While rituals can be useful in reminding us of God's past work, they can easily turn into a "thing we do" or a way to feel good about ourselves, leading to a dry and empty experience, a social event, a shot in the arm, or a time "to be inspired." In short, they can become about us.

Let's look at three passages where God addressed the danger of empty rituals, even if those rituals are technically in obedience to his commands.

PSALM 50

Stop reading this article and take a moment to read the whole psalm with an eye to what God thinks about going through the motions of worship.

This psalm is a rebuke to Israel for offering worship with distant hearts. The writer, Asaph, details the sinful activities that Israel participates in, all while offering worship. In verses 8-9, God acknowledges their sacrifices, but he won't accept them. In verse 14, Asaph exhorts them to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving and to be people of their word. He tells them to look to God for help and call on him. The final verse sums it up saying,

> "The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to the one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!"

ΙςδιδΗ 1

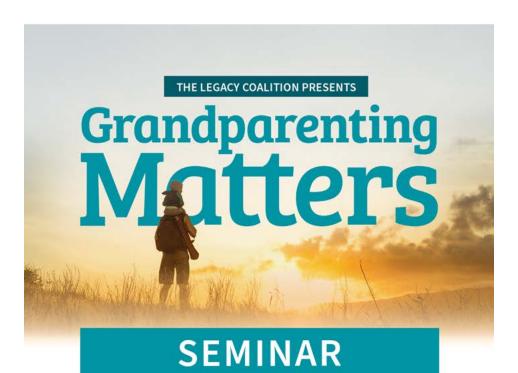
Before continuing, read Isaiah Chapter 1.

This chapter is a scathing rebuke of Judah. In verses 11-17, God specifically addresses their worship. He says, "What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? I have had enough! Bring no more vain offerings! Do you want to honor me? Then stop doing evil. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Correct oppression. Bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow's cause."

What good is an offering if the heart behind it is running the opposite direction? God often spoke of Israel's adultery against him. Think of your spouse bringing a gift to you on your birthday, knowing that they had cheated on you the night before. Does that seem horrendous? This was how God felt about Israel's "worship." It was not worship.

Місан 6

Before continuing, stop and read Micah Chapter 6.



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This is one of the most well-known passages on this subject, but we often only quote verse 8. Verses 6-7 say,

"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

This gets pretty extreme! How do I please God? What is it going to take? Thousands of rams? Tens of thousands of rivers of oil? My own children?!? What does God require?

Here's the verse many of us know:

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

The above passages show that our actions in worship must flow from a heart of submission, obedience, service, kindness, and humility. Now, don't misunderstand me here. The actions of corporate worship are important! Psalms 63, 73, and 84 all speak of the importance of the temple (the place of worship) and the congregation. Sacrifices were God's idea. And while we don't offer sacrifices anymore because Jesus offered the final one, we are exhorted to gather for worship. Hebrews 10:24-25 affirms how crucial this is!

This is why our personal worship is so vital. We cannot ignore our daily walk with God. We cannot ignore fellowship with other believers. We cannot settle for lives that neatly go through the motions. We must meditate on his word and wrestle in prayer. We must love others. We cannot settle for lives that merely go through the motions. Then our gatherings on Sunday are built on the right foundation and our hearts can respond to God with thanksgiving. *

SHOW (HOPE

HOPE for the Journey CONFERENCE

Equipping and encouraging parents and caregivers with children impacted by adoption and/or foster care.

REGISTER AT GRACEB3.ORG/EVENTS

The Hope for the Journey Conference is designed to equip and encourage parents and caregivers meeting the needs of children impacted by adoption and/or foster care.

Bringing together teaching, resources, and practical experiences, parents and caregivers (and the churches and organizations seeking to serve these children and families) will gain a deeper understanding of these children's needs.

Featuring Special Hosts, Show Hope Founders Mary Beth & Steven Curtis Chapman, this simulcast conference explores topics include an introduction to Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®), The Church and Trauma - Competent Care, and more!

DATE April 21
TIME 9am – 5pm
Location Grace
North Liberty
Cost \$10, lunch and
snacks provided.

No childcare provided during conference.



By Dick and Bev Snakenberg

Dick and Bev Snakenberg are our Global Outreach Program Leaders for Education, Mobilization, and Communication.

What brings you the greatest joy and fulfillment throughout each church service you attend? Is it participating in the worship music as you lift your voice in song? Is it the coming together as one body with fellow believers in unity with Christ? Is it the hearing of God's word and applying it to our daily lives? Is it the peace of the Holy Spirit that washes over us as we seek God's will? I would imagine all of us have felt many, if not all of these emotions at one time or another. What a privilege it is to carry life's trials to the Lord Jesus Christ and receive his peace and hope. But what if we had never, ever, heard the name of Jesus? What if we did NOT know about his incarnation, his love, his sacrifice, and his

gift of salvation to all those who believe? How would this change our perspective in the daily happenings of our life? Where would we look to find peace and hope? Sadly, NOT knowing about Jesus is the reality of over 3 billion people in our world today. There are over 7000 unique people groups that are considered "unreached" for the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Unreached" means these people, over 40% of the world's population, do not have access to the gospel. It is NOT that they can hear or have heard the gospel, and they choose NOT to believe it. It is that they cannot even hear it because NO ONE around them knows it. Therefore, without outside help, no one is there to make Christ known to them. This means that billions of souls will be born, live. and die without ever hearing the gospel, the goodnews of Jesus Christ, and will never hear how they can have a relationship with the Lord now on earth and eternally in heaven. Jesus Christ gave us the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20. Unless we, as believers in Jesus Christ, take this command seriously, more people will continue on the road to eternal separation from God without ever having the chance to hear how they can have a relationship with him through Jesus Christ here on earth and eternal life in heaven.

These sobering statistics stand as the foundation as to why the Education, Mobilization, and Communication (EMC) group exists as part of the Global Outreach Team at Grace Community Church. We as the EMC seek to make the Great Commission known and lived out in the lives of those who are attendees and members of our Grace church body. The Great Commission was not just commanded by Jesus for



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THIS CLASS IS FOR PARENTS WHO WISH TO DEDICATE THEMSELVES BEFORE THE CHURCH TO RAISE THEIR CHILDREN IN THE LORD, IT WILL ADDRESS THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR DEDICATION, THE PARENT'S ROLE, THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE RATIONALE FOR WHY WE DO NOT PRACTICE INFANT BAPTISM. THIS CLASS MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE PARENTS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE DEDICATION CEREMONY.

BABY DEDICATIONS WILL BE HELD DURING SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES ON 5/14. QUESTIONS? EMAIL OFFICE@GRACEB3.ORG OR CALL 319.626.2040 the early church to follow, but his command stands just as pertinent to us today. The EMC team wants to educate and communicate Christ's calling to each and every man, woman, and child and mobilize them to authentically walk out their faith, grounded in the truth of God's word.

Here are some ways that the EMC Team has been working to provide opportunities for the body of Christ at Grace, to practically live out the Great Commission:

Every third Sunday of each month has been selected to be "Missions Emphasis Sunday." Missionary prayer sheets are given out at both services as people enter the sanctuary. These are actual prayer requests and praises from Grace's missionaries serving in or with overseas missions to make Christ known. Please consider lifting up these men and women and their families in prayer. Prayer is a practical and powerful way to live out the Great Commission right where you are! To find out more about who Grace's missionaries are, you can go to <code>graceb3.org/field-staff</code>

Grace Community Church has had the privilege of having two Mission Emphasis Weeks and two Mission Fairs over the past two years. These outreaches are meant to bring missionaries, missionary agencies, missionary opportunities, and missional information to communication with Grace attendees and members. The Mission Emphasis Week has brought about missional connections and opportunities to Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS), Grace's Student Ministry, and to the congregation through missionary speakers and multi-linguistic worship. We plan to have Mission Emphasis Week 2023 on October 22nd – 29th with the theme "Declare His Glory Among The Nations!" This is another opportunity to engage in the Great Commission by participating in the many events of Mission Emphasis

Week right in our own home church!

The EMC Team hosted a Thrive class this past fall called "Life Is About ME" (Missional Engagement). Class participants learned about various ways to engage missionally in their families with children and teens, at school, at work, in their neighborhoods, and in their cities. We also focused on prayer and intentionally shared how to missionally engage with others, whether across the street or the globe. Look for a future Missional Engagement Thrive class as details come together. Your attendance would be another practical and informative way to live out the Great Commission.

The Bible has made it very clear that people from every nation, tribe, and tongue will be represented in heaven. What an amazing privilege to be called by Jesus to be a part of God's amazing story!

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" Romans 10:15b №



By Spiritual Formation Pastor Dave Kirk

We were made for relationships. We know this because God is a God of community and connection – we see it perfectly demonstrated within the Trinity – and he created us out of his image. Being made in God's image means we have certain characteristics that are like God's characteristics so that we can mirror those to one another; and in so doing, point each other back to our wonderful creator and heavenly Father. One of those characteristics is being relational beings. We were created to be in relationship with the Lord first, then with one another.

At Grace Community Church, we celebrate that we were created for a relationship with God and one another. Grace Community Church is not a building; we are a people who are united together through Christ. We are family. The family of God. The challenge in all of this is that we live in

a western culture which emphasizes the individual over the community, and the busyness and complexity of life challenges the idea of being in community and putting relationships as a top priority.

At Grace, we strive to challenge you to build community. Throughout our Discipleship Pathway, we emphasize having intentional relationships. When someone begins to attend Grace, we want them to be connected to Christ and to the church, so we encourage them to find an area to serve in the church, and then we encourage them to get into a community group. Our community groups are a primary place to find community with one another.

The purpose of community groups is for people to know others and to be known, to care for others and to be cared for, and to serve together so that families, neighborhoods, and the whole corridor area will see the love of the Lord and be drawn to him through us.

Here at Grace, we have 32 community groups over our two campuses along with 78 leaders and 17 community group coaches (both men and women) that coach those leaders. Our community groups meet throughout the week, in various locations throughout the greater Iowa City area. Our community groups come in all shapes and sizes, but one thing that should be true about any group you go to focuses on the gospel, and on knowing, caring for and serving people. So this means there is a group for you.

As the Spiritual Formation Pastor, I am excited about our community groups and I am also proud of them. Our community groups have demonstrated the love of Christ to our city in some impactful ways. We have had community

groups jump in and help during emergencies in our neighborhoods. Twice we have had a fire in homes in North Liberty, and our community groups reached out to help with the cleanup and to meet needs. Our community groups have also served in the community in other ways: meeting needs during derecho, serving meals to college students downtown, sharing the gospel with kids through Backyard Bible Clubs, and ministering to those in need in trailer parks and more. One of the biggest things I love is the way the people in community groups love and care for one another. Our community group leaders go through training to learn how to care for the people in their groups. When people from a community group go to biblical counseling, often the community group is advocating for those people and helping them through their struggle. I am very thankful for our community groups at Grace and highly recommend them to anyone who is not in one.

We plan to start more community groups; if you are interested in becoming a community group leader, visit graceb3.org/connect/groups and fill out the Leadership Interest Form. We will sit down with you to determine what steps need to be taken to start a group.

If you would like to be in a community group, visit graceb3. org/connect/groups and fill out the Shrae Your Group Preference form to let us know you would like to be in a group. #

Should I Volunteer with the Children's Ministry?

Am I comfortable working with kids?

Yes

No

Do I know "enough" about the Bible?

Yes

No

Yes! You would make a *great* volunteer! There are lots of places you can help.

Contact Natasha at natasham@graceb3.org to sign up!

SERMON NOTES		DATE:
MAIN IDEA:	NOTES:	

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saturday april 22 10am - 12pm HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

a seasoned sisters gathering

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" Matthew 6:25-27

Join your seasoned sisters for brunch, worship, and a program. Feel free to invite friends! Seasoned Sisters events are open to all women age 50 and up.

Sign up at graceb3.org/events, or call 319-626-2040