



GRACE
insider

making disciples

// feature //

Daughters of the King
featured on pg. 14

graceb3.org/DOK

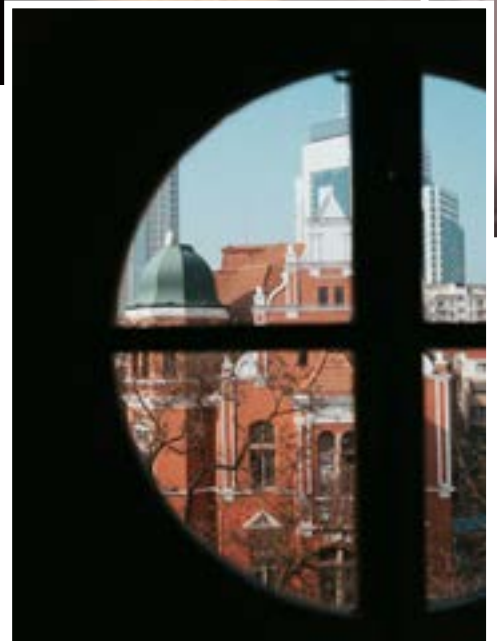
/march

MARCH SERMON FORECAST

by **Steve Schepeler**,
Downtown Campus Pastor

Sometimes, the Bible seems very foreign to us, describing ancient practices that make very little sense in our day. This “strange” biblical world can leave us with questions, proving that the Bible does not always lend itself to easy and immediate application and instead demands time, diligence, and patient study to mine its rich treasures. Other times, the Bible describes cultures that are quite similar to our own. As we will see in March, Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians speaks a bit more directly to our time.

March’s sermons will cover portions of 1 Thessalonians 2, 3, and 4. In chapters 2 and 3, Paul expresses his joy that the Thessalonians are standing firm in the good news, even amidst affliction and persecution. These Christians had abandoned idol worship, which was a regular



part of life in Thessalonica, and for this, they were marked out as peculiar and possibly politically subversive, resulting in persecution. In chapters 3 and 4, Paul urges the Thessalonians to grow in their love for one another and to avoid sexual immorality. Like idolatry, sexual immorality was woven throughout much

during my childhood are now casually paraded across screens on social media and primetime TV commercials. We can take comfort that we are not the first or only ones asked to swim against the tide of culture when we are called to pursue sexual holiness today. We stand in a long line of disciples who have



As a brief P.S., we will have an important vision message on March 22nd. This will not come directly from 1 Thessalonians but provide an opportunity for the entire church to be aware of important developments in the life of our body.

of life in Thessalonica, and to abandon these sexually immoral practices would have likely only added to the Thessalonian Christians' strangeness in the eyes of their non-Christian neighbors.

Though we may not have idols of wood and stone erected throughout the corridor, we know what it means to live in a highly sexualized culture. Images that would have been considered sexually inappropriate at best

been called to look strange and different when honoring our Savior and seeking relationships that are loving instead of devaluing and degrading. And should our commitment to strive for sexual holiness lead to us feeling marginalized, the Thessalonians' commitment to the gospel amidst affliction is a living and tangible reminder that these light and momentary afflictions are far outweighed by the eternal weight of glory.

SERMON NOTES

March 1 - 1 Thess. 2:13-16

March 8 - 1 Thess. 2:17-3:10

March 15 - 1 Thess. 3:11-13

March 22 & 29 - 1 Thess. 4:1-8

PLANNING FOR CELEBRATION

by Chelsy Reed, User Experience Communications Designer

Last October my daughter, Lizzie, was just over two years old, but I think it's officially when she started remembering events well. I know this because we're five months out from Halloween, but she's still asking weekly if we can go trick-or-treating with our family friends. She also really misses having our Christmas tree up, regaled a stranger about her amazing birthday cake, and happily partook in writing Valentines for family and friends and deeply enjoyed gifting them.

While the science might be a little iffy on when memories really begin to stick in children, my husband and I decided we would choose to make memories, take pictures, and relish these younger years.

There's more planning required now than when Lizzie was a crawler, but there are some things that I'm really glad we've done for holidays because they've been amazing discipleship moments. For example, I bought a nativity set where Mary had a button that recited a few passages from Luke. Lizzie could repeat one of the verses by the time we were packing Christmas decor away for the season.

So as we prepare for Easter there are some 'less spiritual' things on my list, like cereal-treat carrots (below), but we're also planning on using object lessons to talk through the Lent guide (pgs. 10-13), Resurrection Eggs (Google it) and reading through her kid's Bible passages about the events leading up to and the day of Easter because the science on kids' memory will probably keep changing, but the word of God doesn't return void.



**Get the recipe for the Food
Network's Coconut
Cereal-Treat Carrots at
<http://bit.ly/eastertreatster>**

TALENT AT GRACE

Megan Lehman

Megan Lehman has been attending Grace Community for about five years after getting invited for the first time while she was in college. After trying other churches in the area as a college student, Grace felt like home after Megan and her sister were so warmly welcomed. We're so glad that she's landed at Grace and has become so involved in missions at Grace.

Megan works as an Assistant Retail Manager with MidWestOne Bank in Coralville. She helps customers with loans, fraud situations, new accounts, and she supervises the teller line. She gets to work with folks and help them achieve their financial goals, and she finds the work very satisfying.

She lives in North Liberty, right down the street from her twin sister and her husband. Her parents and younger sister live in Knoxville, Illinois. Her Lehman grandparents live in Iowa City, and Megan spends lots of time with them. Megan says her family is incredible.

Megan is passionate about service. In high school, she went on her first trip to Guatemala with her Spanish teacher, who was a member of the Peace Corps there. She always imagined that God would bring her back to Guatemala, so in 2016 when Grace partnered with Rick and Annette Fulton to send a short-term team to Guatemala, it was an easy yes for Megan. She's been on each annual short-term trip since (which we're currently recruiting for: graceb3.org/goguatemala) and God has used that Spanish education in several unexpected ways on these trips!

Megan also loves to read, take walks with her Corgi, Gracie, and listen to audiobooks and podcasts. She spends most mornings at Title Boxing Gym and is also a member of Kiwanis with her grandfather. Megan loves to travel, and has a goal to make it to a new country every year.





We recruit early for Guatemala every year, typically in January. Each team member is responsible for their own travel expenses, but the team as a whole fundraises every single dollar that provides for the projects while in Guatemala. Our goal is to raise \$30,000 to cover the costs of the homes, 100 wheelchairs, and other projects. Donations directed to Grace Guatemala are appreciated. The team will also be hosting fundraisers at Pizza Ranch and other local places. Finally, Guat's Up Coffee Roasters was born out of the passion to serve Guatemala, and all profits from the coffee sales help fund the projects. You can order at graceb3.org/guatemala or on the [graceb3](#) app.

Discerning What We Treasure

by Paul Hansen, Executive Pastor

As a young boy, I remember being amazed that the word “racecar” spelled backwards was the same as it was spelled forwards. Don’t believe me? (Go ahead, try it yourself!). What can I say? Small wonders can amaze small minds.

Much more significant is recognizing the bi-directional truth Jesus spoke in Matthew 6:21. Want to know what you value the most in life? Take a look at your budget. It’s there for you in black and white! Wonder where your money is all going? Take a look at what you value the very most. There is a very good chance it consumes a significant portion of your paycheck.



*For where
your treasure
is, there
your heart
will be also.
Matthew 6:21*



What does this mean practically in the life of a believer?

First it serves as a warning. Whose kingdom are you really seeking to expand? This is a tricky question for a believer. Those raised in church or that attend regularly know that the correct answer is supposed to be “Jesus”! And yet Jesus himself warns us here.

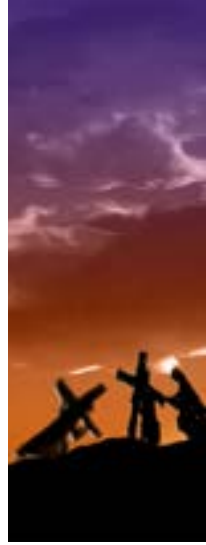


What am I treasuring above all else as evidenced by what I spend my money on?

Second it serves as a way to measure the condition of my heart. If my bank account does not value the things of the Lord, do I truly value the things of the Lord? And yes — the same is true with Paypal, Venmo, or however you conduct your regular financial transactions.

Finally, it can serve as a reproof to help me bring my values closer in line with the values of my King. Don't believe me? Start praying and giving cheerfully, regularly and generously to Christ, and watch your heart be enlarged for what is on His heart! And while you are at it... spell racecar backwards!

PREPARING FOR EASTER IN THE SEASON OF LENT



Lent is traditionally centered around concepts like fasting, giving, and praying. However, in 2020 our Lent guide is going to zero in on some interesting metaphorical statements that Jesus made about Himself. In each week leading to Easter, you'll find the "I am" statement and its root scripture along with a Psalm to pray through. There's also a link for a bit more commentary on each statement.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Week One • March 1-7

Read John 6:22-40, noting context; chapter 6 begins with the account of Jesus feeding the 5,000. The people following Him had gotten bread (and fish) the day prior, but now they seek a sign, comparing Jesus to Moses. Who does Jesus actually credit with the provision of manna in the wilderness? Why do you suppose that they wanted a sign one day after the food multiplication miracle?

Pray Psalm 54, keeping in mind that the author, David, wrote while his life was being sought by men. While this is unlikely the case for you the reader, there is an enemy who seeks to steal and kill and destroy those chosen of God.

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Week Two • March 8-14

Read John 8:12-20 and 1 John 1:5-10. "The figure of light that John used to describe God emphasizes His ability to reveal and His ability to deal with what the light of His holiness reveals." (New English Translation, Constable's notes).

Pray Psalm 119:109-112. As you pray throughout this week, ask God to give you a hunger for His truths and His guidance which can be found in His word. Pray that God's light would reveal areas of your heart that are hidden, even hidden from you. Also, pray for the courage and resolve to submit any areas of shadow to God, to confess, repent, and, believe that He is faithful, just and will forgive.



I AM THE GATE AND GOOD SHEPHERD

Week Three • March 15-21

Read John 10:1-18. In her book, *Scouting the Divine*, Margaret Feinberg recounts a conversation she had with a shepherd. As they were tromping into the sheep pasture through the muck, which was not your standard dirt and water composition, Lynne, the shepherd, took careful time closing each gate. She told Margaret, "You always have to be careful with gates because they're crucial to the animals' survival. Not only do they keep sheep in-- they keep predators out."

In ancient times often shepherds would lead their sheep to an enclosure every night and lead them back out to pasture in the morning. Shepherds would often lay across the opening of their enclosure at night guarding the sheep against predators and thieves, and ensuring that they'd notice if a sheep tried to make a break.

Pray Psalm 23. As you pray through this Psalm, remember that the sheep are dependent on the shepherd for everything. Ask God to call to mind places where surrender and dependence on Him are necessary for your life for the sake of His glory and your good.

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS TO BE AMONG THE VICTORS

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Week Four • March 22-28

Read John 14:1-7.

Pray Psalm 146, keeping in mind that this Psalm was a Psalm of ascent that would have been said as Jews climbed the many steps to Jerusalem for Passover. John 14 fits into the biblical timeline right before Jesus was to die. We should not overlook the faith involved both in the utterance and in the acceptance of those words, spoken as they were on the eve of the crucifixion. 'I am the Way,' said one who would shortly hang impotently on a cross. 'I am the Truth,' when the lies of evil people were about to enjoy a spectacular triumph. 'I am the Life,' when within a matter of hours his corpse would be placed in a tomb.

I AM THE TRUE VINE


Week Five • March 29- April 4

Read John 15:1-5. In the Old Testament (Ps. 80:8-16, Is. 5:1-7, Jer. 2:21 and more) Israel is referred to as a vine. Jesus also refers to Israel as a vine in the gospels, but this old vine wasn't as successful as the gardener had intended it to be, producing sour grapes and going wild instead. Here when Jesus says, "I am the true vine"; He uses a metaphor to allude to His



fulfillment of Israel's original calling. Israel wasn't fruitful as the vine, or at least, on the whole, they weren't the picture of perfect fruitfulness that God's kingdom representatives are called to be. Jesus, as the true vine, fulfilled what Israel couldn't.

Pray Psalm 1:1-6. Since we are grafted into the 'true vine', we are also called to be fruitful in our lives on earth. No branch will produce good fruit without the competent care of a master gardener, just as a branch detached from the vine will not thrive either. Pray for fruitful living within the season that you are in. This requires each believer to be communing with God, recognizing the season of life that they are in. Bearing out-of-season fruit isn't what we're called to, so we must continually go back to His word that sustains us in all seasons.



**"O God of highest heaven,
occupy the throne of my
heart, take full possession
and reign supreme.
Thou art worthy to be
praised with my every
breath, loved with my every
faculty of soul, served with
my every act of life." Make
my heart to dwell on you.**

-Valley of Vision

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Week Six • April 5-11

Read John 11:1-44. This claim is made right in the middle of the story of Lazarus' death and resurrection, context is oh so important! Jesus tells Martha that He is the resurrection; He is the life. It's not a principle or doctrine that she must trust in, but in Him, in His person. When we're sick, we want a doctor (or our mother); when those who are in Christ grapple with death, He is the comfort and the one who does the resurrecting.

Pray Psalm 95.



Cover Feature

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

Daughters of the King is a ministry at Grace that helps moms and daughters build better relationships with each other and Christ.

The gifts we give to others can be interesting. Having now had just enough time away from Christmas, maybe we're no longer sullied about gift-giving, or maybe (since retailers saw the highest volume of returns in 2019) you're still wary about the idea of gifting



Each session of Daughters of the King includes a craft time, Bible and teaching time, and a game time. But that's just the itinerary. The whole point is to get girls and moms that are going through similar life seasons together to be mutually encouraged.

after having returned the gift you got in triplicate or pitching in the trash something for which there was no gift receipt.

But there are other kinds of gifts. We asked some of the moms who've recently come, with their grade-school daughters, to Daughters of the King what their experiences have been like. When asked what the most valuable lesson they've heard has been, one mom replied, "That God loves us regardless through everything." Now that might seem obvious to the well-seasoned Christians reading this, but for a 3rd-grade girl to learn that and have it really sink in, the impact from that lesson could be life-changing. That could mean that she'll remember this when she fails and will fail well, learn from failure and pain, and grow beyond it.

Catching up with Olivia Merriweather



March is a month that brings much color and brightness to our lives, but also much spiritual darkness and oppression through the worship of false gods. Spring is welcomed by the festival of Holi or the 'festival of colors.' In the West, people find the colors fun and festive, but in reality, the festival of Holi can be a tricky one to navigate with local friends. With its roots in spiritual belief, Holi is celebrated because of a young prince's triumph over his evil kingly father and aunt. He escapes death only by the power of the god to which he is devoted. The good triumphing over evil is a common storyline in local belief and can

The Holi Festival

Holi is celebrated with enthusiasm and gaiety on the full moon day in the month of Phalgun which is the month of March per the Gregorian calendar.

What makes Holi so unique and special is the spirit of it which remains the same across the globe, wherever it is celebrated.



In March 2019, two of our staff and their daughters visited Olivia during the Holi festival, clearly.

be a good opportunity to talk about the One who is Good. However, the spiritual darkness of this time can veil the eyes and hearts of our friends and keep them from Truth.

Prayer Request

Please pray for my friends who live in darkness. Please ask that conversations of ultimate Good would be heard and understood.



The tradition of the Holi is that even the enemies become friends on Holi and forget any feeling of hardship that may be present. Besides, on this day people do not differentiate between the rich and poor, and everybody celebrates the festival together with a spirit of brotherhood. In the spew of dyed cornstarch colors, everyone, if only for one day and one night, looks equal.





Caleb Stamp Business Administration Director

Who are you, Mr. Stamp?

Hi! I'm Caleb, the Business Administration Director. In English, that means that I handle all the financial goings-on, and manage HR policy here at Grace Community Church.

What's something people may not know about you?

My love for Star Wars burns with the fire of a thousand suns--but that's pretty obvious. Just check out my desk. I also like to barbeque--my favorite cut to BBQ is pork shoulder. My best advice to the BBQ newcomer

is: always make your sauce from scratch. (Note: Caleb does not own the Darth Vader Smoker pictured, but we all have dreams!)

What have you been thinking about lately?

The budget for the upcoming year. I've been getting spreadsheets ready to go, collecting ministry budget proposals, reviewing for accuracy and accountability. I've also been meeting with the Financial Review Committee (FRC) to go through the budget line by line. The FRC review is to ensure that estimates are appropriate

and well-thought-out. They also evaluate what's included in the budget and match it to the FRC's understanding of the Elder Team's vision of the church's priorities for the coming year. I serve as a non-voting member of the FRC, but I facilitate and provide context to help the FRC understand the proposed expenditures.

After the Elders approve the upcoming budget, I execute the



budget by putting it into our financial software, building operational worksheets, and communicating the approved spending with staff. I also prepare the budget for sharing with the congregation during our Annual Business Meeting, which is on March 22 (pg. 23).

My work with Momentum for the rest of the year will primarily be analyzing the financial outcomes of our secondary goal from the commitments made by the congregation, and forecasting the final outcomes as we consider next steps.

How is your ministry on staff at Grace choosing to be missional?

I assist in creating an environment of stewardship on staff, which allows and empowers other ministries to be successful in bringing the gospel to the corridor, Iowa, and our mission fields.

PRAYERS FOR UNITY

by Pastor Brooks Simpson

As a church we are in a season of refinement. I am being refined. Our staff is being refined. Everyone is being refined. God in His severe mercy has been loving enough to help me see sin that I have not wanted to deal with, and He has been gracious with me as I have, and am repenting of pride and all manifestations of sin that spring from it. Repentance always means that we turn from one thing and towards another. Pride in my life has caused isolation and strained relationships. So repentance means not merely ceasing to be proud, but in humility striving for unity with others.

John 17:20–23 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

Jesus wants us to be one. He stakes the credibility of His gospel on our unity.

You can't fake unity. We often try, though. Marriages, families, church leadership, and whole churches settle for artificial harmony instead of unity. We mistake “niceness” for unity. I can be nice to you while I lie to your face if I am not willing to love you enough to tell you the truth about your sin. Chances are you will be nice right back to me and we can keep lying to each other. Nice is not a fruit of the Spirit. Niceness without unity is artificial harmony.



It's not real, and eventually it will give way to outward disharmony.

If we are to experience genuine revival personally and corporately, pray for unity. Pray that God would make us one. Pray that we would love each other enough to hear truth about ourselves and speak truth to others. There are so many broken people in the church, and with broken people comes broken relationships.

- Pray for marriages, families, and community groups to be unified.
- Pray for our staff, elders, and community churches to be unified.
- Pray that God would expose and forgive any sin in us that hinders unity.
- Pray that the world will know the Father sent the Son because of our unity.

TIMES OF MARCH



The **Spring Fling** is an hour of spring fun! We will have story time, a craft, activities, and a take-home snack! For ages two years through Pre-K and their parents.
Mar. 6 • 11 AM on the North Liberty Campus - graceb3.org/fling



Ignite is a yearly multistate Youth Conference for student leaders, volunteers, and youth workers. Yes, Ignite was designed with the whole youth ministry in mind.

Mar. 13-14 • Depart on Friday, 13th at 4 PM and back on Saturday, 14th at 7 PM.
Des Moines - graceb3.org/ignite



Equipping Women in the Scriptures
by The Gospel Coalition (TGC)

Learn and be encouraged by experienced TGC teachers as we study 2 Timothy together. Select a focus by choosing one of our workshop tracks: Bible Interpretation, Ministry Practicals, The Story of Scripture in Your Ministry, Advanced Bible Topics and Making Disciples.

Mar. 27-28 at Parkview Church - TGC.ORG/WTN



International Student Easter

Invite an international student into your home to share an Easter meal together, or drop off an Easter dessert to share and invite an international student to join you at church for an Easter message.

Mar. 28 - 7-9 PM on the North Liberty Campus
graceb3.org/ineaster

FORECASTING APRIL

Join us at **Getting to Know Grace** to hear God's story, learn Grace's story, and share your story. This is a great starting point to get connected and plugged in at Grace.

April 5 • 11 AM on the North Liberty Campus - graceb3.org/gtkg



Downtown Membership Class

Learn what makes Grace Downtown tick and how you can join us on our mission to glorify God by being and making disciples who make disciples.

At Old Brick Church - Saturday,
April 4, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
graceb3.org/dtmembership



Annual Business Meeting

March 22 - 12:30 PM in the North Liberty Auditorium

The Financial Review Committee will present the proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-21, the current financial standing of our church, and the ministry plan and financial implications for the upcoming year.

All are welcome to come and ask questions, and members are highly encouraged to attend.

COMING UP



ANDY & DARLENE MORLAN

Meet the Morlans who let the good things run wild at home and at Grace.

THE MCINTYRES

Checking in with our Field Staff serving in the Middle East.

EASTER WEEKEND

All the details, all the times, and please come and serve all the people!

Grace Community Church

graceb3.org | graceb3.org/app | 319.626.2040

2707 Dubuque St. NE, North Liberty | services at 8, 9:30 & 11 AM

Old Brick Church 26 E Market St, Iowa City | service at 5 PM