

# Pastor's Pen

Your Race!

***...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2***

In high school, I ran track, and my race was the 440 (now the 400m). I was an average runner. My best time was 52.9, and I finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. I hated to run the 440 but to play football, we were required to play a spring sport. Running the 440 is a full-out sprint for a quarter mile. When I first started to train, my times were just over a minute. However, after being coached in proper technique, my times improved to running around 54 seconds constantly. I was trained to run on my toes without ever putting my heels on the ground and taught proper arm, hand, and head movement. I trained so hard that I never needed to think about what I was doing when I ran. I just raced, intending to run as fast as possible and do my best. When Jesus willingly went to the cross to die for our sins, He focused on the race before Him and the prize He would obtain. John MacArthur writes:

"Only what was at the end of the race could have motivated Jesus to leave what He did and endure what He did. Jesus ran for two things, the joy set before Him and sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God. He ran for the joy of exaltation. In His high-priestly prayer Jesus said to His Father, 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the World was' (John 17:4–5). Jesus gained His reward by glorifying His Father while on earth, and He glorified God by totally exhibiting the Father's attributes and by fully doing the Father's will."

As faithful followers of Christ, we must train for the race before us. We do that from the study of God's Word. We train by hearing the Word of God preached and taught. Training is challenging and is never easy. There will be struggles that come your way; persecution, loss of friends, and being hated by the World are just a few of the difficulties you will face in your "training." However, just like Christ, we need to focus on the joy set before us that joy is heaven and a life lived for Christ. Christian, remember that you were chosen before the foundation of the World to be His (Eph. 1:4), and He has prepared good works for you to accomplish (Eph. 2:10). As you run this race of Christian life, keep your focus on the author and perfecter your faith, Jesus Christ, who endured the shameful death on the cross to make us right with God.

Your shepherd,  
Pastor Mark

# Grace Gems

Regeneration Is Monergistic  
by Steve Lawson

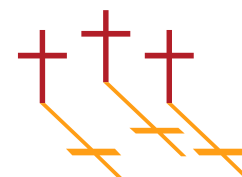
There may be no truth in the Bible more deeply loved and greatly cherished than the subject of the new birth. Here is the grace-centered message of a new beginning for those whose lives have been ruined by sin. Here is the life-changing truth that sinful men can be made new. When the new birth is caused by God, old things pass away—old practices, old cravings, old habits, old addictions, and old associations. Behold, new things come—new desires, new pursuits, and new passions. An entirely new life begins. Nothing could be more positive than this. It is no wonder that the truth of the new birth is so beloved.

Yet despite its great appeal, the new birth may be the most misunderstood doctrine in Scripture. Most people naively imagine that there is something they can do to cause themselves to be born again. They hear a well-meaning person say, "Believe and be born again," and suppose that they can. So they try to effect their own regeneration. But this they cannot do. In attempting it, they are like someone who imagines he caused himself to be born physically. Did he meet with his parents and ask to be born? Did he initiate his own birth? Of course not. The truth is, the initiative in birth lies outside of the one being born. He is merely part of a process that started long before he came into being. His parents acted, then God acted. And as a result, that individual was brought into the world. He did not cause his own birth to happen.

The same is true regarding spiritual birth. If you have experienced the new birth, it is not because you initiated it. Rather, it was an event that God brought about in you. More specifically, you were not born again because you exercised faith. In truth, the new birth preceded your faith and produced it. Saving faith is the fruit of regeneration, not the root of it. The biblically correct order of salvation—known in theological language as the *ordo salutis*—is not "Believe and be born again," but the very opposite: "Be born again and believe." The living God must act upon the spiritually dead soul and cause it to be born again. The new birth is by divine choice and sovereign initiative. God's will affects the human will, not vice versa. Scripture intentionally uses the imagery of birth to underscore this essential truth of the sovereignty of God in regeneration. John Murray, one of the foremost theologians of the twentieth century, affirmed the divine initiative in the new birth when he wrote: "For entrance into the kingdom of God we are wholly dependent upon the action of the Holy Spirit, an action ... which is compared to that on the part of our parents by which we were born into the world. We are as dependent upon the Holy Spirit as we are upon the action of our parents in connection with our natural birth. We were not begotten by our father because we decided to be. And we were not born of our mother because we decided to be. We were simply begotten and we were born. We did not decide to be born.... If this privilege is ours it is because the Holy Spirit willed it and here all rests upon the Holy Spirit's decision and action. He begets or bears when and where He pleases." Murray goes on to write, "Regeneration is the act of God and of God alone." In other words, regeneration is monergistic, meaning that "the grace of God is the only efficient cause in beginning and effecting conversion." In the latter epistles of the New Testament, this truth of regeneration appears with intentional regularity (James 1:18; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). This is a fundamental teaching within the doctrines of grace. It reveals that God must implant new life within your soul. God must effect a spiritual conception within you. God must impregnate your heart. In short, God must cause you to be born again.

## Quote of the Week

"If private revelations agree with Scripture, they are needless, and if they disagree, they are false."  
-John Owen



# Weekly Gatherings

## Bible Classes

Old & New Testament Classes  
Ladies Class  
Young Adults    Young Parents  
Youth                Surge  
Sunday Morning @ 9:30AM

## Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM  
Men's Bible Study  
1st and 3rd Saturday  
Women of Grace | 9AM

## Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM  
every other week @ Brown's  
Other groups off for the summer

## Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team and need to sign up, please contact the team leader at the appropriate email address on the back of this bulletin.

## Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM  
Youth Study & Surge!

## Service Times

Sunday Services 8AM & 11:00AM  
Sunday School 9:30AM  
Children's Church @11:00AM

Giving from service on 07/02/2023

General Offering .....	10,664.65
Building Fund .....	6,727.00
Uganda Missions .....	300.00
Benevolence .....	25.00

Total.....\$17,716.65  
Attendance ..... 206  
Online.....26

## Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org  
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org  
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org  
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org  
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org  
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org  
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org  
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org  
Maintenance-maintenance@ghbcva.org  
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org  
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org  
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org  
Security-security@ghbcva.org



Grace Harvest  
Baptist Church  
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# Grace Harvest Baptist Church

July 09, 2023

Welcome