

"Equipping students for excellence" at Darren Patterson Christian Academy.



SAVED BY GRACE, CALLED TO DO GOOD THINGS

When introduced to DPCA's theme for the 2010-2011 school year, "Saved By Grace, Called To Do Good Things", my thoughts went immediately to a sermon written in 1998 by Pastor James R. Van Tholen: "Where All Hope Lies." Jim was a friend of mine and my husband's. We met Jim when he was an intern pastor at Third Christian Reformed Church in Denver, Colorado, where we were members. Even then, with Jim being so young and just beginning his pastoral journey, those of us who knew him and heard him preach knew he was a God-gifted preacher and teacher. In this sermon, written while Jim was in the middle of his fight against the cancer that eventually took his life, Jim movingly explains "grace" and the scandalous hope it offers.

--Marla Pranger, DPCA Staff Member

WHERE ALL HOPE LIES *by James Van Tholen (1964-2001)*

Van Tholen, James R. "Where All Hope Lies." *Where All Hope Lies: Sermons For the Liturgical Year.* Dystra-Poel, Susan, Vanderszwan, Eileen Borduin, Wierenga, Edward, and Wright, Joseph, Editors. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003. Pages 281-286.

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Text: Romans 5:1-11: Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

This is a strange day, for all of us. Some of you may be unaware that today marks my return to this pulpit after seven months during which I've been dealing with a particularly aggressive and deadly form of cancer. Now, with the cancer vacationing for a little while, I am back, and glad for it. But this is a strange day, because I don't really know what to say. I want to ignore the whole thing, pretend everybody's forgotten that I was gone — and why I was gone — but we can't do that. We can't ignore what's been going on. We can rise above it; we can live through it; but we can't ignore it. If we ignore the threat of death as too terrible to talk about, then the threat wins. Then we are overwhelmed by it, and our faith doesn't apply to it. And then we have no hope.

We want to worship God in this church, and for our worship to be real it doesn't have to be guilt-ridden, or fun, or crowded; but it does have to be honest — honest about faith in a world of violence and pain, a world that decries faith and smashes hope and rebuts love. We must be honest that believing is not always easy and that life is hard.

So we must face the truth here, and the truth is that I was scared. Not of cancer, not really. Not

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even of death. Dying is another matter — how long it will take and how it may go. That still scares me. But when I say I was scared, it's not those fears that I'm talking about. This fear was something else altogether.

One man has influenced my preaching more than anyone else. His name is John Timmer, and he's a recently retired Christian Reformed minister in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In his working with a text and in his preaching, John Timmer showed me that a sermon that misses or ignores or disowns the scandal of the gospel is no sermon at all. And the scandal of the gospel is grace. The scandal of the gospel is that there is nothing you can do to be made right with God; but God has made himself right with you — through blood, through death. And it's amazing how a man could in one sense preach the same message week after week and still mold my life with what he said. John Timmer taught me that baptizing an infant reminds us that God comes to us before we go to him. John Timmer showed me that God came to Abraham when there was nothing to come to, an old man at a dead end. And that's how God always comes — to infants and old people, to sinners and losers. That is grace. And no sermon can be without it.

So I've tried to fill my sermons with it, faithfully and honestly and even courageously, but always with grace. And it's an amazing thing to do, to proclaim through the poetry and the stories and the letters of the Bible a plan of God that runs contrary to every instinct we have, to every principle of our world. And, you know, I believe it. I believe that God has come to Kevin, this infant baptized here today, long before Kevin can make a move toward him. I believe the words of John Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism and the New Testament that we have only one comfort, but it is a comfort in life and in death. I do believe that, but I was scared.

We've dealt with a lot of interesting and difficult topics the last three years — war and divorce and homosexuality, *and death*. And I said that the gospel speaks to every one of them — I said that God receives broken people all the time. But that was before I faced death myself.

This is a silly thing to admit. I don't know if I ever realized the absolutely shocking, radical idea that is God's grace. I said those things about it fully believing them, but at the same time fully believing — or at least expecting — that I had a few decades yet before I really needed to count on them. I assumed that I had forty or fifty years yet, years in which I would earn my way, be a kind old man whose sin wasn't so significant anymore, who of course would be received by God because he was good to animals and picked up the mail for his neighbors. Like I say, it's silly thinking.

And scary. Because suddenly I wasn't looking at fifty years but five months, or seven months, probably not two years, almost certainly not more than that. My appointment was moved up — now I would meet my Judge not kind and old but *soon*, with not enough time to undo the wrong, not enough time to straighten out what's been crooked all these years, not enough time to prepare, to clean up. *That's* what I was scared of.

So, for the first time in my life, I had not only to preach this scandalous good news, not only to believe it, but to rest on it, to depend upon it, to stake my life on it. And as I faced all of this and was frightened by it, I remembered one of the simplest, most powerful statements in the entire Bible.

You may have thought that I chose this text because of those wonderful words about suffering producing endurance and endurance character and character hope. Those are beautiful words, true words, but I'm not so sure they apply to me; I'm not so sure I've suffered so much or so faithfully to claim that result. I hope so, but many of you easily outdistance me in those ways. Actually, what drew my attention to Romans 5 was not that beautiful paragraph, but just one little word: *eti*. That's what brought comfort to my soul. *Eti* is a Greek word that means “yet,” “still” — as in “while we *still* were sinners Christ died for us” (v. 8); or “while we were *still* weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (v. 6). What's interesting about verse 6 is that the word is used twice; it's repetitious and un-grammatical, but it's like an additional emphasis, an additional marveling at the glorious goodness of the gospel: “For while we were *still* weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Kevin is weak right now — he's weak in language and intellect and faith. That's why his baptism is a wondrous act; it's a celebration of grace, a celebration of how, when he was still weak, God came to him before he could even know to go to God. I am weak, too — physically, of course, quite profoundly in some ways, but that's not my main weakness, my most debilitating weakness. And if I ever doubted that, it's been proven to me in this last half year. My weakness is more of the soul than of the body, and I've realized that as I've dwelled on thoughts like, “How will I explain myself to my God? How can I ever claim to have been what he called me to be? I can't.” That's the kind of weakness Paul's talking about. And that's where *eti* comes in — while we were *still* weak, while we were *still* sinners, while we were *still* enemies of God, we were brought together with him through the death of his Son.

I find it unfathomable that God's love propelled him to reach into our world with such scandalous grace, such a way out, such hope. Let me tell you, there's no hope anywhere else — I looked. There is no hope

H O P E L I E S ...

in this world apart from that scandal. It all lies right here.

You learn that when you face death and think about what it means. It means the same friends you enjoy now will still get together a year and three years and twenty years from now and you will almost never come up in the conversation. It means that your work will be gone — in my case, this church will call a new minister with new gifts and a new future — and you will soon be out of mind as you are out of sight. And don't feel too sorry about that — I would be the same way, I *am* the same way. Hope doesn't lie in your legacy; it doesn't lie in your longevity; and it doesn't lie in your personality or your career or your politics or your children or your goodness. It lies in *eti*.

When I was saying something like this a few months ago to a friend of mine, he reminded me of those poignant words of Psalm 103: "As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more." For the first time I felt those words in my gut; I understood that my place would know me no more.

One of my favorite recent poems — even before the cancer — is from Miller Williams. It's called "Adjusting to the Light." It's about that scene in John 11 in which Jesus raises his friend Lazarus from the dead. For the most part the words of the poem are spoken by Lazarus's friends and neighbors, after they are surprised to see that he really is back among them, back among the living, after four days of being gone. This is what they say:

Lazarus, listen, we have things to tell you.
We killed the sheep you meant to take to market.
We couldn't keep the old dog, either.
He minded you. The rest of us he barked at.
Rebecca, who cried two days, has given her hand
to the sandal maker's son. Please understand
we didn't know that Jesus could do this.
We're glad you're back. But give us time to think.
Imagine our surprise. . . .
We want to say
we're sorry for all of that. And one thing more.
We threw away the lyre. But listen, we'll pay
whatever the sheep was worth. The dog, too.
And put your room the way it was before.²⁴

I love that line. Time goes on, whether we do or not. Miller Williams is right: Lazarus's place knew him no more. I *liked* that poem, but now I've *lived* that poem. And, believe me, don't put your hope in your legacy or your name recognition, in some sermon you wrote or project you accomplished. Even if it allows you to last a little longer, it won't matter, because in the end you'll still be swallowed up, and your place will remember you no more. The story of Lazarus being raised isn't really the story of Lazarus; it's the story of Jesus. Lazarus got a few more years and then he died all over again — he was resuscitated, not resurrected. The story of Lazarus makes for a good film, but it's not much to rest your entire existence on. But this isn't the story of Lazarus; it's the story of Jesus, the story of the one who gives life, even through his death, the story of the one who breathes the breath of God into utterly dead souls.

Our place will know us no more. It's true. All the stuff we think will keep us alive, when we really look at it, it only shows us how little we have to depend on, to stake our lives on, to put all our hopes in. All we really have is the scandalous gospel of grace, that while we were still weak and sinners and even enemies, Christ died for us.

My place will know me no more, but God knows me. The Giver of life, who came to me and kept coming to me before I ever went to him, knows me, and so I have hope, hope on which I can rest all that I am — hope that I believe Kevin will have some day, hope in the story of Jesus.

So don't be surprised that we won't talk about this cancer situation very often. This is not the story of me, it's the story of Jesus. And that story applies to every cancer, every job, every family, every divorce, every sin that belongs to any of us. But to us who believe, it's always Jesus' story, and Jesus' story carries beyond all of it.

I'm dying. Maybe it'll be longer instead of shorter; maybe I'll preach for several months instead of a few weeks. But I am dying. And it's hard and I hate it and I'm frightened by it. But there is hope, an unshakable hope. That hope is not in something I've done, some purity I've kept, or some sermon I've written. I hope in God, the scandalous God with a plan the world has never heard of — reaching out for an enemy, saving a sinner, dying for the weak. And that I can stake my life on. I must. And so must you.

²⁴Reprinted from *Adjusting to the Light: Poems* by Miller Williams, by permission of the University of Missouri Press. Copyright © 1992 by Miller Williams.



DOUBLE BLESSING CAMPAIGN BEGINS

by Erik Ritschard, DPCA Administrator

Beginning Monday, October 25, friends of DPCA have a wonderful opportunity to double the impact of financial gifts made to the Academy. Thanks to a very generous donor, gifts given between October 25 and December 25, 2010, will be matched dollar for dollar up to a total matching grant of \$25,000. That means if you can give \$20, it will be worth \$40. If you can give \$200, it will be worth \$400, and so on! You can double the impact of your gift to the Academy during the next two months, and double the blessing the school receives from your generosity!

Announcing

Double the Blessing!

Darren Patterson Christian Academy

Fall 2010

Matching Funds Campaign

Thanks to a very generous donor, gifts given to DPCA between October 25, 2010 and December 25, 2010 will be matched dollar for dollar up to a total grant of \$25,000! Our total fund-raising goal for this campaign is \$25,000 in gifts, plus \$25,000 in matching funds, for a total of \$50,000!

*Double your gift! Double your impact! Double your generosity! **Double the blessing!***

Tuition and fees covers about 65 – 70% of our operating budget. Endowment income generally provides an additional 10% or so, and various school fundraisers and activities (such as ticket sales at athletic events) raise in the neighborhood of another 5%. That means that each year we are dependent on the generosity of friends of the Academy to help make up that final 15% or so of our operational expenses. In large part, those funds directly support students and families who are on scholarship – who desire a Christian education for their children, but do not have the means to pay the whole tuition bill themselves. Our 28 year history is a testimony to the faithfulness of so many who have given to see that the ministry and mission of Darren Patterson Christian Academy continues!

Would you consider a gift to DPCA at this special time? We could raise up to \$50,000 in just the next two months – which would be a fantastic blessing for the school this year! Gifts could be for the General Fund, for Scholarships, in memory of a loved one, etc. Thanks so much for giving some thought and prayer to helping out as we seek to double the blessing!



JUMPING OUR SHADOWS

Thoughts from the ACSI Convention by Jamie Davidson, DPCA 5th and 6th Grade Teacher

You might ask yourself what “jumping your shadow” means or how exactly someone can “jump” their shadow.

On Friday, October 8th, a few of the DPCA teachers traveled to Denver for the annual ACSI convention to hear key-note speaker Dr. Phil Johnson of Global Next Research Group and Leadership Institute speak about reaching students (and the world) in an ever-changing culture. He used the phrase “jumping your shadow” as a way to visualize coming out of your comfort zone and taking risks for the cause of Jesus Christ. We had the privilege of hearing Dr. Johnson speak in four sessions throughout the course of the day.

The first session with Dr. Johnson emphasized the fact that we live in a broken world in need of a Savior. Our culture is transforming so much every day, and that fact really impacts the thinking and worldview of those around us. This emphasizes for us as leaders (and followers of Christ) that we need to *know* the truth of the Word of God, *cling* to it, *share* it, and *live* it.

In our second session, we looked closer at the generations that are represented in a school setting, and gained new perspective of ways to approach different people from particular generations. Did you know that there are about 5 generations in our world today that span from about 15-20 years? We must pray for wisdom and understanding for the ability to know what truth is, how to articulate it, and connect with those around us in light of the generational differences we have.

The third session focused on the prophetic story in the book of Ezekiel of Gog and Magog. In this story, nations form alliances together against Israel in the last days. Dr. Johnson explained that looking at this prophecy would help us to have a sense of urgency about how we are living. None of us are guaranteed tomorrow. How will we choose to live today even in such troubling times?

Session four ended with a realization that, if we can step back and take a look at God's plan unfolding, we should be more convicted to live life with more urgency. It is our job to get out of our comfort bubbles (“jump our shadows”) and live for something bigger than ourselves. If we realize how much the God of the universe loves us and what He's done for us, how can we not want be a part of His story?

Learning more of God's incredible history that is unfolding, I am personally convicted of a number of things. First, I realize our imminent need for a Savior and how often the truth of the Word is skewed or misinterpreted. I pray for wisdom for all of us to know absolute truth based on God's Word alone. Second, I also see

the need to be more aware of the changes happening in cultures around the world. This knowledge of how others think and live will help me to understand how to better teach. Lastly, I am challenged to think of ways to live my life in light of eternity. I don't want to be one who is “always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:7) How can I personally glorify God by “jumping my shadow” and living in a way that also urges others to follow Him? This is my challenge for you.

How can you “jump your shadow” today?

CONGRATS!



Congratulations to the Junior High Volleyball Team for placing second place in an eight team round robin tournament in September. The team is coached by Becky Martin and is made up of girls from grades 6-8.

Watch for a complete volleyball wrap-up in the next edition of the SOAR!

LIFEWOR^K: *Developing a Biblical Theology of Vocation*

Submitted by Board President Dave Macnab

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Work itself is a holy activity. God is a working God. We see this in his work of creation (Genesis 2:2-3) and sustaining providence (Hebrews 1:3b). We are made like him. We gain dignity by working. We fulfill our destiny through our work. God wants to use our occupations to occupy territory for Christ and his kingdom (Luke 19:13).

As Pope John Paul II has written:

...the Holy Spirit of God writes in the heart and life of every baptized person a project of love and grace, which is the only way to give full meaning to existence, opening the way to the freedom of the children of God and establishing the offering of one's personal and irreplaceable contribution to the progress of humanity on the path of justice and truth. The Spirit does not only help to place oneself sincerely before the great questions of the heart -- Where do I come from? Where am I going? Who am I? What is the purpose of life? How should I spend my time?--but opens up the prospect of courageous responses. The discovery that each man and woman has his own place in God's heart and in the history of humanity constitutes the point of departure for a new culture of vocations."

What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness within the context of my vocation? When work is viewed as a calling, not only do we see God's hand of providence directing us toward our work, but we have opportunity to manifest the moral and metaphysical values of the kingdom of God through our work into the institution and society that we are serving. To put it differently, we have the opportunity to connect the kingdom of God to our vocation, and through that to impact our world.

In the 1930's the humanist educator, John Dewey, debated the classical educator and president of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins over the purpose of education. Dewey argued that the purpose of education was to prepare people for *jobs*; Hutchins said that it was to prepare people for *life*. Dewey won the argument, and his secular humanistic moral and metaphysical underpinnings have permeated the education establishment of nation after nation since that time. Unfortunately, there were no Christians engaged in the debate to argue that education is to prepare people to worship God, to serve their fellow man, and to steward creation. Christian educators were not involved in this very important discussion because they had given up a biblical worldview which influences all areas of life for an increasingly narrow spiritual worldview in which they failed to bring their moral and metaphysical foundations into the work arena to be used for God's purposes. They were Christians in church but secularists in the workplace.

Christ has called his people to *disciple nations*; discipling a nation is more comprehensive than discipling individuals to be spiritual or merely saving souls for heaven. What this means is that as his disciples we are to infuse God's moral and metaphysical order into our spheres of influence, particularly into the institutions where we work. As salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16) we are to infuse kingdom culture (ethos) into institutional (ethne) settings. As Christians we are to consciously see ourselves as shapers of the workplace and builders of nations.

The sum of our general call to life and our particular call to work is our *lifework*.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RON AND ANN HECK FOR BEING THE WINNERS OF OUR SUMMER SURVEY CONTEST. THE HECKS RECEIVED A PIZZA WORKS GIFT CERTIFICATE.



CHAPEL: Serving our Community

by Kathy Akers, DPCA Staff Member



Whether laughing at a Christian comedian, planning what to “buy” from the World Vision catalog to send to those in need in other countries or listening to a local pastor who has volunteered to share with our kids, Chapel is an exciting proposition. But, it just doesn’t get as exciting as Service Chapel. That day comes twice a year and finds our students and teachers serving in the community in a variety of ways.



The “little guys” either clean up here at DPCA or help Miss Joyce on the Busy Bees campus. This year our 3rd – 6th graders and select members of the 7th – 12th grade classes piled into the bus to help clean up at Trail West. Beta Club took its usual trek north of town on Highway 24 and cleaned their designated section of the road.

Mrs. R and three animal lovers helped the staff at the Arkansas Valley Humane Society clean dog pens, administer medicine to sick animals, provide clean water and hand out a lot of love.

Mr. Navarrette had a band of hard workers accompany him to the Arkansas Valley Christian Mission. They walked (skipped or ran) to the Mission and then spent an hour and a half pulling weeds, clearing pipe and straightening their back yard.

Mrs. Mac and Mrs. Akers took a lively crew to the BV Pregnancy Center’s storage unit. Everything was dragged out, sorted through, organized in bins and put back. A quick trip to the Center to deliver needed items, get rid of trash, enjoy a treat provided by the Center’s administrator, Carol Flowers and it was back to school. Even when the job is hard and the day is long, everyone returns to DPCA full of excitement, laughing with one another, and genuinely happy about a job well done.



There were three seniors on this year’s high school volleyball team and they were honored at the last home game of the season on Tuesday, October 12.

Coach Derek Bos presented each with flow-

ers and a gift bag and Athletic Director Tom Navarrette commented on each girl’s contribution to DPCA’s athletic program during their high school careers. He thanked them all for their commitment to the volleyball program as well as their display of leadership on and off the court. “Nicole is smart, driven, hardworking, and loyal,” stated Mr. Navarrette, “things we all want to be. She will accomplish anything she puts her mind to.” He went on to say that “Hannah has a light heart, a healthy smile, and is very encouraging...this has helped span the gap between the age and grade differences that existed on the team this year.” When asked about Heidi, Mr. Navarrette said that “She is a very tough girl who never backs down. Her volleyball skills have improved this year making her an asset to any team. I’ve enjoyed watching her become a great friend to her classmates.”

Pictured above left to right are: Nicole Pranger, Hannah Tingle, and Heidi Pollock.

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Click the Support DPCA button and then follow the Booster Club Plus link;

or contact the Development Office: Phone: 719-395-6046 Ext. 18 Email: development@dpcaweb.org



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FIRST QUARTER HONOR ROLL 2010-2011

PRINCIPAL'S HONOR ROLL GPA 4.0

Sheridan Harder	4
Maggie Hollenbeck	4
Jase Staudt	7
Rebecca Pranger	8
Micah Ritschard	10
Nicole Pranger	12

TEACHER'S HONOR ROLL GPA 3.50-3.99

Sydney Phillips	3
Drew Martin	4
Dean Mason	4
Tori McManamay	4
William Cunningham	5
Grace Mei Parker	5
Heather Burdges	6
Nathan Van Deel	6
Sydney McManamay	6
Noah Ritschard	6
Keely Campbell	7
Winter Bardol	8
Hannah Foreman	8
Matthew Ruitter	9
Nathan Ruitter	10
Elle Jelinek	11
Tanner Brassier	12

HONOR ROLL GPA 3.0-3.49

Summer Martin	3
Gavin Ritchie	4
Reid Shawhan	4
Marshal Swarny	4
Kassie Schell	5
Cailyn Willis	6
Shelby Phillips	6
Tatianna Popovich	6
Katelyn Davis	6
Todd Beebe	7
Kate Lundy	7
Mitch Hollenbeck	8
Kiernan Martin	8
Kenneth Schell	8
Levi Jelinek	9
Zakk Martin	10
Jake White	10
Ethan Ritschard	11
Abbie Tingle	11
Josette Deschambeault	12

