



GRACE COMMUNION  
SEMINARY

August 2025

# GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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## President's Letter



### Is your gospel too tame?

2 Timothy 1:8 says, "Do not be ashamed...of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but *join with me in suffering for the gospel*, in the power of

God." Paul was often thrown into jail (and eventually killed) for preaching the gospel. Why? Why did people find the good news so objectionable?

If Paul was simply preaching forgiveness, who would object to that? Suppose he preached like this: "Good news! God's not angry at you, he has already paid for all your sins."

Who would object to such a message? It's harmless – innocuous. Pagan religions didn't say much about sin and forgiveness, and some people might respond to Paul's message with, "I suppose it's OK to be forgiven, but I really wasn't worried about it in the first place." They might shrug their shoulders and go on their way.

However, Paul is in jail, chained up, threatened with death. Death! Why? What was it about his message that anybody objected to?

One answer comes in an early Christian statement of belief. It is simply, "Jesus is Lord." If you confess that Jesus is Lord, then you will be saved (Romans 10:9). Now, who would object to *that* sort of message? It would be all the other folks who wanted to be lord, especially Caesar. When Paul preached that Jesus was Lord, he is also saying that Caesar is not.

What is a lord? A lord is someone who has authority to tell us what to do. Caesar claimed the right to tell people what to do; Paul is saying that it is Jesus who actually has that right. It's a question of allegiance, and that's what got Paul thrown in jail.



As part of the gospel, he was preaching, Jesus is Lord. He was saying, If you agree with that, then you will be saved. He was definitely not saying that it doesn't matter whether you believe it. Maybe behind the scenes Jesus will somehow take care of people who don't believe it, but that was definitely not part of Paul's message. God's possible provision for the unevangelized is not part of his message.

Jesus is Lord, and he wants you to believe it.

The Jewish word *Messiah* didn't mean much to a Greek audience, so Paul gave it a functional translation: Jesus is Lord. It's like saying, Jesus is King.

But some people may think, "That doesn't sound like good news. It's like preaching: 'You have someone else to obey.' What's good about that?"

Some people want to reserve the word *gospel* for the good parts of the message, or the parts that people might think are good. The gospel is just about forgiveness. It is a harmless gospel that no one would object to. It has no explanation for why Paul would be arrested, jailed and executed.

That approach also seems to judge Jesus by what human kings are, instead of realizing that human kings need to be judged by what Jesus is. Christ comes not just with judgment of condemnation, but also a judgment of salvation. Paul said that his gospel included the fact that “Christ Jesus judges the secret thoughts of all” (Romans 2:16).

It is actually good news that Jesus is King, that he is Lord, that he has authority over us. Let’s suppose that we are hauled into a courtroom and we are going to be judged based on what we did in this life. Isn’t it good news to find out that the Judge is *Jesus*?

When we are looking at the final authority for life, isn’t it good news to realize that the King is *Jesus*? It’s not some human who makes up laws to make himself richer, it’s not some cultural trend that changes from one year to another. No, the authority for all of life is Jesus, and he is totally trustworthy. He gives us good laws, not bad ones.

He has earned our allegiance not with threats of killing us, but by being willing to die for us. He loves us, and as John says, his commandments are not burdensome. They are *good* for us, just like guardrails on a mountain road are *good*; they are not restrictions on our freedom.

If salvation is by grace – and it is – then why does Jesus say so much

about obedience? Why does Paul say it’s all a free gift of grace, and yet he gives so many commands? It’s a question that many religious leaders have, not just in our own denomination.

One answer is... that commands are actually grace. They are good for us, given by a good God. The God of grace and mercy is the same as the God who gives commands. There is no disconnect there, just like there is no tension between love and righteousness. God’s righteousness and love go together very well, and



each one helps us understand the meaning of the other. We need to keep them together. Grace and commands go together.

Commands are part of the good news. We can’t separate the gospel from its implications, like some people want to do. The gospel is all good news, they say, and later we can teach people about the implications that we ought to do this, ought to do that. They are trying to define the gospel by what they think is a message that will be well received in our culture, instead of by seeing what Paul actually preached. For some, the main priority seems to be “avoid offense” – tell people only the things they like to hear. They are trying to preach forgiveness without saying why we all *need* forgiveness.

The message of Jesus cannot be separated into the parts we think people will like, and the parts we think are less culturally acceptable.

The reason that we need Jesus is not just because we need forgiveness. Yes, we need that, but guilt is only the *symptom* of the problem and not its real cause. We sin and need forgiveness because there is something deep-down *wrong* with us, and the good news is not just that the *symptoms* are eliminated from the record-books – if the good news is really going to be good, it also has to say something about fixing the root cause of the problem, and that’s our heart.

Some people are not going to like that sort of good news. People do not like being told that they are not in charge of their own life, that they have someone else to answer to, that they can’t just make up their own rules. The solution to humanity’s problem is

going to offend some people because it tells them that *they* are part of the problem.

It is backwards thinking to say that the word *gospel* means good news and therefore the gospel can contain only what modern society is likely to perceive as good. No, the proper way to go about it is to see what the message actually is, and then to understand that it is actually good. Culture does not define what is good – Jesus and his apostles define for us what good is.

Forgiveness is part of the gospel, and it is good. Loyalty to Jesus is part of the gospel, and it is good. Jesus as Lord is part of the gospel, and it is also good. It is good news that we have

a King who is perfectly righteous, perfectly loving, perfectly able to take care of us in eternity – an eternity in which people live and love and think like *Jesus*. The gospel says that people need to be transformed to be like Jesus. The gospel tells us to change, and that is good news, and we do not need to be afraid of preaching it.

Titus 2:11-14 does not use the word gospel, but it does use the word grace, and it weaves together grace and command, forgiveness and expectation:

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity [that's forgiveness] and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. [that's command]*

The good news is that Jesus is Lord, and he tells us what to do. He loves us even if we fall short, but he loves us enough to tell us that we do fall short. Do we love the people around us well enough to tell them that? Jesus tells us that there is a better way, and we need to do it. God is love, God is grace, and God also tells us what to do. He is good, all the time.

*Michael Morrison, PhD*  
President

## Fall Semester Online Convocation September 8, 2025

# A Time to Gather for Devotion and Prayer



Join us for our next convocation, where we meet by Zoom to share in a short devotional and prayers for the work we are doing together. The meeting is open to current students, alumni, faculty members and board members from around the globe. We hope to see you there.

**The convocation for the Fall semester will be held on Monday, September 8, 2025 at 8:00pm Eastern Standard Time.** Invitations with Zoom links will be sent

to all students who register for fall semester courses. If you aren't taking a class this semester but still want to attend the assembly, send an email to Georgia McKinnon at [registrar@gcs.edu](mailto:registrar@gcs.edu).

In a world with more than 24 time zones, we know that everyone may not be able to attend our gathering. If you have a schedule conflict at this time slot, let us know for our future planning considerations.



# CONGRATULATIONS

## GCS HAS BEEN REACCREDITED

GCS has maintained its accreditation status since 2012 with the federally recognized Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). For a good portion of the past year the GCS staff has put in considerable effort towards completing all the necessary requirements to qualify for another five-year term. We are thrilled to announce that we have successfully completed this process and have been approved for another five years of accreditation. Not only are we thankful to reach the end of this process, we are hopeful that our renewal of accreditation will serve as an added benefit for our students. The process and the effort of maintaining our accreditation serves in helping the seminary maintain high standards of education while constantly seeking improvements along the way. This will in turn benefit our students and the churches they serve, whether GCI or other churches in the Body of Christ.



**Join us in celebrating  
our newest graduates  
next summer at the  
GCS Graduation!**

***The next GCS Graduation will be held at the GCI  
denominational celebration in Dallas, TX. The ceremony  
will take place Friday, July 24, 2026.***

### PARTNERS WITH GCS



Financial support from alumni and friends like you has a profound impact on the seminary's mission of *"Equipping Men and Women for Church-based Ministry."*

If you have a passion for the provision of seminary training informed by an Incarnational Trinitarian faith, GCS is grateful for your partnership through prayer and financial support.

Donations to Grace Communion Seminary can be mailed to  
3120 Whitehall Park Drive, Charlotte, NC 28273  
or donate online at [gcs.edu/donate](https://gcs.edu/donate).



# Schedule of Courses

**All schedules are tentative**

**Fall 2025:** Registration begins August 18. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, September 1. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, September 8 through November 3. All work is to be completed by November 30.

BI541	Biblical Greek 1	Michael Morrison
CH501	Church History: The First Millennium	Stephen Dolson-Andrew
CM504	Practice of Ministry	Ted Johnston
CM507	Experiencing the Trinity	Larry Hinkle
CM510	Polity of Grace Communion International	Greg Williams
TH505	Doctrine of the Trinity	Gary Deddo

**Spring 2026:** Registration begins January 5. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, January 19. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, January 26 through March 23. All work is to be completed by April 19.

BI501	Biblical Interpretation	Michael Morrison
BI512	Prophets	Tim Finlay
BI542	Biblical Greek 2	Michael Morrison
CM513	Trinitarian Worship	Lance McKinnon
TH503	The Holy Spirit, the Church and Last Things	Gary Deddo

**Summer 2026:** Registration begins April 21. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, May 18. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, May 25 – July 27. All work is to be completed by August 16.

BI522	The Gospels	Mike Morrison
CH502	Church History: The Second Millennium	Stephen Dolson-Andrew
CM503	Christian Counseling	Ted Johnston
CM511	Homiletics	Dan Rogers
TH515	Theological Ethics	Gary Deddo

All schedules are tentative. If fewer than five students register for a course it may be cancelled at the discretion of the instructor. **Thesis and Capstone courses for the master's degrees are offered in all semesters.**

