

## A Word from Our Preaching Pastor:

Sunday, January 18, 2009

<sup>8</sup> *For by grace you have been saved through faith;  
and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;  
<sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

It is humbling to believe the Gospel. Religion, on the other hand, is a great foundation for human pride. Religion lets me continue to think well of myself even as I exult in “the depths” of *my* devotion to God. With religion I am the one in charge. I set the pace. I make the decisions (at least the ones that really matter!). I devote myself to God’s cause and do my best to practice my faith in a way I feel is both personally fulfilling and, I imagine, of help to God.

But the Gospel is just the reverse. When the Gospel comes to me, it finds me to be an outcast, powerless and – to be honest – anything *but* devout. No, I am a sinner. A reprobate. A pagan with nothing in me that could commend me to God. Every decision I have ever made – spiritually speaking – has been the wrong one. And even my best acts of righteous devotion have been nothing but filthy rags of self-serving pride. That’s where the Gospel finds me! Not a good man, hoping to be better. Not even a weak man needing to be made strong. But a dead man who needs to be given a life that comes from outside himself.

I remember for years thinking of my salvation as if I had been drowning – going down for the last time - and Christ at the last minute jumped in to save me. Now I know that I was a dead man, three weeks dead, bloated and lying at the bottom of the ocean when Christ, for his own purpose and glory chose to come to me. I could not cry out. I would not save myself. Nevertheless He came. And with a marvelous display of astounding power and grace, *He saved me!* He rescued the perished and gave life to the dead. Where then is my boasting? It is no more. All I can do is say, “*Praise! Praise! Praise for an Amazing Grace!*”

That’s what we’re here to celebrate this morning.

Pastor Scott!