

Week One: **The God** **Who Is Able** January 2-6, 2023



THE GRANVILLE CHAPEL

Sharing Our Lives | Sharing The Gospel

At A Crossroads

Crossroads can often be seen from a distance, but sometimes you pass through them unaware. In March 2016, I learned this firsthand. I was in The Gambia, West Africa teaching theology classes to pastors and other leaders when my guide asked me to accompany him on a "short" detour to visit the place where he first started to preach the gospel in that country. We left the truck near the highway and began walking southward. After walking for almost ninety minutes, we finally came to the edges of a village. As is customary when children spot a large white man such as myself, they came running up to greet me. But something was different. Instead of the usual English greetings of, "Hello!" I was hearing, "Bonjour!" And as I began conversing with them and greeting the adults who came to welcome me also, I noticed that instead of speaking English (the national language of The Gambia), they were speaking French (the national language of Senegal!). Turning to my guide, I asked, "Are we now in Senegal? How is that possible?" Puzzled, he looked at me and said, "Yes. Of course. Didn't you notice when we crossed the border?" Obviously, I hadn't noticed! I'm used to security checkpoints with long lines. But it was all cleared up for me on our walk back to the truck. For there in the middle of the field was an unassuming and unmarked, medium-sized rock – the only indicator within miles that defined the international border, the crossroads that brought you from one nation to a completely new one altogether.



The Granville Chapel has also come upon a crossroads. Over the last eighteen months, we have experienced significant growth in our various ministries and in our weekly worship attendance. While we have been able to manage the limitations we have with our current rented space, we recognize that to sustain both a growing congregation and a growing community we need to plan for a larger and more suitable home for our church family. Recently, the elders laid out what such a move might look like financially, and they are currently working on presenting what that might look like practically. And though we cannot be certain which way we will end up going right now, we can embrace the crossroads where we find ourselves, and we can start recognizing the indicators that point us to where God is taking us. And I can't imagine us trying to do so without first consulting the One True Guide who not only knows where all borders lie – but who establishes them according to His own good will and purposes.

Praying a Big Prayer

In Ephesians 3:14-19, the Apostle Paul prays a big prayer for the young church in Ephesus. He asks God to strengthen them with power through the Holy Spirit; to be rooted and grounded in love; to comprehend the incomprehensible love of Jesus Christ; and to be filled with all the fullness of God. That's a lot to ask – a lot that, humanly speaking, is next to impossible. I say, 'next to,' because to whom Paul addresses the prayer. Paul is not just asking anybody – he's asking the God of the universe; the One by Whom all things were created, and the One through Whom all things hold together. If you are praying to a big God, you might as well pray a big prayer, right? It's just as the hymn writer, John Newton, once penned: "Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring; For His grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much." (*Thou Art Coming to a King*)

Paul knows that he can never ask too much. He wants the Ephesian church to know this. Through this letter, God wants all His people to know this. And I as your pastor, along with your elders, want The Granville Chapel to not only know this – but to experience it together as well. That's why we are calling for January 2023 to be a month of prayer. This will be a month of joining our hearts and voices together to call out to God asking Him to give us wisdom; asking Him to open doors that might seem closed; asking Him to pour out His resources among us; asking Him to do great and mighty things for us; asking Him to faithfully guide us through this crossroad and into the wonderful place He has for our future as His church.

To lead us in this month of prayer, we will be turning to Ephesians 3:20-21. These verses follow Paul's big prayer of verses 14-19 – not as an afterthought, but as a joyful declaration of praise to the One he knows will answer this big prayer for His glory and for the good of His people. Following this example, we will also pray big prayers together and eagerly anticipate (and watch!) as God answers. Each week, you will receive a new prayer guide following this outline:

January 2-6: *The God Who Is able*

January 9-13: *The God Who Has No Limits*

January 16-20: *The God Who Works in and Through Us*

January 23-27: *The God Who Leaves a Legacy*

For every weekday, there will be a Scripture passage relative to that week's theme. After that there will be a devotional thought, a brief prayer, and a question for reflection. You are encouraged to follow along each day by yourself, with a friend, or as a family. So come, let us pray together!

Monday, January 2

"By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." -Hebrews 11:3

God is the Creator of all things.

We begin our month of prayer by focusing on the first words of Ephesians 3:20: "Now to Him who is able to do..." But what is God able to do? To answer that question, we start at the beginning. For in the beginning all there was – was God! And God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). In this work of creation, we see the absolute power and sovereignty of God on display bringing the universe into existence. So, as we begin to bow our hearts to God in prayer this month, let us acknowledge Him as the Creator – as the One who gives to all mankind their life, their breath, and their everything (Acts 17:25).

Prayer

"O LORD God, Creator of everything that is and ever was and ever will be, I come to You now rejoicing in Your good creation. I thank You for creating the world and everything in it, and for creating me. Thank You also for creating my brothers and sisters in Christ. And thank You for creating our community at The Granville Chapel. I know, God, that You have made all things for a purpose, to bring glory and honor to Your name. But I also know that You have made me a new creation in Christ, Your masterpiece, designed for the good works that You have prepared for me to walk into. Lead me, and my church family, to walk in those good works, for Your glory and for our good. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Question(s) for Reflection

In Ephesians 2:10, we are told that we have been "created in Christ Jesus for good works". What does this mean? What does this look like in your life?

Tuesday, January 3

"And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." -Colossians 1:17

God is the Sustainer of all things.

Today, we continue to focus on God's ability by turning to His providence. Our own Westminster Shorter Catechism defines God's providence as, "His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions." (Q. & A. 11) In other words, God's mighty acts did not stop at creation. He did not just create the world, set it in motion, and then step back to watch what happens. No, God has always been and still is intimately involved in every aspect of every one of His creatures. As Paul says in Colossians 1:17, "in Him all things hold together." This means that we can rest assured knowing that God has not abandoned us to our own earthly power, but rather He sustains us by His gracious and righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

Prayer

"Dear God, I am so thankful that in Your providence, you do both preserve and govern all of your creation. Even when everything around me seems to be falling apart, I can trust in You, knowing that you will never forsake me nor abandon me. Because I am born again in Christ, I can also rest in the truth that you have a good and perfect plan for me and for my church. I ask now, O LORD, that You would be with our church as we make plans for the future. I know that you have something wonderful in store for us. You have all the details already in place. Help me – help us – to trust in You as we wait and as we plan. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Question for Reflection

How have you experienced God's sustaining providence in your life?

Wednesday, January 4

"O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms and the nations. In Your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you." -2 Chronicles 20:6

God is the Ruler of all things.

Theologian R. C. Sproul once famously said that "If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God's sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled" (from "Chosen by God"). Because God is both creator and sustainer of His creation, it remains that God is also the ruler of His creation. As King, He reigns over every corner of it. Every single bit of it belongs to Him and Him alone. Because of this, we can find hope that God is more than able to provide for us exactly what we need. As we think about the needs of our church – particularly the need for resources (whether existing property, land upon which to build, the finances necessary, etc.) – whatever the needs may be, God is the King over it all. And, if it is His plan for us to have anything, then nothing can withstand Him from providing it.

Prayer

"Oh God, help me to have faith in Your Kingship over all things. I know that I am just a steward of what belongs to You, but in my sin, I tend to live as though I am the one who rules. Loosen my grip on my earthly possessions and increase my vision for Your supremacy over all that exists in this world. Now, in humble hopefulness, I ask on behalf of my church that You would provide for us – whatever it may be – all that we need to fulfill our vision and mission for Your kingdom here on earth. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Question for Reflection

In light of suffering and trials, what comfort can be found in knowing that God rules over all things?

Thursday, January 5

"He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" -Romans 8:32

God is the Giver of all things.

In Luke 11, just after giving the Lord's Prayer, Jesus encourages His disciples to not give up on asking God to provide for their needs. Notably, He said this: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...what father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (11:9; 11-12) You see, God is more than able to give good gifts to His children. He gave us His Son, didn't He? So, we should not grow weary in asking Him to provide; we should persevere in seeking His will; and we should persist in our pursuit of opportunities to carry out the vision that He has given to us as a church.

Prayer

"Jesus, thank you for teaching us how to endure in our prayers. Though I often fail to come to you and ask as I ought, I am thankful that you never withhold your ear from me. So, I come to you now, and I thank you for all the many gifts you have provided for me and for my church. And because I know that your riches know no earthly bounds, I boldly ask you to give us what we need to accomplish what we believe you have called us to do. And where we lack the faith and endurance to continue coming to you, please provide us with the strength needed to not grow weary and to not give up asking. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Question(s) for Reflection

In what way(s) have you experienced God's provision in your life? How do you pray when concerned that God will not provide something?

Friday, January 6

"Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. -Hebrews 7:25

God is the Redeemer of all things.

We began Monday by focusing on God's power in creation. Today, it is good for us to focus on God's power to finish what He began in that creation. In Revelation 1:8, God proclaims that He is "the Alpha and the Omega". This means that He is both the beginning and the end. God knows the end of all things, and it is His purpose to redeem His people (those who have been given faith in Jesus Christ) and His creation from the power of sin. It is very comforting to know that all of history is marching toward a known end; toward a point in time where Christ will indeed return in glory and bring with Him the new heavens and the new earth. And everything that happens between now and then is serving the great purpose that God has for His church. So, not only are we safe and secure in our salvation until that day, but our church – the church that He loves – can rest assured in knowing that it will be used to bring many more of God's children to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

"God, my understanding of your grand plan of redemption is much too small. Grant me wisdom and understanding according to Your Word and give me patience as I wait for you to work things out according to Your will. Forgive me when I lack hope and lead me to trust in the truth that you are indeed working all things together for good – both for me and for my church. Teach me to long for heaven and please open my eyes to see the many glimpses of your redemptive work all around me. And use me; use The Granville Chapel to share the gospel with others. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Question(s) for Reflection

Who can you share the gospel with this month? How will you do so?