



EXPOSITION

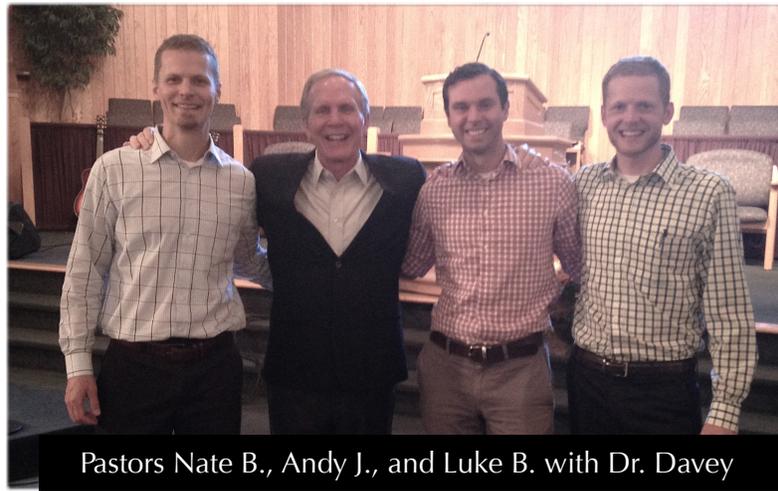
Monthly bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



Daniel K. Davey, Th.D.

From my window ...

On August 24th I began my new ministry as the full-time President of VBTS. These past 33 years of pastoral ministry have prepared my heart and mind for the task that is before me. What an amazing opportunity this is from the Lord! Every day I get to teach and counsel with the next generation of pastors and teachers. This energizes me and motivates me far beyond any personal challenges I may face as I enter this new phase of ministry. Our mantra is the following: *Sharpening servants for global ministry*, and this phrase captures the core of my heart. I pray that God will help VBTS train an "army of disciplers" to meet the ever-increasing global demand of shaping people with the Gospel of Grace.



Pastors Nate B., Andy J., and Luke B. with Dr. Davey

Alumni in Ministry Spotlight

Lakeshore Baptist Church in Grand Haven, Michigan, was looking for a youth pastor eight years ago. Through an initial phone conversation between the Pastor, Wayne Muri, and Dr. Davey, God led Nate (M.Div, 2007) and Kris Birkholz to take this position. Through a series of providential happenings, Pastor Muri retired from the senior pastor, and the church called Nate to assume this position. Because of the Lord's blessing on the church, two more VBTS grads joined the pastoral team at LBC.

Recently, when Pastor Nate was asked what he attributed the growth and blessing of the church, he replied, "It is all about the Word and applying it to our context in Grand Haven." These are wonderful words. May God give all our grads a heart to apply truth in their context of ministry!

Strategic Investment Opportunity for Nov.-Dec.

VBTS Thanksgiving Offering
\$40,000 to help defray summer deficit





Scholar's Spectrum: "Grace and Evil Men?" (part 1)

There is a question that has plagued the minds of believers down through the centuries just as it did the mind of Job (21:7-16), "Why do the wicked live and continue on and become powerful?" Job notes that these wicked men are bold enough to "say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not desire any knowledge of your ways'." How is it that God allows the wicked to live and to prosper while they manifest incorrigible arrogance? Centuries later when King David was wrestling with this very thought he transparently wrote (Ps 73:16), "When I sought to understand this, it was troublesome in my heart." So, what is the answer to this question: *Why is God gracious to evil men who, in David's words, "wear pride like a necklace?"*

The answer to this question must first seek to find its satisfaction in the character of God and his expression of infinite grace. The term *grace* in both the OT (*chen*) and the NT (*charis*) means "favor," "goodwill," or "kindness" (DNTT, 2:115). However, as the NT data is specifically examined, the noun often refers to "concrete favor or act of kindness bestowed on someone, thus approaching the sense of *gift*" (NIDNTTE, 5:653). The gift idea means that whatever has been given is not the result of merit but from the unsolicited kindness of the giver. This was exactly Job's resolution to his own question, "Behold their prosperity is not in their hand." What he means is that the ultimate source of any good fortune to the wicked is not because of his own counsel or good luck, but in plan and purpose of God.

You might be thinking, "Well, I get the fact that God is gracious to the wicked, but *why* is God so good to them?" The answer rests in the expression of his infinite grace. When grace is used in NT contexts where God favors man, there seems to be two distinguishable categories of his benefits. One category relates to the benefits that God bestows upon all men regardless of their spiritual condition. This is called in theology *common grace* or grace that is universally applied to all men. The second category exclusively connects the salvation benefits of God to those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. This is best termed as *saving grace* and these favors are limited to the elect of God. By providing these two categories for the reader, I am not suggesting that there are "two different kinds of grace" (Grudem, *Sys Theo*, p. 657 makes this very point); rather, I am only noting that God manifests his grace in our world among mankind in two distinguishable ways.

When we narrowly focus on God's common benefits to all men, both the OT and the NT are clear. King David wrote the following (Ps 145): "The Lord is good to all and His mercies are over all His works....[He is] kind in all His deeds." In the NT Jesus expressed God's kindness to all men in Matt 5:45, "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Again, Jesus declared in Luke 6:35 "[God] is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

So, *why* would God favor men who are evil and ungrateful? The Scriptures pointedly state that the richness of God's love for evil man goes beyond the temporary moment of his short life;



rather, God is profoundly concerned for his eternal soul. God declared through the prophet Ezekiel, “‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live.’” Paul concurs in Romans 2:4, “Do you think lightly of God’s kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” In other words, God takes immense delight in being kind to evil men for the sole purpose of leading that soul into the path of righteousness. Truly, God’s infinite grace is amazing . . . so, let’s probe deeper next month into his grace.