

Sunday 10 August 2025



SERMON TOPIC: All one in Christ
BIBLE TEXT: Ephesians 2:11-22
PREACHER: Chris Pretorius
ELDER ON DUTY: Peter Williams
OFFERINGS:
1st Collection: The work of the Church
2nd Collection: Middle East Reformed Fellowship

Freely given, humbly received

We live in a world where nothing seems free. Everything comes with conditions, expectations, hidden costs. Even in our relationships, we often feel the need to earn love, respect, or acceptance. And if we're not careful, we can bring that same mindset into our walk with God.

But the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ—is completely countercultural. It tells us that what we need the most is something we cannot earn, cannot buy, and cannot repay. It is simply given, by a Father who delights to give it.

The Extravagance of God's Gift

Romans 6:23 (NIV) says:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Notice the contrast here—wages versus gift. What we earn by our own effort is death. But what God gives freely, through Christ, is life eternal.

Let me ask you: if someone gave you a mansion, would you insult them by offering a \$5 note in return? That would be absurd. And yet, how often do we try to "pay" God back with religious effort, guilt-driven good works, or trying to prove our worth?

God's grace is wildly extravagant. It is not offered based on your merit, but on His mercy.

We Cannot Earn It—Only Receive It

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV):

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

You are saved by grace, through faith—not by works. That means your best day and your worst day do not change God's willingness to give you grace.

God isn't moved by how impressive your offering is; He's moved by your open arms, your childlike faith, and your willingness to receive.

Stop Trying to Earn, and Start Living in Grace

Galatians 3:3 (NIV):

"Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?"

Paul is calling out believers who started their journey in grace but then returned to trying to earn God's favor. Church, hear me today—you do not have to strive for what God already gave you.

Grace frees you. It humbles you. And it transforms you from the inside out.

What Does It Look Like to Open Your Arms?

It means laying down your pride. It means laying down the lie that says, "I must clean myself up first." It means acknowledging, like the Grace Declaration says:

"I will not insult You or Your great grace by attempting to 'buy' with my meager means what You have offered as a wildly extravagant gift."

It means saying, "Father, I come empty-handed. I come just as I am. And I receive—fully, freely, and without hesitation—what You long to give."

Closing: Receive It Anew Today

If grace is a gift, then the most holy thing you can do right now is open your arms.

Right now, wherever you are, say this again with faith:

"Gracious Father, I will not insult You or Your great grace by attempting to 'buy' with my meager means what You have offered as a wildly extravagant gift. I humbly and gratefully open my arms to receive what You long to give."

Let that be your prayer every morning. Let that be your song in every season. Let grace do what only grace can do.

Because what He gives, no man can take away.

~ Pieter van Gent



Our Giving, an Act of Worship

In our Church we have two offerings every Sunday. The first goes toward the ministry of this congregation. The second offering goes toward various Christian causes. This week our second offering is for the Middle East Reformed Fellowship .

If you would like to support the work of you can do so by in Church giving - simply add your offering to the bag at the back of Church or by bank transfer -

BSB 063-167. A/C 1015-8356

If using bank transfer please indicate whether it is for the first offering "Sun1" or second offering "Sun 2" in the reference line. Or you can give online via our Church app

<https://wpcrc.org.au/give>

This week's **PRAYER POINTS**

Prayer is the life of the soul. Madame de Stael

Personal **PRAYER POINTS**

As we go into the coming week let us daily pray;

Giving thanks to God that he did not limit his salvation to his chosen race but graciously extended it to include us gentiles.

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (Ephesians 3:6 NRSV)

Give praise and thanks to God for his undeserving love for all who call on his name and gladly receive the sacrifice made through his Son our Lord Jesus.

Congregational PRAYER POINTS

Please continue to pray for Leon and Anjali De Beer and their baby Zealiah, please pray that she will be healed and that there will be no lasting ill effects.

Please pray for the elderly among us, pray that age related illnesses and disabilities will not burden them but that the Lord will their help and comfort.

Please continue to pray for Ben Palmer that he will be fully restored and with Lauren as she travels this journey with her husband.

Please continue to pray for our church that the Lord will protect us and develop us into the church he wants us to be and that we will totally submit to him and follow his leading.

Local & Global PRAYER POINTS

Please pray for all those who have been called by God to special tasks in ministry or mission, pray that they will experience God's nearness when challenges mount up around them.

Please pray for the leaders of the nations that they will not seek their own aggrandizement but the good of the people they rule.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Iran.

It's no secret God can use 'one'. A life like Somayeh's, brutalised for her faith but unstoppable in Christ, even as she lives for Him in secret. One man. One woman. One life lived for Him. A life like Somayeh's—brutalised and pierced by sorrow for her faith but unstoppable in Christ, even as she lives for Him in secret. You probably know that countless Christians across the world are forced to live in secret. The threat of severe punishment if discovered makes it dangerous for them to serve God openly. Yet they still spread the gospel in quiet, hidden ways.

"My husband was furious when he found out I had become a Christian," Somayeh says, briefly recalling the emotional torment she was thrust into and the stress-induced loss of the baby growing quietly inside her.

It seemed miraculous that she was later able to have two children. But since accepting Jesus, her life has become a series of unlikely occurrences. But then... There have been several in Somayeh's life: like the day Jesus held her so she felt no pain as her husband lashed her with his belt. Or when a close family member betrayed her to the authorities who searched her entire home but never found the Christian books hidden in her basement. Or even as she attended a secret church every month without being caught or reported. Each miracle strengthened her ministry. Somayeh would never stop talking about Jesus in secret.

"My husband had threatened to kill me if I preached the gospel, but I couldn't stay silent," she explains. In a drastic move to distance her from the church community she loved, Somayeh's husband sold their home and moved her and the children to another town. "I prayed, asking God, 'Why did You bring me here? I was already struggling to attend church, and now I'm so far away I can't go at all. Why?'" What she heard in response must have been God—she would never have suggested starting a church on her own, in a new town. She prayed, "You are truly God, and if You're telling me You want to build a church here and bring people to me, then I'll respond. I'm ready."

"We started with just a few people meeting in secret, and shortly after, we grew into a house church with over 30 members," Somayeh says excitedly. "On special nights like Christmas, we sometimes had as many as 50 people! When people came to faith, I knew I had to provide them with spiritual nourishment. I had to be cautious, though, to avoid any issues with my husband." And then, one day... "I received a call from the intelligence service where they detailed all my information and said, 'We will see you soon,'" Somayeh recalls, briefly awash with fear from that terrible phone call. "I was terrified, both from the intelligence and my husband who was also threatening me." The day she had dreaded since finding Jesus had come. It was time to flee Iran. Somayeh's new church is Persian-speaking, and for the first time since becoming a Christian, she can worship freely, openly expressing what Jesus has already done in secret. Because even when she appeared shackled, silenced, tortured, and terrorised, she was free.

Today, Somayeh serves secret believers in Iran through an online ministry, sharing the gospel and supporting those living in the shadows and under threat. She attends leadership training sessions with Open Doors' local partners who equip her to guide other Iranians into freedom through Christ. "I've learned so much from these trainings, deepening my understanding of God's Word," she says happily. "They also provide solutions we might not have discovered otherwise. I'm also able to share these insights with those God has entrusted to me, especially those who, for security reasons, can't attend such trainings." "Even in the darkest circumstances and in the most difficult places, God is working," says Somayeh confidently. "He is still the Lord of miracles, and He always brings His light into people's hearts."

It's no secret that... God can use you. Open Doors

The next prayer meeting will be held on Thursday the 21st of August at 7.30pm.

TERM 3 **2025**

SUPERDASH

25
JUL

SOCIAL : ESCAPE ROOM

7: 30 PM @ WONGA PARK CRC

8
AUG

BIBLE STUDY: MARK

7: 30 PM @ WONGA PARK CRC

10
AUG

STATE YOUTH SERVICE

4 PM @ GEELONG CRC

22
AUG

BIBLE STUDY: MARK

7: 30 PM @ WONGA PARK CRC

5
SEP

BIBLE STUDY: MARK

7: 30 PM @ WONGA PARK CRC

19
SEP

BIBLE STUDY: MARK

7: 30 PM @ WONGA PARK CRC

FOR MORE INFORMATION SPEAK TO YOUR YOUTH LEADERS

Term 3 2025

YOUNG ADULTS

23 July	YA Bible study ^a
6 Aug	YA Bible study ^a
10 Aug	SYS* (Geelong)
17 Aug	YA Social
20 Aug	YA Bible study ^a
3 Sep	YA Bible study ^a
13 Sep	YA Social
17 Sep	YA Bible study ^a

Series: Jesus the game changer

a — Location: 70-72 Ennismore Crescent, Park Orchards
Time: 7:30-9:30pm

* — State Youth Service



Dear church family & friends

You are invited to a morning tea in the church hall on the 31st of Aug 2025 after the morning service to celebrate my significant birthday milestone and recent retirement from my full-time job.

All are welcome! Looking forward to celebrating with you!

Kind regards
Brendina Saul

Ways to serve at the **DINING ROOM MISSION**

The next opportunity to cook for the Dining Room Mission is 26 August.

Contact Joy van Veen for details.

Their food pantry would love donations of pantry staples such as...
Cereal, long life milk or other beverages, tuna and other tinned goods, rice, pasta etc.

Even a little money to support the cooks or pantry is also gratefully accepted.

CALLING FOR ELDER NOMINATIONS

As announced on Sunday, Church council is looking for nominations for new Elders. Please consider these prayerfully and if you would like to nominate someone, please submit your nomination to either Chris or one of the Elders.

You can do this by emailing pastor@wpcrc.org.au or session@wpcrc.org.au, or let them know in person.

SAFE CHURCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Classis is looking for a suitable person from amongst its churches to be its representative on the Safe Church Advisory Committee (SCAC).

If anyone is interested and wants to know more about being a rep, please email David Timmins at: classis.maroondah.clerk@gmail.com



Planning Centre Launch

10 AUGUST

Step 1: Download the app



Step 2: Log In - Open the app and search for our church by name

- Use the email address we have on record for you to log in.
- Follow the simple prompts to verify your account.

Step 3: Explore the features

Step 4: Say Hello in the Church Group chat

If you need assistance, bring your phone on Sunday and volunteers will assist you after the service

Upcoming events

OUR CHURCH CALENDER

Wednesday 6 August 19:30 Young Adults Bible Study

Friday 8 August 19:30 Super Dash

Sunday 10 August Church Centre Activation for the Church Community

Sunday 17 August 10:00 Lord's Supper

Thursday 21 August 19:30 Prayer meeting



Discussion QUESTIONS

- How does thinking of the church as a “household” change the way we treat each other?
- What would it look like for our church to better reflect the unity described in this passage?
- Are there ways you can help someone feel more included in the church “household” this week?
- What do you personally remember about your life before Christ?
- How have you experienced the peace of Christ in your own life?
- What does it mean for you to belong to God’s family?
- Why do you think Paul wants us to remember our past separation from God?
- Are there any walls or divisions between people, families, or cultures in your world that Jesus wants to break down?

Sermon NOTES

Bible passage:

Date:



Something
that shines
from the
passage



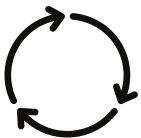
Anything
hard to
understand
or any
questions



Personal
application
for your life



Theme of passage



How does it
fit with other
passages in
the Bible



Who will you
tell about
what you have
learnt?

[illegible]

Helping HANDS

	10 August	17 August	24 August
Preacher	Chris Pretorius	Chris Pretorius	Chris Pretorius
Elder on Duty	Peter W	Martin	Kasha
Prayer Leader	Peter W	Martin	Herman L
Music Leader	Mia	Nelleke	Inge
Children's Talk	Sarah	Inge	Janette
Bible Reader	Marlene	Conrad	Adri
Sound	Nina	Nic	Nina
Visuals	Isaac	Ene	Salme
Broadcasting	Christo	Pieter	Christo
Sunday School	Sarah, Lynette, Lize S	Sarah, Izelle, Lize B	Ilze, Lize B, Izelle
Coffee	JD & Izelle Steenkamp	van Staden Family	Danie & Grietjie Uys

Upcoming BIRTHDAYS



**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

Neil Bester 8 August
Anne Keegal 11 August
Telise Steenkamp 11 August
Martin van der Merwe 13 August
Marizanne van Staden 14 August
Marlene Theron 18 August
Brendina Saul 24 August
Nelleke Arnold 27 August

Who Should I Contact?

Pastor:	Chris Pretorius	0423 889 913	pastor@wpcrc.org.au
Chairman of Session:	Peter Williams	0431 500 006	session@wpcrc.org.au
Community Engagement	Jenna Miller	0403 650 398	
Church Administrator:	Sarah Pretorius	0409 221 277	admin@wpcrc.org.au
Deacons:			deacons@wpcrc.org.au
Music Ministry:	Mia Van Wyk	0420 817 800	
Sound & Visuals:	Cassie Van Veen	0499 230 872	
Children's Talk:	Sarah Pretorius	0409 221 277	
Sunday School:	Sarah Pretorius	0409 221 277	
Youth Group:	Kasha Schubert	0450 012 177	youth@wpcrc.org.au
Young Adults:	Michael van der Merwe	0456 960 424	
Growth Groups:	Chris Pretorius	0423 889 913	
Prayer Chain:	Herman Linde	0411 069 808	
Facilities & Maintenance:	Dale Reed	0412 216 300	deacons@wpcrc.org.au
Newsletter:	Leana Van Gent	0452 334 224	newsletter@wpcrc.org.au