

The Marvelous Gift of Grace

Ephesians 2: 8-10

Over the past few weeks, we have considered the desperate situation of mankind. There is no doubt that we are all born in sin, separated from God and in danger of eternal condemnation because of sin. Thankfully, God understood man's desperate need and his inability to restore himself to a right relationship with the Sovereign. Through His grace, God provided the means of salvation and reconciliation to Himself, restoring what sin had damaged.

Whether people choose to admit it or not, we all have a void within that only God can fill. We are God's creation, created to know Him and fellowship with Him. While in sin, separated from God, we cannot enjoy that fellowship. God alone has the ability to provide what is necessary to fill the void within our hearts and lives.

Humanity has sought to fill that void down through the ages. While it may appear that the approaches have been quite varied, each approach always falls into one of two categories – works or faith. With the sons of Adam and Eve, very early in humanity, we see both of these approaches. Able sought to please God by responding in faith to God's command. His brother, Cain, sought to please God in his own way, by works of the flesh. Unfortunately, many continue to approach salvation, seeking acceptance of God, through works of the flesh. These works are varied, but lack the ability to obtain salvation. Many religions today are based upon works – seeking to do enough to gain acceptance of God. Genuine salvation is never obtained through works that we accomplish, but by God's grace through faith in the finished work of Christ.

As we examine the [aspects](#) of our salvation revealed in the text, I want to consider: [The Marvelous Gift of Grace](#).

I. The Grace in Salvation (8a-b) – [For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves.](#)

Paul began this powerful discourse by emphasizing the grace involved in our salvation. One cannot truly receive or appreciate salvation apart from grasping the grace involved. While I do not suggest we will ever fully comprehend God's grace, we must realize the necessity of it in our salvation. Consider:

A. The Substance of Grace – Paul declared that we are saved by grace through faith. In order to adequately understand what we have received, one must see grace for what it is. Grace is God's unmerited favor; grace is extended and provided to those who are underserving; grace cannot be bought or earned – it is provided through God according to His divine will.

- Understanding the severity of sin, sheds great light upon grace. Sin separates us from God. The penalty for sin is death. God is completely holy and righteous, void of any sin at all. Sin must be atoned or it must be punished. There is no middle ground. If our sin is not atoned through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, we remain condemned in sin. God could have left us in our sin and forced us to endure the judgment we rightly deserved. Grace provided what we could never obtain ourselves, and what we could never receive had God not been gracious in His provision!

B. The Significance of Grace (8) – One cannot consider grace apart from its source. Grace is wholly an act of God’s sovereign dealing with mankind. It cannot be purchased with money; it cannot be earned through works of the flesh; it cannot be obtained apart from God in any way. He alone is the provider of grace.

- This is very significant when we consider the truth behind our relationship with God. Because of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, we are all born in sin. We all come short of what God demands if we are to fellowship with Him and have the assurance of eternal life in heaven. There is nothing we can do to obtain the righteousness God demands. We cannot obtain the level of holiness required. In and of ourselves, we are hopeless.

- God understood the desperate need of man and chose to provide a means of reconciliation to Him. Through His grace, God provided the atoning sacrifice for sin. As Christ Jesus, the only Son of God, died in our place on the cross, bearing our sin, the righteous demand of God was satisfied. Through His marvelous grace, God imputes (or transfers) the righteousness of His Son to us! We become righteous in the eyes of God because of the sacrifice of His Son. That is quite significant! [Acts 13:39 – And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.](#) [Rom.3:23-25 – For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; \[24\] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: \[25\] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation \(sacrifice, payment or appeasement for sin\) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.](#)

C. The Submission to Grace (8a-b) – [For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves.](#) One must fully submit to God’s grace in salvation. This is only accomplished through faith in the atoning work of Christ on the cross for our sin. Christ bore our sin, paid the penalty for our sin, and fully satisfied the righteous demands of God. Through faith in Christ, we respond to His atoning work and the grace of God that provided the sole means of salvation. Paul declared that salvation is not according to ourselves. God provided salvation through His Son according to His good grace. We respond to that through faith. Salvation is not obtained through personal merit or effort!

II. The Gift of Salvation (8c-9) – Paul goes on to reveal that salvation is a gift, offered with the expectation of receiving. Consider:

A. The Source of the Gift (8c) – *it is the gift of God*. Paul has laid out an irrefutable case that salvation is obtained through the grace of God, apart from any merit of our own. Here he declared that it is God who provides the gift of salvation. We are not saved based on our merit; we cannot transfer our salvation to another; salvation is not obtained through religious activities – church membership, baptism, moral living, or being born into a Christian family. Salvation is the gift of God. He is the source and provision of our salvation! *Rom.5:6, 8 – For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [8] But God commendeth (demonstrated) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

B. The Superiority of the Gift (9) – *Not of works, lest any man should boast*. Paul emphasized the fact that none are worthy or deserving of salvation in themselves. Works could never earn salvation and it is impossible to live good enough to merit salvation. It is a free gift, provided to those who are undeserving!

- If you are saved by grace through faith, you have much to rejoice in. However, you have nothing to boast of. Salvation is based upon His grace, apart from our works. We are nothing more than undeserving sinners who have received the good grace of God. In fact, we ought to rejoice that God doesn't deal with us according to our works or what we have earned. *The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom.6:23.*

III. The Guidance in Salvation (10) – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*. Paul didn't seek to minimize good works. In fact, he encouraged them. Works and grace are not contrary to one another; they are compatible within the lives of believers. Those who are saved by grace will reveal their relationship with Christ through their works. Many think James and Paul taught conflicting doctrines, but they actually agreed when it comes to works and grace. *James 2:17-18 – Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. [18] Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* Notice:

A. The Sovereign (10a) – *For we are his workmanship*. This has the idea of “*a product, literally a fabric.*” The believer is a genuine work of the Lord; we are His creation, His tapestry. He has woven our lives as it pleased Him. One could never argue this is an act of God's grace. We are created in His image, according to His divine plan.

B. The Service (10b) – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Our lives are an act of grace, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. God does not provide salvation and place us on a shelf, simply to wait for future glory. He has created us, by His grace, in order to serve Him through our good works. The works we perform in life, bear witness to His marvelous grace. Those who experience grace in salvation are motivated and equipped for good works! Thus, works and grace or not contrary to one another. Works are the result of grace received.

C. The Standard (10c) – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* The work revealed in the lives of believers, ordained of God, is to be consistent with the grace we have received. The Lord desires every believer to walk in a way that pleases and honors Him.

- This is impossible with man, but possible through the Spirit. Those who are right with God will reflect His grace through the life they live. Our walk will match our profession of faith. Now, many question how some live as they do, following a profession. While I am convinced it is possible to stray from the Lord, and engage in sin following salvation, such behavior will not be without consequence. God has ordained that we walk according to His will for our lives.

- I am not the judge of men, but I fear many have made a profession, but they lack a possession. Many have proclaimed salvation, but lack a personal relationship with Christ. If you are able to live as you please with no conviction for sin, I doubt you have been truly saved. Those the Lord loves, He chastens. Children of God will be chastised and convicted for their sin.

Conclusion: Paul clearly laid out God's provision for our salvation. It is obtained by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ, apart from any works of the flesh. Salvation is the gift of God. A gift can be offered, but in order for it to be of benefit, it must be received. Christ paid the debt for your sin. He died in your place on the cross and endured the righteous judgment you deserved. Salvation is available, but you must respond to the leading of the Spirit by faith. If you are unsaved, come to Christ today, believing by faith and receive the gift of salvation.

Christian, are you living in obedience to God and His will for your life? Does your life and behavior reflect the grace you have received? Are you living a life of faithful service to the Lord? If not, come and repent of your failures, seeking restoration to the Lord.