

Series: Ephesians  
Title: Grace, Salvation, & Faith  
Text: Ephesians 2: 8-9  
Date: September 29, 2013  
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our text is one that can be used to determine whether any doctrine you hear is true or false. This text declares our gospel.

**Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:* 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**Proposition:** Salvation is of the Lord in its entirety, in every aspect, beginning to end, so that God gets all the glory and the saved sinner has no room to boast about anything.

**Title: Grace, Salvation & Faith**

**I. GOD SAVES BY GRACE—V8: BY GRACE are ye saved...**

Salvation is all of grace.

- God elected a people to salvation by grace. Grace is opposite to works. (Rom 11: 5-6)
- The stewardship of every preacher is a “dispensation of the grace of God.” (Eph 3: 2-8)
- The gospel we preach is “the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20: 24)
- We are justified freely by God’s grace. (Rom 3: 24)
- We are called by God’s grace. (Gal 1: 15)
- It is “grace wherein we stand” (Rom 5: 2)
- Every believer is what he is by the grace of God: including any labor in the cause of Christ. (I Cor 15: 10)

Romans 5: 20:...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

**What is Grace?**

So what is grace? Now let me have your undivided attention. You must understand what grace is if you would have a right understanding of how and why God saves sinners. You need to understand what grace is to be able to understand the scriptures. Grace is God’s glory.

Moses asked to see God’s glory. Three things were involved in showing his glory. First, God said, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee”—God’s goodness is his glory. Secondly, God said, “I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee;”—God’s name is his glory. Thirdly, God said, “and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”—God’s grace is his glory.

Ephesians 1: 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace,...

Every sinner who boasts that God chose him for some foreseen reason in the sinner, attempts to rob God of his glory. Every sinner who boasts of his will, of his faith, that he brought himself to God, is attempting to rob God of his glory. But God says, “my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” (Is 42: 8)

**God is an Absolute Proprietor**

It is God's prerogative as God over all his creation to be gracious TO WHOM HE WILL be gracious because God is an absolute proprietor—everything is God's property. He created all things, including every person in mankind. Therefore God can do with his own what he will.

You do what you will with your property. If your neighbor said you were unrighteousness to do with your own property what pleases you then you would think your neighbor is absurd. Christ said, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Mt 20: 15)

God alone puts a difference between sinners. He does so by being gracious to whom he will. God's reasons for being gracious are within himself—not by any merit in his creatures. God is not a debtor to any nor accountable to any.

### **Grace, No Cause; Damnation, Cause**

Let me give you one more very important point about grace. It is never said, "I will damn who I will damn." God chose to be gracious to some without a cause in them; but God never condemns anyone without a cause in them. God is just. And it would be unjust if he randomly chose to damn some for no reason. God's damnation of sinners is always the just wage earned by a guilty sinner for breaking God's law.

Be sure you understand this: Grace can never be earned by the sinner but damnation is always earned by the sinner. Grace is unmerited free favor bestowed according to God's own sovereign prerogative to do with his own what he will but damnation is the just due earned by the sinner. By grace are ye saved.

## **II. LET'S CONSIDER THIS SECOND WORD—"SAVED"—V8: by grace are you SAVED...**

It was not enough for God to simply choose who he would be gracious to—God also had to do everything necessary to actually save us and that, in way consistent with his holiness.

I love to think of how infinitely wise God is! I am amazed by it. God purposed to do three things:

- To manifest his glory
- To give his Son all preeminence;
- To save his people from our sins

All three are accomplished in Christ and him crucified. In Christ crucified is where God "reserves mercy for thousands" and at the same time "by no means clears the guilty."

Psalm 85: 10; Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Righteousness is freely imputed to God's elect and God is just because Christ paid all the debt we owed to divine justice on Calvary's tree and justified us. Christ justified a multitude-many!

### **Saved Then Called**

God regenerates his people and calls us. The good news is that our salvation has already been accomplished by God by his Son.

2 Timothy 1:9: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,...

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation is more than escaping hell and going to heaven. Salvation is being made perfect in the eyes and presence of God through faith in His Son.

### **III. FAITH. GOD'S GIFT OF FAITH IS THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH WE RECEIVE SALVATION ALREADY PURCHASED FOR US BY GRACE, BY CHRIST—V8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.**

I have heard men debate over what is meant by the gift of God in this verse. It applies to faith—I started to say, “Because faith is the one thing mentioned that sinners would attempt to boast in.” But sinners foolishly try to boast that all three things mentioned here are of themselves. Yet, everything mentioned here is a gift of God.

- Grace is a gift: grace is given from without us for no reason in us—and yet sinners foolishly boast that grace was given because God foresaw something in them. No. Grace is a gift.
- Salvation is a gift—“Salvation is of the Lord”—yet sinners foolishly boast that some aspect of their salvation was performed by them. No. Salvation is a gift.
- Faith is a gift—it is “faith” of which the Holy Spirit speaks here particularly, saying, “and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

#### **Context, Context, Context**

Always pay attention to the context. From chapter 1 to this verse, the Holy Spirit has been declaring through the apostle Paul, that every blessing the believer has was given us from God the Father in Christ Jesus.

He says in Ephesians 1: 3: “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he chose us in Christ from before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

- Verse 5: He “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.”
- Verse 6: He “made us accepted in the beloved.”
- Verse 7: “In Christ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”
- Verse 8: “he abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will.”
- Verse 9: He gave us “an inheritance” in Christ
- Verse 13: You trusted “AFTER that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” and were “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.”
- Verse 19: He compares the power to regenerate and convert us to the “exceeding greatness of his power” in raising Christ from the dead.

In chapter 2, he says you and I were dead in sins like every other sinner fallen in Adam, Ephesians 2: 1: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;” Then here in verse 8 he says and even your faith is not of yourselves, it too, is the gift of God.

1 Corinthians 4: 7: Who maketh thee to differ *from another*? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

Everything a believer has is the gift of God—even our faith. Preacher, why are you laboring on this point? Because a person has only confessed he is a sinner when he confesses he can do nothing to save himself. Those who say they are sinners but then speak of what they contribute to their salvation have not yet truly confessed they are a sinner. Those who speak of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone but then brag about their faith, saying it was their decision for Jesus that made the difference, have not yet believed salvation is of the

Lord. As long as a sinner believes that something he did contributes to his salvation he has not believed that salvation is of the Lord.

**Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

### **How is Faith Given?**

Faith is given when God draws his child to Christ and teaches us in the newly created heart who Christ is and what Christ, by himself, has accomplished for his people. God shall do so for every child whom Christ redeemed. Turn to John 6.

John 6: 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent...35: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...37: ALL that the Father giveth me SHALL COME TO ME; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out...

This is Christ's gospel: all that the Father gave to Christ, before the foundation of the world shall come to Christ—because “by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH.” When they heard Christ preach this, they began to murmur. Just like two or three will hear me preach this truth which Christ preached—that all God's elect shall be brought to saving faith in Christ. I preach it and they read it right here in the scriptures. Then in their hearts or privately with someone, they murmur about why they don't believe that “all” the elect shall be given faith. Is God not sovereign to do it? They have no good excuse for not believing Christ's gospel—he preached it. But they even murmured when Christ preached it in person.

John 6: 43: Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

It says “they shall be all taught of God.” It says, “Every man, THEREFORE, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.” That is why Christ said “all that the Father giveth to me shall come to me.” That ends my murmuring. How about you?

### **What is Faith?**

So, what is it to have “faith in Christ?” Faith involves three vital things.

First, faith involves “knowing” Christ in spirit and in truth. This “knowing” is more than just believing facts about Christ. It is to know Christ BECAUSE we have been “known of God.”

Galatians 4:9: But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God,...

Faith is only as valuable as its object. So God first knows his child then God makes his child to know his Son. Cults have worthless objects of faith therefore, their faith is worthless. Great faith in a powerless object is the same as no faith at all. So first, faith is to know God our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Secondly, faith involves “being persuaded he is able to keep” everything you commit to him. When the Holy Spirit makes us to know him then we will be persuaded he is able.

Thirdly, faith involves “committing” everything to him—complete surrender to Christ. When God makes us to know him and persuades us he is able, then we will commit all to him.

2 Tim 1: 12: I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against the day.

## **Righteousness through Faith**

Through faith in Christ, Christ our Righteousness is received by us and God reckons us righteous. We do not earn righteousness. Through faith, the person who believes in God's Son, is counted perfect before God in the Lord Jesus our Righteousness.

## **IV. ONE MORE POINT, NONE OF THIS IS BY OUR WORKS—V9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

### **Not of Works**

First, grace is not of works or it ceases to be grace.

Romans 11:6: And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Secondly, salvation is not of works.

2 Timothy 1:9: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

The work was given to Christ: to fulfill all righteousness, to justify his people, to declare God just and Christ said, "It is finished!" So salvation is not of our works.

Romans 4:2: For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

When the Holy Spirit says through James,

James 2:21: Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22: Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

It was not a work to legally justify Abraham before God, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." James means that Abraham's was justified in his claim of truly believing God and truly being persuaded God was able to raise his people from the dead. What manifest Abraham's faith as being true faith?—He committed the salvation of his own son to God—his faith was perfectly justified as genuine faith by Abraham laying his son on the altar and drawing back the knife to slay him—that is what James means by works—committing all to Christ.

Lastly, faith is not of works—we just read "that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Romans 3:27: Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

Any man that boasts in his faith does not have true faith. True faith excludes boasting.

Titus 3: 3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. 4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Boasters say, “But at least I believed!” If a heart surgeon put a new heart inside of you, would you boast, saying, “Well at least I made my heart beat!” The heart beats because you are alive without you doing anything. Likewise, a sinner cannot do otherwise but believe when Christ the Life is breathed into us by God the Holy Spirit. Faith which commits all to Christ is the effect of Christ the Life put in us like breathing is the effect of natural life. (1 John 5: 11-12)

### **Lest Any Man Should Boast**

Salvation is not of works, “Lest any man should boast.” If any man contributes even slightly then he will boast. Therefore, God does everything so that his people contribute nothing. We receive everything lest we should glory:

God says, 1 Corinthians 1: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

- Here is God the Father in divine election—1 Corinthians 1: 30: of God are ye in Christ Jesus...
- Here is God the Holy Spirit in regeneration and giving us faith—1 Corinthians 1: 30: who of God is made unto us
- Here is God the Son—1 Corinthians 1: 30: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.
- No flesh has any room to glory!—1 Corinthians 1: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Now is there anyone listening who has a problem with my gospel? Why? It gives God all the glory in salvation. Are you arguing in favor of taking some of that glory from God and giving it to a rotten sinner? Sinner, if you want to meet God arguing in favor of your glory, against his glory—you go right ahead—go see what happened to Nadab and Abihu.

Believers want it no other way than for God to have all the glory for we know—we are God’s workmanship!

Isaiah 43:7: *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...(we will take verse 10 next time we are in Ephesians)

**Amen!**