

“And That Not of Yourselves”

Lesson Text: Ephesians 2:8-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the book of Ephesians, the great apostle wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9).
1. Thus far in this series of studies, we have examined grace, faith, and salvation. Today, we will focus on the expression “and that not of yourselves.”
 2. There is a lot in that short phrase—much more than meets the eye.
 3. It is incumbent upon us to study it carefully.
- B. When Paul said “and that not of yourselves” he was talking to the Ephesians about their salvation by grace through their faith.
1. It is as if He had said..
 - a. “you didn’t save yourselves.”
 - b. “You could not have saved yourselves.”
 2. There is a very obvious reason why they could not save themselves..., namely:
 - a. Only divine grace is saving grace.
 - b. No mere mortal has it within his power to generate such grace.
 3. Paul wrote to a young evangelist named Titus where in **Titus 2:11-14** he said, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous of good works.”
 - a. The grace of God that “brings salvation”—that’s the kind of grace we’re concerned with here.
 - b. Salvation is a product of grace and grace is that unmerited favor that only our Heavenly Father can bestow.
 - c. Grace that saves is “not of yourselves.”
- C. Furthermore, the grace that saves is a teaching grace.
1. How does grace teach us? Paul said it was accomplished by the information from above that calls upon man to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to look anxiously for the coming of our Lord.
 2. Concerning that ungodliness that man is to deny...
 - a. Ungodliness is that which is unlike God.
 - b. Ungodliness goes against everything God wants.

- c. Ungodliness is for everything Satan wants.
- 3. What is it that teaches all men to deny ungodliness?
 - a. It is the plain and unadulterated gospel of Christ, the word of the Living God.
 - b. words lifted from **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10** - “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”
 - c. It was the “entry” of the apostle Paul and Silas into Thessalonica that brought the information which caused these people to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and begin looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - d. Please observe how this harmonizes so beautifully with Titus 2.
 - 1. The teaching grace is equated with the entry of inspired men like Paul and Silas.
 - 2. The denial of ungodliness equates the turning to God from idols.
 - 3. The looking for the glorious appearing of Christ is simply stated again in Paul’s recognition of the Christians in Thessalonica who were waiting for the Son of God from heaven.
 - e. And, the redemption that comes to all the saved is mentioned in both texts. This all emphasizes that grace teaches a man what to do to be saved and what to continue doing to remain saved.., and “that not of yourselves.”
 - 1. What man could know how to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts all by himself?
 - 2. Friends, research and see if you can find any group of people in any century of history who, without Almighty God, ever accomplished anything even nearly approaching Christianity that is morally correct and true.
 - 3. Find anything that lifted their spirits above the beast of the field.
 - 4. Such a society cannot be found.
- D. Since humans, unaided by divine power, are unable to provide a way of salvation for themselves, the whole creation must turn to a higher power.
 - 1. No doubt, you may have heard of the humanistic movement — that it is man’s way of saving himself — that it is man deifying himself and denying God.
 - a. As such, humanism is the very opposite of Christianity.
 - b. Humanism stands on the platform that salvation is of man..., and Christianity on the platform “and that not of yourselves.”
 - c. Salvation to the humanist is a very limited salvation
 - 1. The reduction of poverty, illiteracy.

2. The reduction of ignorance.
3. The reduction of injustice.
- d. And that is all there is for humanism.
 1. There is nothing that promises anything of worth beyond death—absolutely nothing.
 2. And yet, so many believe that humanism is the only way to go.
- E. Those who accept the instruction of God’s grace and live accordingly, will accomplish all that humanism proposes to address and more — it is the only thing that has the promise of a good life now and a much better life later.
 1. Listen again to the apostle Paul as he writes in **1 Timothy 4:8** - “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” It would be wisdom to trash all that humanism offers. You will not lose anything of value to this world.
 2. The course of real wisdom is to recognize how frail we really are and lean upon the only and living God and learn His ways.
 3. Life is not of ourselves . . . and neither is salvation.
- F. Lets consider some other verses found in Holy writ.
 1. The Psalmist wrote, “Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am” (**Psalm 39:4**).
 - a. Here is another reason why salvation is “not of yourselves?”
 - b. Saving mankind is accomplished only by power — much greater power than any group of men could muster.
 - c. And the power unleashed on the darkest sinner is the gospel of Christ.
 - d. Paul said he was not ashamed of the gospel, “for it (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone who believes” (**Romans 1:16**).
 2. Solomon wrote in **Proverbs 3:5-6** — “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”
 - a. Those who devise their own methods of salvation..., those ways men proclaim with no biblical basis . . . do not trust the Lord . . . hence, they lean on their own understanding.
 - b. To expression, “Accept Jesus as your personal Savior,” says nothing at all about obedience to His gospel. What biblical basis does?
 - c. If by accepting Christ as personal Savior is meant “Just believe in Him and nothing more” you just try to find that in His word.
 - d. Your eyes will dim with the sunset of life before you find it.
 3. One final verse probably summarizes the whole thought.
 - a. A great man of the Old Testament spoke to his own people who had been seeking every possible way of extricating themselves from peril after peril, ignoring the one and only way of relief.

- b. It was the firm and faithful voice of Jeremiah who said to them in **Jeremiah 10:21-23** - “For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the Lord; therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered. Behold the noise of the report has come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals. O Lord. I know the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.”
- c. Jeremiah was the only one in Judah, apparently, who knew that.
 - 1. The Shepherds (the Pastors of Judah) had become dull-hearted and had not sought the Lord.
 - 2. Maybe they were much like the modern day “Pastor” who is more organizer, manager, promoter, and administrator than spiritual leader or Bible teacher.
 - 3. When “Pastors” are experts in organizational skills, but sadly ignorant of divine truths, they invariably lead their flocks to be scattered.
 - 4. But those, like Jeremiah, trusting only in what Jehovah God has revealed., only in what the Lord Jesus Christ authorized., only what His apostles) taught., have surrendered completely to nothing more than the will of God.
 - 5. Their salvation is the only way to be saved. . . “ it is not of ourselves.”

CONCLUSION:

- A. So many human religious organizations have originated doctrines regarding the salvation of their members, doctrines which did not come from God.
- B. The gospel of Christ reveals the salvation that is not of ourselves . . . it have come from God.
 - 1. We must reach out and grasp it with our minds and obey it from our hearts.
 - 2. God’s grace provided it to bring us home to God.
 - 3. Don’t reject it.
- C. Listening friends, I must remind us again of that crucial statement in our text— “not of yourselves.” And while it is “not of yourselves,” you can still have it because God has made it available to you through Jesus Christ.

God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation.