

“For By Grace”

Lesson Text: **Ephesians 2:8-10**

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The greatest of all God’s gifts is Jesus Christ. John 3:16-17
1. The Hebrew writer tells us that it was by God’s grace that Jesus “tasted death for every man” (**Hebrews 2:9**).
 2. Further, Paul wrote, “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” (**2 Thessalonians 2:16-17**).
 3. No mortal tongue can recite the magnitude of saving grace.
 - a. There are not enough writing materials in the world to fully describe saving grace. . . and there is no human mentality that is able fully comprehend it.
 - b. Grace is the love and goodness of God all combined in the person of our Savior.
- B. In a classic passage of Scripture, the apostle Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:5-10** - “Even when we were dead in trespasses, (God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
1. There is nothing as important to humanity as God’s matchless grace, for it has opened the door for so many blessings from God.
 2. Grace has been defined as: “God’s unmerited favor toward man.”
 3. Grace is a divine kindness mixed with love and pity from the Almighty to all men. It is in the same category as mercy, but not the same.
 4. Someone has described the difference in grace and mercy as:
 - a. **MERCY is what keeps sinful men from getting what they deserve—DEATH.**
 - b. **GRACE is sinful man getting what he does not deserve—SALVATION.**
- C. The kindness of God that provides sinners with a means of finding full pardon and relief from sin is described for us by an inspired man.

1. The great apostle Paul wrote, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly 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” (Titus 2:11-13).
 - a. What clearer statement can be found?
 - b. How marvelous is our God and Maker to have inclined Himself toward us and loved us through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - c. How great the grace that Christ provides in giving Himself for us!
- 2 Listen carefully to the next verse, **verse 14**. “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”
 - a. Did you grasp the significance of that? Think of it—He gave Himself us!
 1. He did not give some object.
 2. He did not give some price,
 3. He did not give some gift for us .
 4. He gave Himself.
 5. He did not ask someone else to give something for us —He gave His life.
 6. His blood was shed to purchase for Himself a very special people and those people make up His one and only church.
3. Again, listen to Paul. Speaking to the Ephesian elders at Miletus. He said, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).
 - a. This may be one of the most baffling statements in divine revelation. It goes far beyond man’s feeble ability to comprehend the vastness of God’s grace toward man.
 - b. One of the things making it so mystifying is Paul’s statement in **Romans 5, verse 8** - “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - c. That is what is so amazing and incredible. One might understand how another could make a great sacrifice for a friend , , , or a very dear member of the family . . . but an enemy? How could that be done?
 - d. No wonder that the Greek word for grace took on a different meaning when it was applied to God’s inclining Himself to mankind
 - e. Therefore, we can appreciate the statement found in **Hebrews 2:9** - “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, (listen very carefully now) by the grace of God, might taste of death for everyone”
 1. What a wonderful story of true love!”

2. Saving grace is God’s deep expression of love to mankind.
 3. Salvation is His gift through grace.
 4. Saving grace is not restricted to a special race of people. It embraces all men of all nations. The apostle Peter was called to the house of Cornelius, the first Gentile converted to Christ.
 - a. Cornelius had gathered his household to hear what Peter would say. Peter’s words must have been warmly welcomed.
 - b. Peter said, “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:34-35).
 4. The text we are studying, “For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” furnishes us comfort by good hope that no matter who we are, what we have done, or whatever circumstances surround us, God’s grace can save us.
- D. Grace is an absolute essential in salvation. No mere man can save anyone.
1. No man can, by his own power and initiative, achieve salvation. Salvation comes as God’s gift to man.
 2. The gracious offer of salvation is through grace and the only way anyone can save self is to accept God’s grace on the conditions He has given.
 - a. That is why we read such statements as Peter’s word to the Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost. “Save yourselves from this untoward (perverse) generation” (Acts 2:40).
 - b. Save yourself how? By God’s grace, of course.
 - c. But how is one saved by grace?
 1. Is it something automatic?
 2. Or, is there something man must do in order to be saved by grace?
 - d. Let’s look a bit further into this.
 3. On the day of Pentecost people were told to “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).
 - a. In order to be saved by grace . . . to benefit from the death of Christ . . . to enjoy the salvation God graciously provides . . . these people were to repent and be baptized.
 - b. Who were they? They were a group of people who, hearing Peter preach, had come under the conviction that Jesus Christ is the true and only Messiah, the Son of Jehovah God and that through Him, and only through Him, is remission of sins possible.
 - c. So, as penitent believers, they were baptized (immersed in water) for the remission of sins. **They were saved by grace.**
 4. The people to whom Paul wrote, “by grace you have been saved,” he personally commanded them, as believers, to also be immersed for the remission of sins.

- a. **Acts 19:1-5** says, “And it happened while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ And they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
- b. Please observe three things:
 1. These people who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus were saved by God’s Grace.
 - a. **Baptism did not nullify grace. But grace would not have saved them, or anyone else, in disobedience to the Lord. One cannot be saved by grace and disregard God’s word.**
 - b. One cannot reject God’s will and be saved.
 - c. A case in point is found in **Luke 7:30**. “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.”
 2. The one baptism that saves is part of God’s teaching grace.
 3. Baptism for the remission of sins is done by God’s grace.
 - a. It is a part of the avenue of obedience made available to men by God’s marvelous grace.
 - b. God’s commands come through . . . and by . . . God’s grace.
- D. Without God’s grace none of us would ever even know of salvation—but with it, we learn what to do to please Him.
 1. The very knowledge of what the word grace means comes through revealed truth.
 2. Revealed truth is God’s way of showing His grace. “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (**John 1:17**).
 3. Since God was gracious enough to provide salvation . . . and Jesus was gracious enough to give Himself . . . and since God’s grace teaches us what to do . . . should we not be gracious enough to do exactly what He commands? Should we expect grace to save us when we do any less than those God saved by His grace in the first century? Surely not!
- E. Please observe:
 1. **Colossians 1:6** – “. . . the grace of God in truth.”
 2. **John 17:17** – “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

CONCLUSION:

A. Amazing Grace!

1. Sing it!
2. Preach it!
3. Live it!
4. Tell men what God has done before you tell what to do.
5. Bring sinners to the cross . . . keep sinners at the cross.
6. The gospel is good news. Never turn good news into bad news.
7. Christianity is not right answers to selected questions.
8. Christianity is not one’s ability to pass a religious quiz at the judgment.
9. Man cannot save himself by himself. Man cannot:
 - a. Know enough . . .
 - b. Do enough . . .
 - c. Live long enough . . . to merit salvation.

B. Notes on “Grace & Baptism”

1. **Titus 3:5-7** – “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.
 - 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
 - 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
 - 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
 - 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”
2. There may be no subject more misunderstood in religious circles than that of grace. Somehow the idea evolved that grace is dispensed unconditionally—or at least almost so. Many contend that grace and water baptism are mutually exclusive, so that baptism could never be a part of the plan of redemption without the negation of grace.
3. Titus 3:5-7 stands squarely in the face of that concept.
 - a. Paul had just affirmed that “. . . according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration . . .” (5). Having said that, he continued by affirming “according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration” (7).
 - b. It is obvious that “being justified by His grace” includes the “washing of regeneration” to which he had just referred. Note the parallel:

Saved	by	—————→	“washing of regeneration”	(3:5)
Saved	by	—————→	“his grace”	(3:7)
4. Consider a parallel reference elsewhere in Paul’s writings.

- a. In **Ephesians 2:1**, the apostle states that “. . . You He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
 - b. In **verse 6** he writes, “He raised us up together.” The question is—when were we raised up with Him?
 - c. The answer is found in Romans 6:3-4. When we were immersed into the death of Christ, we were subsequently raised with Him to walk in newness of life. Grace and baptism are not **OPPONENTS** . . .they are **COMPONENTS** in our being permitted to return to God.
 - d. We are saved by grace when we are raised up with Christ, and we are raised up with Christ when we are immersed (baptized) into Christ’s death.
 - e. **Therefore, we are saved by grace at the point of baptism.**
- C. Without God’s grace none of us would ever even know of salvation—but with it, we learn what to do to please Him.
1. Are you ready this day . . . yes even this very hour to accept God’s grace and to respond to God’s grace by obeying what God’s grace has revealed to you to obey?
 2. God has done His part . . . will you now do yours?

God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation.