
Salvation by Grace

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

A proper Scriptural concept of Grace is fast disappearing in many religious circles of our day. We talk about Salvation by Grace then coax people to do something in order to be pleasing to a Holy God. In today's preaching, faith is demanded on the part of the sinner as though he already possesses it and can refuse to exercise it. We have unregenerate, dead sinners trying to make a decision that God in Heaven is doing to accept as a basis for an entrance into His family. Many Pastors urge a trip to the front of the church for a public profession, making it a vital part of their Eternal Salvation. By the way, we might as well get them baptized and receive them into the church membership in the same trip. With the church classifying them as saved and a member, we swell our membership rolls for other churchers to notice our growth. What a poor measurement of success!

If the Spirit of God is supposed to convict men of their personal sin at the preaching of the Gospel, why urge them for ten, twenty, or thirty minutes to make some public display? Will not their changed life demonstrate sufficiently the work of Regeneration by the Spirit within them? If water Baptism is a public testimony of their identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, why must we demand a public response of people moving forward to do something? Who is drawing sinners to Himself? "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" John 14:6. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" John 12:32. "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" John 6:44. "And when He (The Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" John 16:8.

Definition of Grace

It is the favor of God freely bestowed independent of any merit of labor on the part of the believer and receiver. God's Grace is based entirely upon the work of His Son on Calvary's cross. "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" Romans 5:15. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" John 1:17. "To the praise and glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" Ephesians 1:6. "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 by the grace of God should taste death for every man" Heb. 2:9.

It is most difficult for man to concede a total inability to place God under obligation to respond to his action. Many conclude they are saved by an exercise of faith despite the plain teaching of the Bible. Ephesians 2:8, 9 states, "AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES" and "NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast." Faith is merely the medium through which Grace is communicated to us. Faith is not laborious or meritorious. It is not generated by us or to be used as a medium of exchange for Divine Favor. God's Marvelous Grace is not to be purchased or deserved. Note verse 8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" The gift here mentioned is not only Salvation, but also Grace and the medium of faith. We rest upon the Grace of God, not our faith. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" Romans 5:2.

In Grace everything required of us is supplied by God. Faith is a gift and communicated to us through the Word of God. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" Romans 10:17.

Repentance that God requires is also His gift. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance?" Romans 2:4. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" Acts 5:31. "When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God saying, 'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life'" Acts 11:18.

We are completely dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit, not only to convince us of sin in the sight of a Holy God, but also to reveal the Saviour. There is no other medium communicating such Truth. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Word. "How be it when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truths: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he will shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" John 16:13, 14.

The revelation of Truth by the Holy Spirit, Repentance, Faith and all other essentials of our Eternal Salvation, are supplied by God's Grace. How dare we conclude that we are rescued from sin by some personal action? Many people sit in church thinking their eternal destiny depends upon what they do rather than the Grace of God. We had better get back to willingness on our part to trust the Lord to do it all. The Philippian Jailor was not told to do anything when prostrate on the ground trembling and asking for direction. He was to believe in the authority and

action of another person completely on the outside of him. "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" Acts 16:30, 31.

Biblical terms indicate that we are to CALL in complete dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" Romans 10:13. We are to RECEIVE AND BELIEVE! "But as many as received him, to them give he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" John 1:12. The work is accomplished by God. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" John 1:13. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" Ephesians 2:10.

We do not control the population of Heaven or Hell. This is God's business. We do not convince people to be saved. That is the work of the Holy Spirit within hearts made honest by Him. God speaks through the message we teach and preach. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" Romans 1:16.

Grace Teaches Us

In the revelation of the Holy Spirit of our lost condition, we realize our inability to do anything to please a Holy God. Then Christ is revealed as the only one acceptable to God. The Holy Spirit reveals Him only to a repentant sinner. We have the delightful opportunity of trusting the Lord Jesus Christ to accomplish in our behalf all that is necessary to become acceptable in the sight of a Holy God. Such a position motivates our action of separation from this world because of our relationship with God. God's Grace teaches us these facts.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" Titus 2:11-13.

Grace teaches us a higher plain that the selfish motivation to get from Hell to Heaven. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" Titus 2:14. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" Eph. 1:4.

God's grace is the greatest motivation for service for the One Who died for us. No longer can we keep His money in our pocket books or live for ourselves. Grace teaches us to say "NO" to that which is displeasing to our God. We say "YES" to His direction for our conduct and authority. We reach Heaven because of God's action, not ours. We would have no access to His Eternal Riches if it were not for His marvelous Grace manifested in the provision of His Son.

"Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold, Threaten the soul with infinite loss; Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold, Points to the refuge, and mighty cross. Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, freely bestowed on all who believe; you that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive?" (GRACE GREATER THAN OUR SIN, Johnston). "It was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed! Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. This grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home" (AMAZING GRACE, Newton).

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