

Salvation: By God's Grace

INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I want to continue our study of salvation.
 - A. Last month we talked about why salvation is so important to us, which is because God is holy, and we are sinners, which is a massive problem for us—our greatest problem.
 - B. With that in mind, I want to follow that lesson with a study of how salvation must, therefore, be by *God's grace* and what that means to us.
 - C. The apostles Paul sums up our condition in connection with grace (Eph. 2:4-5 – But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)").
2. To approach this subject I want to look at three things: 1) the definition of grace, 2) why we need grace, and finally what being *saved by grace* means to us.

BODY:

I. Grace defined (two meanings):

- A. "That which affords joy, pleasure, delight,...loveliness" (*The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*)
 1. "Graciousness, attractiveness" (*BDAG – A Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.*)
 2. This idea is found in the N.T. mainly in connection with our speech and actions.
 - a. Eph. 4:29 – "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give **grace** to those who hear."
 - b. Col. 4:6 – "Let your speech always be with **grace**, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."
 3. Although these verses address how we deal with one another, God's grace toward us is how true joy, pleasure, delight, and loveliness come to our lives.
- B. "Goodwill, loving kindness, *favor of God*, even on the *undeserving*." (*Thayer's*)
 1. "Favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill...that which one *grants* to another, the action of one who *volunteers* to do something to which *he is not bound*" (*BDAG*)
 2. So, **God's grace** involves...
 - a. His willingness to show loving kindness, favor, or goodwill to help us.
 - b. God doing this when he is not bound in any way to do so, giving us such abundant, loving favor when we are undeserving of it!
 3. It is not surprising that God's grace is deeply connected to our salvation.
 - a. In redemption and forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7 – "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the **riches of His grace**." – NKJV).
 - b. Of salvation in general:
 - i. Eph. 2:8 – "For by **grace** you have been **saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God"
 - ii. Titus 2:11 – "For the **grace** of God that brings **salvation** has appeared to all men"
 - c. It is this form of grace, or God's undeserved favor, goodwill, and help in relationship to our salvation that we are most interested in today.

II. Why we need grace:

- A. Because our sin will condemn us to death at the Judgement!
 1. No one will escape Christ's judgement or the consequences of their deeds done in this life (2 Cor. 5:10 – "For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may be **recompensed** for **his deeds in the body**, according to **what he has done**, whether **good or bad**.")
 2. This is a problem because:
 - a. Every accountable person (including us) finds him/herself guilty of sin before God (Rom. 3:23 – "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.").

- b. Romans 6:23 tells us “The wages of sin [any one and all sin] is death,” and this *death* according to Rev. 21:8 is the second death of “the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.”
- 3. We need grace, or God’s favor shown on the undeserving, because our sin means we deserve to be condemned to face death in hell at the Judgement!
- B. Because as *sinner*s, we are *unable to save ourselves* from the punishment of death in the lake of fire and brimstone! This is true for two reasons.
 - 1. Saving ourselves requires perfect obedience to God’s law.
 - a. Even under the O.T. if someone kept the law perfectly, they could avoid the law’s **curse** of death and condemnation (Gal. 3:10 – “For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “**Cursed** is everyone who **does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.**”).
 - i. Did you get that? The curse of the law comes because people violate the law.
 - ii. So, if someone did do “all things written in the book/law” all the time, they would save themselves!
 - b. All this is silly talk, seeing even here Paul states that everyone who seeks justification by law is *cursed* because they fail to obey the whole law—they sin in breaking the law.
 - c. And, we have just established that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).
 - d. We need grace since we cannot save ourselves without keeping God’s law perfectly, and we do not keep God’s law perfectly.
 - 2. A sinner can never do enough good, never obey enough, to negate his/her sin and its condemnation.
 - a. Think of it this way: If you were to rob a bank, would the fact that you never broke the law again somehow justify, or take away, the fact that you robbed that bank? No!
 - i. Robbers do this from time to time. They want to enjoy the money they stole by blending into society as *model citizens* to never draw attention to themselves.
 - ii. But law officers continue to look for them to bring them to justice for *breaking the law* no matter how long it takes or how they have lived their life since.
 - b. In the same way, once we sin, or break God’s law, doing the other things His law commands will not cause the law to declare our sin to no longer be sin, or to justify our actions and claim we are righteous, or to say that sin never happened!
 - c. This is Paul’s point (Rom. 3:20 – “Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified** [pronounced righteous] **in His sight**, for by the law *is* the **knowledge of sin.**”).
 - d. So, despite how God’s law is designed to show us what is right, when we break that law it shows us to be [gives us knowledge that we are] sinners deserving of death (Rom. 7:9-11 – “Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, **sin sprang to life**¹⁰ **and I died**. The commandment that was meant for **life** resulted in **death** for me.¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it **killed me.**”).
 - 3. We need grace, or God’s favor willfully shown on the *undeserving*, because once we sin, we cannot do enough good, or obey enough, to overcome our sin and save ourselves!

III. What does salvation by God’s grace mean?

- A. It means we can be saved *apart from works of the law* (Rom. 3:21-24 – “But now **apart from the Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God **through faith** in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;²³ for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being **justified** as a **gift** by **His grace** through the redemption which is **in Christ Jesus**”).
 - 1. This passage, despite so much confusion among denominationalism, is not to be understood to say that salvation does not require obedience on our part. That creates a contradiction!

- a. Jesus only saves those who obey (Heb. 5:8-9 – “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation **to all who obey him**”).
- b. Jesus will bring the fire of retribution on those who do not obey (2 Thess. 1:7-8 – “when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,⁸ **dealing out retribution** to those who do not know God and to those who **do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**”).
2. It does mean that we do not have to earn our salvation through perfect obedience *to God’s law*.
 - a. Why, because our justification is “**a gift by His grace,**” something God has chosen to give us despite how we *do not deserve it!*
 - b. This has been God’s plan all along for all mankind, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23) and we cannot save ourselves.
- B. It means a tremendous price for our redemption/salvation had to be paid.
 1. That God is full of grace does not change that wages of sin is still death (Rom. 6:23).
 2. For God’s righteousness to be upheld and His justice met, *which normally means our death in hell*, the price of God’s own blood had to be paid for our redemption in grace (Rom. 3:24-26 – “being **justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is **in Christ Jesus;**²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation in His blood** through **faith**. This was to **demonstrate His righteousness**, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;²⁶ for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be **just** and the **justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**).
 - a. Though there is a lot to absorb here, what it says is that for God to be **righteous** and **just** in saving us from our sins **by His grace, Jesus’ blood had to be spilled on the cross to atone for our sins!** The price of death still had to be paid.
 - b. So, by willingly paying the price of death **through His own Son**, He has shown himself to be **just** in His willingness to **justify** sinners like you and me (Rom. 3:26)!
 3. We need to appreciate how amazing the offer of grace is for our lives (Titus 3:3-7 – “For we also once were **foolish** ourselves, **disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures**, spending our life in **malice** and **envy, hateful, hating one another.**⁴ But when the **kindness** of God our Savior and His **love** for mankind appeared,⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His **mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that being **justified by His grace** we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”).

CONCLUSION:

1. To God be the glory for His grace that save condemned sinners, giving us hope of eternal life with Him in heaven!
2. If you have sin in our life and are outside of God’s grace and salvation in Christ, will you accept his grace and be saved today by F-R-C-BP?
3. Or, if you are a Christian but have fallen from His saving grace, will you come back to Him today in faith, repentance and confession of your sins while seeking God’s grace forgiveness through prayer?
4. Will you receive the grace of God today?