

Saved By Grace
“Salvation, God’s Gift”
Ephesians 2:8,9

Please find in your Bible **Ephesians 2:8-9**. I am beginning a new series of messages this morning titled, **“Saved By Grace.”**

Our theme text for this series is **Ephesians 2:8-9**. Please follow along as I read.

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

There are two terms in that verse that we must understand for this text to make any sense to us at all.

The first term is “saved.” What is the apostle Paul talking about when he uses that word? What does the Bible mean when it speaks of people being “saved?” What does salvation mean?

The word “saved” means to rescue someone from something.

Matthew 1:21 teaches us that the reason for Jesus’ birth was that he would **“save his people from their sins.”**

That means that Jesus’ purpose in becoming a man was to rescue us from the judgment our sins deserve.

The apostle Paul said in **Romans 5:8-9**...

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

To be “saved” means to be rescued or delivered from the wrath of God that our sins deserve.

And you will notice that our text says that this salvation is made possible because of “grace.”

That is the second term we need to understand. We have sung about God’s grace today, but what are we talking about?

Grace is an expression of God’s love. God’s love is expressed to us in two ways. Sometimes God shows us mercy...which is God not giving us what we deserve. The flip side of God’s love is grace. Grace is God giving us what we don’t deserve.

What we need to get a good grasp of is that our salvation is only possible because of God’s loving grace.

And that is what we are going to focus in on for the next few weeks, what it means to be “Saved by Grace.”

You might be thinking, “why are we going to spend so much time talking about this?”

We are going to take the time to talk about this primarily for two reasons.

First, though most of us present would profess to be saved, I never want to take for granted that everyone is saved.

Secondly, I think it is important for those of us who are saved to be reminded occasionally what salvation is about so we might appreciate what the Lord Jesus did for us more and more.

So, what does it mean to be “Saved by Grace?” To answer that question over the next few weeks I am going to use an acrostic of the word “GRACE.”

We are going to learn that being “Saved by Grace” means that...

SALVATION IS A	<u>-GIFT OF GOD</u>
SALVATION IS	<u>-RECEIVED BY FAITH</u>
SALVATION IS	<u>-AVAILABLE TO ALL</u>
SALVATION ONLY	<u>-COMES THRU CHRIST</u>
SALVATION RESULTS IN	<u>-ETERNAL LIFE</u>

That is our agenda for today and the next few Sundays.

I was tempted to try to cover all of that in one sermon, but I didn’t want to make the mistake that I heard a professor who was invited to speak at YALE UNIVERSITY made. He decided to base his talk on an acrostic, using the word Y.A.L.E. He spoke on four attributes of a Yale student. They’re Young, they’re Adventurous, they’re Loyal, and they are Enthusiastic. He had a good idea but, his speech went on for over two hours. It wore out the crowd. When it was finally over, he looked down at a student on the front row and said, “What did you think of my speech?” The kid said, “I sure am glad this isn’t the Massachusetts Institute of Technology!” (pause)

So let’s get to the first part of our acrostic of GRACE.

If you and I were to go to Walmart this afternoon and conduct a survey asking the question, “How do you get to heaven?” I am sure we would hear things like, “The way you get to heaven is you try to be good and do your best” or “Work real hard at being a moral person” or “Do more good things in life than you do bad things in life and if your good pile is higher than your bad pile, God’s going to say, “You’re a good person, so come on in.”

You realize don’t you that those responses would be wrong and in total contradiction of what the Bible teaches about salvation.

The Bible teaches that...

- Being “Saved by Grace” means... **Salvation is a GIFT of GOD**

And to be saved or to better appreciate the salvation that is ours we need to understand three truths about Salvation as a gift of God. First, we need to understand that...

1. SALVATION IS A TRUE GIFT, IT IS ABSOLUTELY FREE.

Some so called gifts are not gifts at all.

Have you ever received an advertisement that said something like...“We have a free gift for you....you buy two nights lodging at such and such price and we will give you a third nights stay free!”

That is really not a gift is it?

For a gift to be a gift it must be offered by the giver freely, no strings attached, to the recipient.

Let me show you what I mean. (from the pulpit get a new gasoline can with a bow on it and attached to the can a gasoline gift card) I know the price of gasoline has been coming down a bit, but it is still very, very expensive, so I thought that I would give the gift of some gasoline this morning. Yep, someone is going to leave here this morning with free gas...enough free gas to pay for your trip here to church this morning and enough to bring you back tonight. So, anyone interested? Look at the bottom of your message notes...there should be a number underlined...who has number 26? Ok, you get the gas...here you go... it's all yours, no strings attached...

God offers the gift of salvation just like that, no strings attached. It really is free.

That is the fundamental difference between biblical Christianity and every other religion in the world.

Every other religious belief system in the world, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, ect... is based on the idea that one gains God's approval and acceptance by doing.

One religion says do this and don't do that and you will be “saved.”

Another religion says don't do this instead do that and you will be “saved.”

Religions are all about rules, regulations, and rituals.

Biblical Christianity however, isn't about keeping rules, regulations, and observing rituals, biblical Christianity isn't about earning or meriting salvation.

The gift of salvation is offered absolutely free to us. Salvation is a TRUE gift, it is absolutely FREE.

How is that possible? How can salvation be free? We find the answer to that question in the second truth we need to understand about Salvation as a Gift of God. The second truth is this...

2. SALVATION IS AN EXPENSIVE GIFT, IT WAS PAID FOR BY CHRIST

We must never make the mistake of thinking that because salvation is free that it is cheap.

In order for our salvation to be possible a price had to be paid. Jesus paid that price at the cross.

Think for a moment of all Jesus did for us at the cross. At the cross Jesus provided...

1) SUBSTITUTION ... which means Jesus died in the place of sinners.

1 Peter 3:18 teaches that Jesus “suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit..”

2) JUSTIFICATION ... which means that God sees the saved just as if they had never sinned.

Romans 5:9 says that the saved have been “justified by His blood...”

3) RECONCILIATION... which means the saved are at peace with God.

Romans 5:10 says that though we were the enemies of God in our sin...“we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son...”

4) REDEMPTION ... which means the debt of our sin is fully paid.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says that the Christian is redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ.”

5) PROPITIATION ... which means God's justice is satisfied.

1 John 2:2... Jesus “...is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

6) **FORGIVENESS** ... which means the guilt of our sin is erased.

Ephesians 1:7 says that because of the blood of Christ, the saved are forgiven of their sins, “according to the riches of His grace.”

1 John 1:7 says that it is the “blood of Jesus Christ” that “cleanses us from all sin.”

Salvation is an expensive gift.

In the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, a group of Army Rangers are given the mission to go deep into enemy territory to find and bring home Private James Ryan. When Ryan is located he refuses to abandon his fellow soldiers because a big battle is coming. So, the Army Rangers stay and fight. Almost everyone dies in the battle. Private Ryan survived.

The leader of the Rangers (played by Tom Hanks) is wounded and is dying, but the battle has been won. In those moments, Hanks whispers to Ryan “earn this.”

It's unlikely however that an Army Ranger would have said that because the Ranger motto has been for more than 200 years...“I choose this.” In other words, I volunteered for this, I give my life for you...that's my job.

When we look at the cross... we don't hear...“earn this.” No, we hear “I choose this, I volunteered for this, I willingly and lovingly give up my life for you. Salvation is yours at no cost to you. I will pay the price.”

Salvation is a TRUE gift, it is absolutely FREE.

Salvation is an EXPENSIVE gift, it was paid for by CHRIST.

And thirdly, we need to understand that...

3. SALVATION IS A **SPECIAL GIFT**, IT CONTAINS SEVERAL GIFTS IN ONE **PACKAGE**

When a person receives the gift of salvation they receive several gifts.

For instance....at the moment of salvation...

1) The saved are given the gift of **JESUS**

John 3:16 says that Jesus is a gift of God to the world. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Jesus of course is the best part of the gift of salvation. Jesus becomes our Savior and Lord. Jesus becomes our best friend.

At the moment of salvation, the saved are also given...

2) The saved are given the gift of the **HOLY SPIRIT**

In **ACTS 2:38**, Peter preaching at Pentecost, proclaimed that if Jesus would be embraced as Savior, the gift of the Holy Spirit received.

The very moment a person is saved, the Holy Spirit is given to indwell, to teach, to guide, to empower.

At the moment of salvation...

3) The saved are given the gift of **HEAVEN**.

Listen to what 1 John 5:11-13 says.

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

You know that is how I know that when my earthly life is over I am going to heaven. God has already given heaven to me. He gave it to me the moment Jesus became my Savior.

The gift of salvation is a package deal. You get Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Heaven all at the same time. It is a special gift.

Conclusion:

What does it mean to be “Saved by Grace?”

It means that Salvation is a GIFT of GOD.

Have you received God's gift? He wants you to have it. Because of His grace it is yours for the taking.

Christian, are you thankful for God's gift? Are you showing that?