

Faith, Works and Grace

Part II

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by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by **grace** are ye saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of **works**, lest any man should boast.

This past week I was approached in the parking lot at Home Depot by a young man who wanted to tell me about Jesus.

So I ask him what I had to do to go to heaven. He told me that I must believe that Jesus died for me on the cross; that I must ask Him to come into my heart and save me and then live a life of repentance to go to heaven.

I asked the young man a few pointed questions to which he became quite frustrated and wanted to know if I was a Baptist.

This young man was very good at repeating what he had been taught to say but he clearly did not understand what it means to put your trust completely in Jesus Christ to save you.

He is but another victim of those Peter warned us about.

2 Peter 3:16 As also [Paul] in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Our text of **Ephesians 2:8-9** is a favorite target of those who would twist and pervert the Scriptures.

For example, some of the Calvinist persuasion would tell you that faith, rather than the grace of God, is the gift spoken of here and therefore if God feels like giving you faith to believe you will be saved and if He doesn't then you are just not one of the elect and God has chosen for you to go to hell.

This particular heresy makes God responsible for the lost man's rejection of Christ - rather than him.

The other extreme of the twisting of these Scriptures is that, yes, Jesus will save you but you have to live to a certain level of holiness to keep it; this being what was preached by the young man in the parking lot.

Listen folks, all of you may not need to know Bible doctrine to the level of a preacher or teacher of the Word, but when it comes to the doctrine of salvation you need to clearly understand it; the eternal future of everyone you know and love depends on that doctrine.

Last week as we studied the role of faith, works and God's grace in our Christian life and were able to put these two verses of Scripture in a proper and orderly perspective.

Today, we want to take this a little further.

I. We are saved by the grace of God.

A. The grace of God is extended to us in many forms and in many ways and circumstances.

1. In this specific application, the grace of God that saves a man from his sins is that gracious act of pure love on the part of Jesus in His shedding His blood for us on the cross; thereby paying our debt of sin completely and in full.

2. There is no other act of grace, no other way or means, no other system of religion, no other plan or action of any kind that can save a sinner from the judgment of God we all deserve.

3. **Acts 4:12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

4. **John 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

5. So this is settled; God's act of grace by which we are saved is what Jesus did for us on the cross.

II. We are saved through faith.

*A. Grace is what God does; **faith** is what we do.*

1. Faith means to trust in, to rely upon.

2. Everyone understands what faith is; we use it every day.

a. You take the medicine you doctor prescribes.

b. You merge into fast moving traffic.

- c. You get on an airplane.
- d. You sign a note to pay for a car.
- e. You eat food at a restaurant that someone else prepared.

3. Like grace, faith is a term that can be and is used broadly; faith or trust can be placed in many things; including the wrong things.

4. Half of those married in America later get a divorce - often because someone placed their faith in the wrong person.

B. In this application, verse 8 speaks of our placing our trust, our faith, in that gracious act of Jesus when He shed His blood for us on the cross.

1. It is BY grace THROUGH faith.

2. **Romans 3:24-25**

24 Being justified freely **by his grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation **through faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

3. **It is not our faith that saves us**, it is what our faith is in that saves us...provided you have placed your faith in the right thing, which is exclusively the blood of Jesus!

4. **Romans 5:9** Much more then, being now **justified by his blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

5. Faith is that which connects you to God's grace.

6. Our faith does not save us, but it connects with that which does.

III. Our salvation is not of works.

A. Sometimes the Bible, in order to clarify what is, shows us what is not.

1. For example, in Wednesday night Bible study, we studied Psalm 1.

2. **Psalm 1:1** Blessed *is* the man that **walketh not** in the counsel of the ungodly, **nor standeth** in the way of sinners, **nor sitteth** in the seat of the scornful.

B. Salvation is not of works.

1. Good works are just that; they are good! Good works are good and wonderful and God is all for it that we who are saved should continually do good works.

2. **Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

3. God simply wants to make it clear that good works on our part, wonderful as they are, have no role whatsoever in saving us from our sins.

4. The only good work that has anything to do with saving us - is the good work that Jesus did for us when He died in our place and was buried and rose again the third day!

Not only is our salvation not of works:

IV. Our salvation is not of ourselves.

A. There are other things that we must actually do that are not works.

1. Exercising faith is one of those things we must do that is not a work.

2. Faith is more like a choice; a decision to trust.

3. Faith is NOT a work, as we established from Scripture last week.

4. And, as we have already established, it is not our faith that saves us.

*B. Another of those things that we must actually do that is not a work **is to repent.***

1. **Mark 1:14-15**

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

2. **Acts 17:30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to **repent**:

3. Repent = **metanoēō**

met-an-o-eh'-o

From **G3326** and **G3539**; to *think differently* or *afterwards*, that is, *reconsider* (morally to *feel compunction*): - repent.

4. This command **is to change your mind.**

5. Changing our mind **is of ourselves**; it is something we do... but changing our mind is not a work.

6. Don't you have to change your mind about what to trust in, in order to place your faith in Jesus?

7. Repentance for the lost man is extremely simple and easy to understand, yet is one of the most twisted and misrepresented terms in the Bible; even at the hands of well-meaning Baptist preachers.

8. You preachers; **don't ever** stand up and tell a lost man he must turn from his sins in order to be saved.

a. Not only is turning from his sins a work, he simply cannot do it until after he is saved and has the power of Christ living in him.

b. Tell him to change his mind about what he is depending on and put his trust in Jesus.

c. Tell him to quit trusting in dead works and trust in Jesus!

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

9. Even so, it is not the changing of our mind that saves us, **it is what we change our mind about that saves us**, provided that **the object of that new trust is the blood of Jesus**.

Conclusion:

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by **grace** are ye saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*

9 Not of **works**, lest any man should boast.

So, if we were to read **Ephesians 2:8-9** with the applicable definitions of these terms inserted instead of just the words themselves, it might go something like this:

For by grace, that act of pure love in Jesus shedding His blood for us on the cross are ye saved, being received through faith, the act on your part of placing your trust, your reliance completely upon Him to save you; and that not of yourselves understanding that no part of your salvation is of or dependent upon you; it is not of works but rather it is the gift of God: not of your religious activities or your meritorious deeds or your refraining from sins, lest you be able to boast or to brag that you had some part in providing this for yourself.

What all this adds up to is that there is no reason whatsoever that you should go to hell.

Jesus died for your sins, He has proven beyond all doubt that He did, He has placed no requirement upon you except that you change your mind and place your trust in Him to save you.

That requirement is something that anyone who has learned about Jesus as you have can certainly do.