

# Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

*Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ*

December 12, 2019

## **Grace, Grace unto It!**

Decades ago I heard a famous minister teach on “Saved by grace, but rewarded by works.” His teaching was that we get into Heaven by grace because it covers the failures, faults and sins of those who believe in Jesus, but when we actually get to Heaven our reward will be based on the works we have done laboring for the Lord.

As I listened, I got a mental picture of a mom raising her children by herself whose “only” contribution to the kingdom seemed to be that she was godly in life and faithful in prayer and intercession before God. I also got another picture of a “great” preacher who preached to tens of thousands of people. This preacher was very haughty and his life was filled with hidden sin. In this scenario, both of these died and went to Heaven because of “God’s grace.” When they got there, the woman received a modest shack because of her meager service upon earth, but the “great preacher” received a mansion, riches, and great authority because of the “great things” he had done for Christ. When I considered these things, I said to myself, “There is something very wrong with this teaching. It reveals a complete lack of understanding of both grace and works.” As a side note, within a few months the minister I heard this teaching from was exposed to be in a very immoral condition.

The Apostle Paul, who considered himself to be the chief of sinners because he had once persecuted the church, tells us more about grace than any other writer in the Bible. He spoke of himself, saying, *“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But **by the grace of God I am what I am:** and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, **but the grace of God which was with me.**”* I Corinthians 15:9.

Paul’s first witness of God’s grace in the above passage is his transformation from one who was filled with *“threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord”* Acts 9:1 to an apostle of Christ who would lay down his life for the gospel’s sake. When Paul was “saved by grace,” his hatred was washed away and *“straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”* Acts 9:20. Paul was not a sinner being covered by grace. He was a new creation who had been delivered from sin by God’s grace. He would tell others of this glorious freedom saying, *“sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”* Romans 6:14.

The grace of God in Paul’s life was evident for all to see. He said, *“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.”* II Thessalonians 2:10. He also said he *“...renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but **by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.**”* II Corinthians 4:2. This manifestation of grace was not just in his “public

life,” but in the most trying of times. He wrote, *“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”* 1 Corinthians 2:3. Everyone seems to have grace when the cameras are rolling, but the redeemed manifest God’s grace even in their most trying times and private hours.

Just because salvation is not of works does not mean that grace does not work in us. In fact, Paul said the grace that was with him *“labored more abundantly”* than all the other apostles. The apostle gives us a wonderful understanding of grace in the following three verses.

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

Ephesians 2:8. Our deliverance from sin, Satan, and the power of darkness is all a work of grace which we receive through simply believing the gospel of Christ.

***“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”***

Ephesians 2:9. There is nothing we can do to help or produce the glorious salvation that grace brings to the believer other than believe the gospel and trust in Christ.

***“For we are his workmanship...”*** Ephesians 2:10. The transformation that comes with salvation is fully the work of grace. The same God who created the Heavens and the earth, takes a sinner and transforms them into a new creation through the miracle of salvation. 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. Even our labors in the service of Christ are by the grace of God. Paul said he was *"...made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."* Ephesians 3:7. The same God who gave the grace that delivered Paul from sin, gave him grace that transformed him into the greatest of apostles. This why Paul says of his labors, *"...yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

Everything of eternal value in our walk with God is by grace. Paul asked, *"...what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"* 1 Corinthians 4:7. From salvation to service, if it is not by grace, it is not of God. This is revealed in the following prophecy spoken of Zerubbabel who was rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

*"This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, **crying, Grace, grace unto it.**"* Zechariah 4:6-7.