

## "By Grace Through Faith"

The Scriptures teach us that we're saved by grace through faith, but is that all it teaches? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're looking deeper into salvation by grace through faith.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We love God's Word and want to hear all God has to say on any topic. We're not interested in choosing one passage to the neglect of other Scriptures that speak God's truth as well. There's a difference between something being true and the whole truth. And we don't want to find ourselves lacking an important teaching. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

If we're saved at all, we're saved by the grace of God. Without God's grace, we'd be lost in sin and have no hope. One thing is sure, that no one can say to God, "You owe me salvation and blessing." No one can earn salvation. And we're saved because Jesus paid the price on the cross to save us. Someone has taken the word "G-R-A-C-E" and made the acrostic "God's Redemption at Christ's Expense." Yes He paid the debt that you couldn't pay. He redeemed you from the terrible consequences of sin by suffering on the cross for you.

1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God." The punishment that we deserved was laid upon Him. Isaiah described His death in Isaiah 53:5 to 6, "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him."

Now this is an important study on being saved by grace through faith; it's part of a series, "Take Up Your Cross"; and we offer it free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have free materials for people all over the world, on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Ephesians 2:8 to 10, and explore what it means to be saved by grace through faith.

Our reading today comes from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 to 10. Here he describes what it means for our salvation by God's gift. Yes it's a wonderful gift to be saved. Let's read.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." That's a wonderful reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. Father we're so grateful that by Your grace and Your love that You have provided for our salvation. Help us Father always to put our trust and faith in You and in what You have done for us. This our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

There can be no doubt! We are saved by grace. The word grace means "favor." One who has the love, blessing and favor of another may be said to be in the "good graces" of his benefactor. The distinguishing factors of God's grace are twofold: first, God's grace is a gift and not earned; and second, God's grace is undeserved. Grace is not a wage for our labors, a prize for our winning a competition or

an award for our meritorious efforts. No it's a gift. And when a man can earn no wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award, yet receives an amazing gift, he's been given unmerited favor or undeserved kindness. Grace describes the favor of God and all the joy, love, and blessing from His hand.

When you mention to some people that salvation is a gift, they think that this is too good to be true. They figure they must earn their way to heaven by doing some great thing. They can't imagine God giving us something so wonderful as forgiveness of sins and heaven.

The Scriptures are clear: God's grace is a gift and not earned. 2 Timothy 1 verse 9 reminds us that God "saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace." Paul explained it even more clearly in Titus 3:3 to 7, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

God's grace is certainly undeserved. Romans 5:6 to 10 says, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." Jesus Christ demonstrated God's love by sacrificing Himself upon the cross for us.

What was their condition when He died? Well, they were weak and helpless, not able to save themselves. We were ungodly in their, they were in their ways and so were we, and knew nothing about Jesus in the beginning. They were sinners, offending God daily and enemies of God by their lives. They didn't deserve the price that Jesus paid for their sins, yet Jesus willingly and lovingly cared about their souls and their salvation.

The apostle Paul looked at his own life and said in 1 Timothy 1:12 to 16, "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, (Paul says) of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost (the chief), Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."

Now if God could save the foremost sinner, my friend, God can save you. God's grace for Paul was not merely his salvation but His ongoing provisions for Paul's ministry. You see, God has perfect patience with us in all our weaknesses and grants us mercy.

We often hear the word "grace," but this word can sometimes be overworked. While the grace of God cannot be earned by our works or deserved, we shouldn't imagine that grace has no necessary means by which God works and no conditions. We are heirs of God's grace. An heir receives his inheritance as a gift. Well that doesn't mean that the giver of that inheritance cannot place conditions on the gift. Conditions don't make a gift any less a gift. Numbers 21 tells the story of the Israelites in

the wilderness who grumbled against God. As a result of their lack of trust and love, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people who bit them, so that many died. When the Israelites confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray God to take away the serpents, God told Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole. "Everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." Do you think merely looking on the serpent, this bronze serpent, earned their healing? No, it didn't; but they had to meet the condition before the gracious blessing of life was given.

When Elisha the prophet told Naaman the leper to go and wash (that is to dip) in the Jordan River seven times to be healed of his leprosy, well Naaman first was furious! 2 Kings 5:13 to 14 says: Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean. Did Naaman earn his healing? No. He merely trusted the prophet and acted on that trust. He wasn't clean until he acted.

In John 9, Jesus encountered a man who was born blind. Jesus wanted to heal this man and show the power of God, so that He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he, the blind man, went away and he washed, and he came back seeing (John 9 verses 6 and 7). Now who would argue that washing in a pool is the same as earning our eyesight? The man earned nothing, but he believed strongly enough to do what Jesus told him to do. Faith is not merely accepting. It is trusting enough to do what the Lord asks us to do!

Some people think the grace of God means I can respond to Him anyway I want. And they consider grace to mean there are no conditions at all. Do you think the blind man would have argued about doing it his own way, if he really wanted to see? Do you think the Israelites would have argued with Moses about looking on the serpent? Naaman at first got mad; but when He did things God's way, his flesh was as clean as a little child. Why does anyone argue about repentance or baptism today? Wouldn't it be better to trust and obey?

When you refuse to obey things God's way, you show that you don't trust the Lord. You're presuming God doesn't care how we do things or whether we obey Him or not. Faith and love obey; love doesn't argue or edit or substitute our own way for God's way. Since the word baptism means immersion, one who loves God will be immersed. He won't substitute pouring or sprinkling water on the head. He will simply, lovingly follow the Lord's instruction. Trust in God means trusting what He says to be true and right.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Now doing your own will is like building your house on sand. When the rains fall and the wind blows, that house will fall. Hearing the word of God and doing it is like building your house on the rock. I tell ya you'll never regret doing the right thing and trusting in the Lord's way.

We're saved by grace through faith. And it takes both. We're not saved by grace alone or by faith alone, but by grace through faith. Grace reflects all that God does in our lives to bring us home to Him. Faith reflects our response of trust, love, and obedience to the grace that He has given us.

You know, faith is one of the conditions of God's grace. We cannot be saved apart from faith. The Lord Jesus said in John 3:17 to 18, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned,

but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” Now later, the Lord Jesus told the Jews how important it was to believe in Him in John 8:24. Jesus said, “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.” Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, “And without faith it is impossible (impossible) to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Now these passages make it very clear that believers may be saved, but unbelievers are condemned.

When we’re saved through faith, we must understand it’s a responsive faith, an obedient faith. Galatians 3:26 shows this: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (then verse 27 says) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” You see the faith that saves and responds to the grace is an obedient faith. We’re sons of God by faith, but this is a faith that will repent and be baptized. For it’s in baptism that we’re born again and that we “put on Christ.” In baptism God grants to believers all the blessings and favor that goes with being a Christian. What a great God we have! Baptism is not, as Paul said, some work that we do to earn salvation. It is how we lovingly respond in faith.

John 3 and verse 36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” Believing in the Son includes the idea of obeying, not to earn salvation but to respond properly in faith. Obedience is not the same thing as earning. Now let’s say I had a treasure worth a million dollars hidden in my backyard. And I told you that I would give it to you, provided that you go and you dig it up. Do you really believe that a few minutes of digging should earn a million dollars?

But, you met the condition for the gift by acting. You didn’t earn the gift, you received it by doing what I asked. That’s how it is in salvation. We don’t earn salvation by repenting or being baptized into Christ; we respond to God’s free gift of salvation. We respond out of faith the way God asks. Hugo McCord, a great scholar of the word of God, described “faith” as a package word. And he meant the word included more than merely believing. It represented all of the things that people do in trusting the Lord. And by faith the people in Hebrews 11 acted; they lived their faith! And so should we.

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re so grateful that You have provided a way that we might be saved by grace through faith. Father we’re thankful for the gift and we pray that our trust in You we lead us to be obedient to Your word and to be the kind of people who love You the way You have loved us. This our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

“Grace blesses us when we don’t deserve it. Justice gives us what we deserve for our sins. Mercy is not getting what we deserve.” We owe everything to God for His mercy and grace. Because of His grace, we don’t have to suffer the justice of God’s wrath. His justice means that we should have died in our sins, but His mercy and grace rescued us from an eternal punishment. God’s grace and mercy permit us to be forgiven and live with Him forever. We don’t want to take God’s grace for granted. We want to be certain that we stand in His grace. We don’t ever want to fall from God’s favor and lose His mercy. We love God and want to please Him and live with Him forever.

The Lord Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14 verse 15). And when we fail to keep His words, we show that we don’t love the Lord (John 14:24). Keeping commandments doesn’t earn salvation; It shows love to the Lord.

God requires us to respond to His love His way by loving Him. We can’t make up our own way of salvation. He wants us to believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, to repent of our sins, to confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God’s Son, and then to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts

2 and verse 38). By faith we put on Christ when we're baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26 to 27). We can't be in Christ until we put on Christ. And I hope that you'll put Christ on in baptism through faith so that you can enjoy the grace of God. You'll never regret doing the right thing.

I pray you'll consider the Lord's grace and by faith obey the Lord. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message or the booklet "Take Up Your Cross," mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And be sure to like the programs that you watch; and if you will, make sure that you punch that thing and be notified whenever the programs come out. When you like the program this helps spread the program so that we can watch it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, if you try to get a hold of us, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God and to go to heaven.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. Now I know some of those who are older or have illness can't go every week but those of you who can, focus your heart on God and attend worship. Well, there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we're glad help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program and that you watch it. And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.