

Saved by Grace
July 1, 2018 (Transmitter Campus)
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:1-10)

It is very important for Christians to be clear on one thing: we owe it all to God. There is nothing we could ever do that will save us from our sins. It is a free gift given by our loving God even when we don’t deserve it. And none of us deserve it! That is what makes it such an amazing grace. This week we will talk about what it means to be saved by grace through faith and not by deeds.

Digging Deeper

What do we mean when we talk about...

Grace?

- Grace may be defined as the unmerited or undeserving favor of God to those who are under condemnation. Grace is what God breathes into each of us before we are even born. He delivers it in our creation, throughout our lives and even after we leave this place. Grace is such a magnificent gift that only God has the ability to dispense it and He does so because of His great love for us. How is grace evident in your life? To what do you attribute your successes?

Faith?

- “Faith is trusting in advance what will only make sense in reverse.”- Philip Yancey
- Faith is more than just believing in God. Even the devil believes. It involves so much more than just belief. Faith is attained not by believing, but rather from in Whom we believe. What do you say when people ask you the reason for your faith? Always be prepared to give a reason for that is how we can bring others to know about Him. (1 Peter 3:15)
- Have you ever listened to the song “We Believe” by the Newsboys? There is only one foundation and one salvation. Yes, we believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ but do we take a step further than belief? In one of his sermons, John Wesley said, “Christian faith, then, is not only *agreeing* with the whole gospel, but also *fully relying* on the blood of Christ.” The dictionary defines rely as: depend on with full trust or confidence. Is your full trust and confidence in the power of His blood? How is this evidenced by your actions? Would others know it by spending time with you? Yes, Lord, let our faith be more than anthems.

Salvation?

- Salvation is defined as: deliverance from sin and its consequences, believed by Christians to be brought about by faith in Christ. The good news is that it isn't something that is coming for us down the road. Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians that "it is by grace that you *have been* saved" (not that you *will be* saved). Do you think people sometimes mix up the message that we cannot earn salvation and use it as a justification or reason to believe it does not matter what we do here on earth? That we do not need to do good works? Good works are of course a by-product of a sincere faith. How would you reply to someone wondering what is expected after receiving salvation?

Conclusion

So how might we sum up what we mean by saying we have been saved by grace through our faith in Jesus Christ? A little boy once said, "I always knew Christ died for my sins, but I never knew that was enough." God doesn't need any help to save us sinners. All He needs from us is genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. He will "by His grace" do the rest.