

Salvation By Grace Through Faith

Introduction:

1. As noted previously, Peter shrank from Jesus in view of his sinfulness (Lk 5:1-8).
2. How can fallible, frail men possibly enjoy fellowship with a Being as pure, powerful and perfect as God?

1. Salvation By Grace Through Faith – Eph 2:8-10

A. Grace – God was not *obligated* to save anyone. Divine justice would have allowed the destruction of sinners: “*The soul who sins will die*” (Ezk 18:4); “*Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book*” (Ex 32:33).

1. But from Adam and Eve onward, God has demonstrated His desire to bring man into fellowship with Him though he sins.
2. It is not man’s beauty or inherent excellence that motivated God to initiate reconciliation: see Eph 2:1-3; Rom 5:6-11. *Grace* is the characteristic of God that blesses and seeks the good of undeserving, sinful creatures. *Grace* is when God gives us what we need the most but deserve the least.
3. Thus love (Rom 5:8), mercy (Eph 2:4) grace (Eph 2:5, 7, 8) and kindness (Eph 2:7) all blend together in providing a way for sinful men to be reconciled.

B. But what is God to do about sin? Breaking of law demands punishment.

1. **Illus:** A recent story of man who escaped from prison, rebuilt honorable life, and then discovered. Verdict: *He still had to pay his debt to society.*
2. By His grace, God provided what man could not provide for himself: an adequate payment for sin.
3. Eph 1:7 – “*In Him (Christ, jj) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*”

C. How does one claim the benefits of that sacrifice? Is it automatic? Is it universal?
Illus: Millions of scholarship, grant dollars unclaimed by those who don’t apply.

1. “By grace you have been saved *through faith* ...” (Eph 2:8). Faith in God has **always** been the qualifying characteristic of fellowship with Him regardless of

the time/covenant under which man lived. *“Without faith it is impossible to please God ...”* (Heb 11:6) – an eternal truth.

2. This faith is directed toward the One who died: Jesus Christ (as we have said, the road to God *always* leads through Jesus as Lord and Savior) – Eph 1:15 (*“faith in the Lord Jesus”*); Eph 3:17 (*“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”*).
3. Our attention must fall upon God’s remedy for sin, just as in the wilderness the Israelites had to gaze upon the bronze serpent (cf. Num 21:7-9).

2. What Is the Nature of This Faith?

- A. Two extremes: 1) merely mental process, a one-time act of acknowledgment that secures eternal favor, 2) a subordinate to works wherein one “merits” standing before God by effort.
- B. The Bible indicates that genuine faith in God is a comprehensive response that involves love for, obedience to and trust in Him.
 1. Faith without love is inadequate – 1 Cor 13:2.
 2. Faith without works is dead – Jas 2:14-26. Note:
 - a. Can faith without works save (2:14)?
 - b. Abraham obeyed/worked (2:21); Abraham believed (2:23); **thus Abraham shows that justification comes by a faith that works** (2:24).
 - c. Faith is demonstrated by works (2:18).
 - d. Faith is made perfect by works (2:22).
 - e. Faith by itself, without works, is dead (2:17, 20, 26).
 3. Faith without trust will not accept the reality of forgiveness – Eph 1:12-13. We trust that God loves us even when we are not loveable; we trust that God forgives us when it doesn’t seem possible; we trust that God is in control even when it seems He isn’t. **We trust because He said so. THAT is faith.**
- C. Putting it all together: *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but **faith working through love**”* (Gal 5:6).

3. The Blessing of Being Saved By Grace Through Faith

- A. Forgiveness provides “*boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him*” (Eph 3:12). Standing on our own merits, all of us are inadequate. There is no confidence in self when standing before God. See the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Lk 18:9-14); Paul (“*not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is **through faith in Christ**, the righteousness which is from God **by faith***” – (Ph 3:9).
- B. God is **for** us! He truly desires our salvation. Some view God as an adversary: stern, unyielding and implacable. But “*if God is for us, who can be against us?*” (Rom 8:31).
- C. Good works, while not the ground of our salvation, are glorifying to God, edifying for the body and enriching unto ourselves. Thus, “*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*” (Eph 2:10).

Conclusion: God has taken the initiative to bring you back to Him, but you must respond. **Illus:** The climber on Everest. They could see him through binoculars; they could talk to him by radio (even patched his wife through); they could urge him to get up and walk down – *but they couldn't do it for him and they watched him freeze to death.*