

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

SOUL-SAVING LESSONS

“Saved by Grace”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

What is it that saves man from sin? What is it that makes salvation available to us? Some would say that our righteous works save us. But that is not true. Some would say that a certain act makes salvation available. But that also is not true. Salvation is available to us only because of the amazing grace of our God. This principle is taught very clearly by Paul in Ephesians 2:8-9. As we read the apostle’s comments, we can understand exactly how faith and grace work together for the child of God. Paul wrote: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Here, Paul makes the point that salvation is made by **possible** through God’s grace. It is made **accessible** by our faith. Thus, we could say that **grace makes salvation available**, and that **faith makes salvation accessible**. God has done everything He can to save us. Because we are saved “by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8), it is through our faith that we access the grace of God that saves us from our sin.

As we consider this topic of salvation by grace, it is essential that we also consider certain false teachings about grace. Many in the religious world today are teaching things about grace that are simply not true. For example, some seem to suggest that grace gives us a “license to sin.” True, they may not come right out and word it in that way, but such a teaching definitely is implied by their lifestyles. It is implied by the way they speak. Some people who claim to be “Christians” use words that are ungodly—words that passages like Colossians 3:8 and Ephesians 4:29 teach are unwholesome. Some people, by their actions, imply that a Christian has a license to sin. They do things that the Scriptures teach are not right—whether it be lust, adultery, drunkenness, etc. It is implied, then, that grace provides a license to sin. I remember watching a softball game once between two supposedly religious teams who were playing each other. After the game, one of the two teams—with their religious organization’s name plastered all over their uniforms—went out to the team’s truck, opened an ice chest, and began to devour bottle after bottle of beer. I remember thinking to myself when I saw their actions, “Those people must think that grace gives them a license to sin.” Apparently some people—whose lives are so closely associated with sin and whose lives are surrounded by worldliness—infer that grace gives them a license to sin. But grace does not give us a license to sin. Romans 6:1-2 makes this point very clear. Paul wrote: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” Paul’s point was this: You cannot say that just because we have grace, the more sin we commit the more grace we are going to receive. So, let’s just go out and live it up and commit sin so that we can have an overabundance of grace.” That is not how Christians are supposed to live. Grace teaches us to deny sin (Tit. 2:11-13).

Another false doctrine that is popular is that **grace alone** saves us. But the Bible never says that grace alone saves. Rather, the Bible says that we are “saved by grace **through faith**, and that not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.” Scripture makes is perfectly clear that

we are not saved by grace alone. We cannot simply look heavenward and say, “God, I believe in you and I want to receive your grace.” That is not what the Scriptures teach. Jesus taught in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** the will of My Father in heaven.” I am reminded of Matthew 23, where Jesus taught the people not to be legalistic. Ephesians 2:8 says, again, that we are “saved by grace through faith.” Do you remember the question that Jesus asked in Luke 6:46? “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” Remember that Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation to all those who **obey Him**” (Heb. 5:9). James 2:24 says, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” Thus, salvation is not by grace alone, and it is not by faith alone. When we combine God’s grace with our faith, and when we do what God says, then the free gift of salvation is made available to us.

Another false teaching about grace suggests that we cannot fall from grace. The idea is that once a person has received grace, then there is nothing that person can do to fall from that grace. But the Scriptures are so clear on this subject. Look at Acts 8:20-23. Simon, shortly after he had become a Christian, was told by Peter, “I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” He also was told, “Your money will perish with you.” A Christian can so sin as to ultimately be lost. The Bible uses clear language to teach that a person **can** fall from grace. Consider the important words of Galatians 5:4, where Paul said to Christians (Gal. 1:1-2), “You have become estranged from Christ.” Paul wanted them to know that they had been “cut off” from Christ. He went on to say, “You who attempt to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace.” The word “from” is the Greek word *ek*, which means “out of.” These Christians were once in the realm of God’s grace, but they had fallen “out of” God’s grace. So, yes, a Christian can fall from grace and eventually be lost. In 2 Peter 1:10, Christians are told to make their “calling and election sure.” If, once we are saved, we can never fall from grace, why would we need to make our calling and election sure? Why would we need to be diligent to do that if we can never be lost? Revelation 3:4-5 teaches that some—if they did not overcome—would have their names taken out of the Book of Life. Thus, we need to know what grace is, and that there are various false doctrines about grace in existence today.

How, then, does the grace of God save us? What is grace’s part in salvation? What does it do? How is grace provided for us? What does grace mean? What are the teachings of the Bible about grace? The Scriptures are very clear about grace. It is the grace of God that makes salvation available. Salvation is made available to us because of God’s grace and His love for us. Grace originates with God the Father. We are told in John 3:16 about God’s great love for us. Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” What, then, is meant by the idea of grace? It sometimes carries the idea of a gift—an unmerited or unearned gift. The idea is that “God so loved that He **gave**.” What did He give? He gave His only Son so that we could have the hope of going to Heaven. Jesus Christ is the gift provided by God’s grace. The Bible teaches us in Romans 5:15-18 that “as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.” Just as one man opened the door of sin, all people walk through that door because of their own sin. Through Jesus—one Man—came salvation. And all can access it because of Him. Adam opened the door of sin. All humans—because of their own sin—have died. But Jesus has made salvation available, and all who will contact Him or go through Him can be saved.

The Holy Spirit also had an important part to play in making salvation available to us. How would we know about the salvation that God offers if it was not for the Bible? How would we know about just how much God loves us? How would we know about His grace and mercy toward us if it was not for the fact that the Holy Spirit gave us that information in God's Word? Titus 2:11-12 teaches us, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." Thus, from the Scriptures we are taught that God loves us and that He gave us His Word. The Bible gives us everything we need to go to Heaven. In John 16:13 we are told that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into "all truth." Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:3 that we have everything we need for "life and godliness" today. Grace, therefore, makes salvation available for us. Grace is the reason that salvation is here.

However, as we think about salvation, we also have to factor in faith. Grace makes salvation **available**, while faith makes salvation **accessible**. It is through our faith that we access salvation. This is clearly taught within the Scriptures. Hebrews 11:1 teaches us that faith is based on substance. It is based on evidence. As we look at the world around us, we can know that there is a God. Faith is **our** part. God has done **His** part by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. He made sure that salvation was brought down to mankind. From the beginning (as we learn from Genesis 3), God gave us His will so that we can know that grace has been given to us. But faith is our part; it is what we do. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." We must have faith in Christ. But how do we obtain that faith? If faith makes salvation accessible, then we need to know how to obtain it. How does a person build a faith in Christ? Romans 10:17 provides the answer—"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It is faith that causes us to trust in God and put our confidence in Him. Proverbs 3:5-6 tell us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." It is faith that causes us to act upon God's Word. In Romans 10:14, the question is asked, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Once people hear the message, they then have the responsibility to act upon God's Word.

Acts 22:16 provides a perfect example of God's grace combined with faith. Ananias came to Saul and said, "Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Today, our faith makes salvation accessible. God has done His part. Now we must also do our part. When faith and action are truly combined, that is when we meet the requirements of salvation. A lifestyle that does not combine faith and action is described in the Bible as a "dead faith." James 2:26 says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." As we think of salvation through grace, it is important for us to realize that Jesus is the epitome of God's grace. Someone has described grace as "God's riches—at Christ's expense." Jesus is the epitome of what grace is all about. Grace did not come through Moses and the Old Law. They never brought grace to us. Galatians 3:10 reminds us, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law." The Old Law brought a curse upon mankind. James 2:10 teaches us that "whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." Here we find condemnation and guilt associated with the Old Law—but no grace. John 1:17 teaches us, "The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." There were certain important principles contained within the Old Law. But grace and truth can be found only in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the embodiment of those things. Consider 2 Corinthians 8:9,

where Paul wrote: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” This is why Jesus is the embodiment of grace. Talk about someone who sacrificed! Jesus gave up everything so that we could go to Heaven. In Philippians 2:5-8, Paul wrote:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

That is what grace is all about. Jesus had equality with God in Heaven, but He gave that up, came to Earth as a servant, and died the most gruesome death you could ever imagine—the curse of the cross (Gal. 3:11-13). As we think about grace, we cannot leave Jesus out of the picture.

But as we think about grace and salvation, we also need to remember that Paul taught us in Ephesians 2:8-9 that man has no right to glory in his own salvation. Salvation is not of our own doing. Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Even when we have done all that God has commanded us to do, we still cannot say that we have somehow “earned” salvation or that we deserve it. Jeremiah taught in the great long ago, “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23). Neither you nor I can find the way to salvation on our own. Only God can teach us what to do to be saved. Salvation is not of our own righteousness. Isaiah 64:6 teaches us just such a principle when it says that “all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags.” What would we be like on our “most righteous” day—without God’s salvation and grace? Imagine a filthy rag that a mechanic has used to wipe the grease off his hands. That is what we would look like without God’s grace and mercy. Our righteousness alone can never save us. It is not through our own merit that we can claim salvation. When you and I have done everything that God has told us to do, can we then say, “God, You **owe** us salvation!”? Or, can we say, “We have **earned** salvation; we **deserve** it!”? In Luke 17:10, Jesus said, “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” When I have kept God’s statutes and have done His will, I cannot say to Him, “Lord, you **owe me** salvation **because I deserve it.**” I must say simply, “I am an unprofitable servant,” and then thank God for His mercy and His grace. Realizing that we have been saved should cause us to give God all the glory and all the praise. The text of 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 teaches us that we need to let God have the glory in all things because to Him belongs the glory. We need to look up toward Heaven and say, “Thank you, God, for your salvation, grace, and mercy. I know that I cannot earn or merit those things, but how thankful and joyful I am to have the blessing of being called a child of God—a Christian.”

As we think about salvation, we need to remember that we can access salvation today only through Jesus Christ. How does a person access God’s salvation? Suppose a person is not saved. Let’s say that you are listening to this lesson and you have never obeyed the Gospel. You want to receive the grace of God in your life, and you want to become a Christian. How do you receive God’s grace? In Romans 5:2, there is a principle from which we learn how to receive the grace of God. Paul wrote of Jesus that He is the One “through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” How do we access God’s grace? We have access **through faith** to the grace of God. We need to have faith in Jesus as our Savior, because He is the only way that we will ever be saved. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the

life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus is the only One Who lived a perfect life on Earth. Hebrews 4:15 says that He was tempted in all points just as we are, yet without sin.” The text of 1 Peter 2:21-22 says that there was no guile or sin found in His life. He was the perfect, sinless sacrifice for us. We therefore must trust in Him as our Savior. Hebrews 9:22 says that without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sins. Someone had to die for our sins, and take our sins upon himself. Hebrews 10:3-4 makes it clear that the blood of bulls and goats could never really do that. They could never really take away sin for us. Hebrews 10:12 says of Christ, “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:24 that He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes we were healed.” Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth of this very thing when he said in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” When Jesus cried out on the cross, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mt. 27:46), the answer is “for you and for me.” Jesus is the only way in which we will ever be saved. Salvation is found only “in Christ” (2 Tim. 2:10-11). Salvation is available only to those who are inside the body of Christ—those who have obeyed the Gospel, who have become Christians, and who therefore are members of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What, then, must a person do to be saved? Let’s look at what God has to say regarding the matter of salvation. The question is asked in Acts 16:30, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The Jews asked this same question in Acts 2:37 when they said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” What does a person need to do in order to become a Christian and access God’s grace? Remember that a person must have faith in order to access that grace. We must hear the Word of God. We must set aside what we think, what we feel, or what we may have heard religious leaders say. We must open the Scriptures and see what God has to say on this matter. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We must trust that God’s Word is the final authority on all matters relating to salvation. Acts 11:14 tells us that Cornelius and his household needed to “hear words” whereby they must be saved. It is the Gospel—the Word of God—that has the power of salvation (Rom. 1:16). So we must come to the Bible, open it, read what it says, and do God’s will.

Then we must believe in Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus made this point clear in John 8:24 when He said, “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” This is exactly what is taught in what some suggest is the “golden text of the Bible” (John 3:16)—“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Yes, we must believe. But faith alone cannot save us. James 2:24 teaches that very principle. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” We also must repent of past sin in our lives. Peter, in Acts 3:19, told the Jews, “Repent and turn again.” They needed to make a change in their lives so that “seasons of refreshing” might come from the Lord. We must change our old ways, change our thinking, and then change our way of life. We also must be willing to confess Christ as the Lord of our lives. In Acts 8:37, the Ethiopian nobleman made this confession when he said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Paul affirmed this principle in Romans 10:10 when he said, “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Thus, we must publicly confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, and we must publicly align ourselves with Him. Then we must be baptized for the remission of our sins. There are many in our religious world today who teach that baptism is not essential to salvation. But let’s see what God has to say about this matter. The text of 1 Peter 3:21 is one of the clearest passages on this subject. There,

Peter said, "Baptism does now also save us." Notice that it does not say that "baptism **alone** saves us," but that "baptism **also** saves us. Baptism—combined with hearing, believing, repenting, and confessing—is essential to salvation. This is taught throughout the New Testament. Jesus made it so clear in Mark 16:16 when He said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved. He who believes not will be condemned." When, in Acts 2:37, the Jews asked what they needed to do to relieve themselves of their sin problem, Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Saul learned this in Acts 22:16 when he was told, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." How does a person call on God's name? By acting on God's will in faith through being baptized. Baptism is essential for salvation, which is "in Christ" (2 Tim. 2:10-11). How does a person get "in Christ"? Galatians 3:27 teaches us how to get in the body of Christ. We are baptized "into Christ." Is God's grace in your life today? Have you combined God's grace with your faith? Have you trusted in God by obeying His will? If not, we want nothing more for you than for you to obey the will of God and to go to Heaven.

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Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “SAVED BY GRACE”

1. In Ephesians 2:8-9, what two things did the apostle say can save us?
2. Salvation is made by **possible** through God’s grace. How is it made **accessible**?
3. According to Ephesians 2:8-9, what does **not** bring about salvation?
4. After you have answered question #4 above, explain **why** (according to the last part of Ephesians 2:9) that this is the case.
5. According to James 2:24, what does **not** save us?
6. According to Matthew 7:21, what **does** save us?
7. In Romans 6:1-2, what did Paul have to say about continuing in sin so that grace might “abound”?
8. What does Titus 2:11-13 teach us to deny?
9. Titus 2:11-13 teach us how to live. How are we to live, according to this passage?
10. What does Galatians 5:4 teach us that it is possible to do?
11. According to John 16:13, what part has the Holy Spirit played in making God’s grace available to humankind?
12. Paul taught in Galatians 3:10 that grace did **not** come through someone. Who was that “someone”?
13. John 1:17 teaches us that grace **did** come through someone. Who is that “someone”?
14. What information does Philippians 2:5-8 provide to show us why Christ is the epitome of God’s grace?
15. According to Galatians 3:11-13, what did Christ have to endure in order to bring God’s grace to us?
16. What does Jeremiah 10:23 teach us that helps us to understand why we as humans cannot find our own way to salvation?
17. Explain Luke 17:10—“So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”
18. According to 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, who should receive the glory for man’s salvation?
19. The text of 2 Timothy 2:10-11 tells us about a place where salvation is found. Where is that place?