



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Matthew 14–28 Sermon Series

Supports Session 8: Grace

Sermon Title: “God’s Saving Grace” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Connection to Session 1

This morning’s group lesson taught us about a landowner who offered equal and abundant grace to all who served in His field. The text for this morning’s sermon will teach that this abundant grace is what saves and leads to a lifestyle of good works.

Introduction/Opening

Several years ago, we had a diagnostic question that went something like this, “In your opinion, what does it take for someone to get to heaven?” An all-too-common answer might have been, “I need to be a good person.” This answer shows a works-based mentality, which is wrong. The answer is, “The only thing that can save me is God’s grace which is received through faith in Jesus Christ. This is a gift and not by works.” When the gift is received, one’s life will reflect a relationship with Jesus through good works. Today’s passage reveals these truths.

Outline

How we are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9)

1.) By grace – If we are going to have a sermon dealing with grace, then the first thing that we need to do is define the term. One of the most basic definitions is that grace is God’s unconditional love and unmerited favor. No matter how much we may miss God’s mark of perfection, He still loves us. This does not mean that we are free to sin, as our sin cost Him dearly. His grace is also unmerited—we do not deserve it. Anything outside of eternal separation from Almighty God is grace.

2.) Through faith – Our response to God’s grace is our faith and this is a gift from Him. We are a people of faith. When we eat the food set before us, we are practicing faith. We have faith that the food is not going to harm us. When we sat in our pews this morning, we had faith that they would sustain us. Some of us even have faith that our GPS will give us good directions, and we occasionally follow said directions. Since we are people of faith, we should place our eternal faith in Jesus Christ who alone can save us.

This faith is also a gift. When we were young, we were excited about the gifts received for Christmas, especially the loud ones. When we opened them, we immediately took them out of the box and began to play with them. Gifts are meant to be used and not simply observed. Since our faith is a gift from God, we should actively explore ways we should use our faith for His glory and not our own.

3.) Not by works – When we earn something, we are more apt to take credit for it. This is engrained at a young age. We earn good grades, so we tell everyone how hard we

worked. We earn a promotion, and we instantly update our social media status. Saving grace, however, is not earned. Therefore, we have nothing to brag about. The good news about this is that since it is a gift that can't be earned, it can't be lost either.

Saving grace yields works (Ephesians 2:10)

1.) We are created in Christ – Many of us can marvel at a masterpiece of art or a unique composition of music. The amazing thing is that the artist had to see the painting or hear that composition in their own mind before the artwork began.

The passage tells us that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. We also see this echoed in Psalm 139, which states we are "remarkably and wondrously made" (v. 14). The amazing thing is that God does not make mistakes. He does not need a do-over. Yes, sin has marred us, but it does not change the fact that we are His masterpiece. We would be wise to see ourselves through this reality and not what the world may tell us.

2.) We are created for good works – If we embrace a biblical worldview, then we embrace the truth that we were created on purpose and for purpose. Paul told the church at Ephesus, and thereby followers today, that they were created for good works. The Westminster Catechism has long been quoted saying that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. When we discover the good work that God has set us apart for, we discover our unique purpose. Living out this good work glorifies God and allows us to enjoy Him.

3.) We are to live out our good works – The grace that saves and yields a lifestyle of works is to be lived out. The calling is not simply to accept God's grace and become content. Yes, the first step is to accept God's saving grace because we cannot work our way to glory. Once we accept His grace and understand that we are His workmanship, we are to "do" the works He has prepared for us in advance. This is the lifestyle which is evidence of us accepting His saving grace. The living out His calling takes place both inside and outside the four walls of the church.

Conclusion: We should always strive to ask ourselves, what should we personally do with a message like this? We can come up with at least two possible points of application. First, for those who know Jesus as Lord and Savior. How can we better live out our calling and thereby point others to Christ? For those who are learning more about Jesus. What steps do you need to take to accept His gift of grace and stop trying to earn His gift of eternal life? The invitation is truly for us all. Dear Lord, give us the faith needed to respond in obedience.

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