

Ephesians

Lesson Seven Salvation by Grace through Faith

2:8-10

Introduction:

1. The church – the body of Christ – is made of members who were once dead in sin.
2. However, God gave new life to the former children of disobedience and wrath.
3. This He did because of His great mercy, love and grace.
4. Building upon that fact, Paul encapsulates the message and plan of salvation in the passage under consideration in this lesson.

2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith

- A. Grace is “good will, loving-kindness, or favor.”
 1. In relation to God, grace refers to his favor or good will toward man, even when it is undeserved.
 2. In the context of Ephesians 2, it is tied to the mercy and love of God – manifest in His allowing sinners (both Jew and Gentile) to be saved and to be united in the body of His Son.
- B. It is by grace that any person is saved.
 1. The deeds of the Gentiles – past or present – could not merit their salvation.
 2. The deeds of the Jews – even in obedience to the Law of Moses – could not merit their salvation.
 3. *{Some limit the word “ye” in this verse to the Gentiles – “It was a result of the overflow of the kindness of God toward the Jews, which placed the Gentiles also in the state of salvation” (Foy E. Wallace, Jr.).}*
 4. However, it applies to all men the same.
- C. It is God’s grace that makes salvation possible, available, and real.
 1. By His plan of the ages
 2. By the sacrifice of His Son
 3. By the establishment of the church
 4. By the revelation of His will
 5. Without these things, no man could be saved!
- D. Yet, salvation is by grace **through faith** – man has a role and responsibility for his salvation.
 1. Matthew 11:28 – “Come unto me”
 2. Acts 2:40 – “Save yourselves”
 3. 2 Corinthians 5:20 – “Be ye reconciled to God”
 4. 2 Corinthians 6:17 – “Come out from among them, and be ye separate”
 5. 1 Timothy 4:16 – “Thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee”
 6. James 4:8, 10 – “Draw nigh to God, ...Cleanse your hands, ...Purify your hearts, ...Humble yourselves”
 7. Revelation 22:17 – “Let him that is athirst come”
- E. “Through faith” does not mean “faith only” or “faith alone.”
 1. Obedience is required (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:24-27; Acts 5:32; Romans 1:5; 2:8; 6:17; 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 1:22).

2. Baptism is required (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21).
3. True, Bible faith is always obedient (John 14:15; Hebrews 11; James 2).

And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God

- A. Thus, their salvation was not of themselves.
 1. They did not devise the plan that would result in their forgiveness.
 2. They did not offer the sacrifice that would remove sin.
 3. They did not establish the body of believers.
- B. Salvation is the gift of God.
 1. He made salvation possible – for, no one else could.
 2. Thus, God – in his love, mercy and grace – offers salvation to all men freely.
- C. This shows that works of obedience are not works of merit.
 1. No work that man has done of could do would make salvation available.
 2. But, God has placed conditions upon man's receiving salvation.
 3. When man complies with God's instructions, he has not earned anything.
 4. Instead, he has recognized humbly the sovereignty of God and submitted himself to the Almighty.
- D. John 6:29; Romans 9:32; Galatians 5:6; Philippians 2:12; 2 Timothy 1:8-11; Titus 3:4-8

2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast

- A. Works of righteousness do not allow boasting (cf. Luke 17:10; Romans 3 – 4).
- B. Works of merit lead to boasting, legalism and self-righteousness.

2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

- A. This verse must not be left out of the study of salvation by grace through faith.
- B. Those who are saved become a part of God's workmanship.
 - 1. The Greek word for "workmanship" is *poiēma* (ποίημα).
 - 2. We get the English word "poem" from this Greek root.
 - 3. It means, "a work; that which has been made; a product; a fabric."
 - 4. It is found two other times in the NT – Romans 1:20, 23.
- C. The idea is that the Christian is a work of God – the church is His creation.
 - 1. Thus, salvation from sin is not something that man creates.
 - 2. God is the one who saves; so, we are His work.
- D. Thus, salvation makes the Christian a new creation of God – in Christ Jesus.
 - 1. The word for "created" usually refers to the physical creation of God (cf. Mark 13:19; Rom. 1:25; 1 Cor. 11:9; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 4:3; Rev. 4:11; 10:6).
 - 2. However, three times it refers to the new creation of the Christian, saved from sin (Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col. 3:10).
 - 3. Just as the physical creation did not form itself, so the Christian cannot boast that he has saved himself.
 - 4. It is God who makes us a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).
 - 5. This new creation (salvation) is in Christ (the church).
- E. God has created the Christian to do good works and to walk in them.
 - 1. In fact, God had "prepared beforehand" that the saved would do good works.
 - 2. This is His plan and purpose for the church – to do good works (cf. Matt. 5:16; Acts 9:36; 2 Cor. 9:8; Col. 1:10; 2 Thes. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:10; 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Titus 2:7, 14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12).
 - 3. Compare and contrast 2:2; 2:10; and 4:1.
 - 4. A church that does not work is not the Lord's church!
 - 5. A Christian that does not work is not a faithful child of God!
- F. Interestingly, those who claim that obedience is not necessary for salvation will also claim that the good works of a Christian are not essential to faithfulness.
 - 1. They claim that salvation is by grace alone; thus, no obedience is required.
 - 2. They claim that once a person is saved, he is always saved – whether his is obedient or not, whether he works or not.
 - 3. And, they say that to teach any differently is to rob God's grace of its power!
 - 4. They will tell us that the Christian ought to do good works; but, even if he does not he is still saved.
 - 5. They will even claim that a Christian will do good works; and, if he doesn't, it shows that he was not really saved.
 - 6. Yet, the Bible still teaches that man has a choice, a responsibility and a duty to obey God (cf. Acts 8:5-25).