

Unpacking the Gospel

Class 5: Salvation by Grace

August 2, 2023



Introduction

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people." (Titus 2:11)

1. False thinking about earning favor with God through works

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9.)

"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:17-1)

Legalism is the insistence that a person can earn more or less favor with God based on our efforts to keep God's law or man-made rules and regulations.

Antinomianism teaches that because God's grace is greater than all our sins, we are no longer under any obligation to obey God's law.

The reformed formula that counterattacks legalism and antinomianism is, "We are justified by faith alone, not by a faith that is alone."

2. God's initiative in salvation

- a. A survey of promises in scripture

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:1-6)

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers." (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

Other scriptures reference *1 John 4:19; John 6:65; Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 1:30-31*.

3. Grace: God's unmerited favor

"Grace permeates scriptures as one of the most important teachings about God and his relationship to his creation." (Car R. Trueman, "Grace Alone," page 24)

Grace permeates scripture because this is who God is, gracious.

Common grace refers to God's unmerited favor toward the fallen creation in restraining evil and giving innumerable blessings that allow them to flourish.

Special grace refers to God's unmerited salvific favor in which he brings people to salvation through Christ's work.

"If any man be saved, he is saved by divine grace and by divine grace alone; the reason of his salvation is not to be found in him, but in God. We are not saved as the result of anything that we do or that we will, but we will and do as the result of God's good pleasure and the work of His grace in our hearts." (Charles H. Spurgeon)

Grace is at the heart of the Gospel.

4. The grace of God and the Gospel

a. The Golden chain of redemption

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30)

The golden chain of salvation talks about the inviolable order in which our Creator saves His people.

These verses are meant to give us comfort and a reason to praise God.

"God elect believers in order that they might believe, not because they already believed." (Augustine of Hippo)

b. God's grace keeps the believer from start to finish

"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)