

SALVATION, ALL OF GRACE

EPHESIANS 2:7-10 • TV144A

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SALVATION, ALL OF GRACE

By Henry T. Mahan

Ephesians 2:7-10

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

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I want you to open your Bible today to the **Book of Ephesians**. I will be speaking to you from **Ephesians chapter 2: verses 7, 8, and 9.**

Now, Paul writes in **Ephesians Chapter 2**: *“for by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.”*

Do you know what we mean by the attributes of God? The old time preachers wisely made much of the attributes of God. They preached about them and they wrote about them.

One of the greatest books on the attributes of God was written by Arthur Pink many years ago and read by many believers, **“The Attributes of God.”** Do you know what they are talking about?

Well, a simple definition of the attributes of God is the character of God; that’s what we mean by the attributes of God, (those characteristics and those qualities which belong only to the Lord).

When Moses went down into Egypt and told Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go; this was his question: *“who is the Lord that I should obey his voice, who is the Lord?”* Moses said that the Lord said: *“let my people go.”* Pharaoh said: *“Who is the Lord?”*

Before that, when Moses was told by God to go down into Egypt and deliver the people of Israel, Moses said: *“Lord; when I go down there and tell them that you sent me to deliver them out of bondage and slavery, they are going to ask me:”*

“What is his name? Who is the Lord that sent you? Tell us who he is. What are his attributes? What are his characteristics, those qualities that belong only to God?”

The heathen said to David: *“Where is your God?”* Who is your God? David replied: *“Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased.”* He identified God by His attributes.

Our Lord Jesus Christ asked the disciples: *“who do you say that I am, who do men say that I am.”* Who is Jesus Christ?

The attributes are characteristics of God. The Scriptures declare the character of God. Actually, most of the Scripture is dedicated to declaring who God is. Listen to some of these Scriptures:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handiwork. In wisdom O Lord thou hast made the world.” Isaiah wrote in **chapter 6**: *“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts: The name of the Lord endureth forever, (immutability); God’s name endureth forever.”*

He said: *“I am the Lord; I change not. Justice and judgment are the habitations of his throne. Mercy and truth go before thy face.”* John wrote: *“God is love.”*

Then there is God’s knowledge of all things: *“known unto God are all his works from the beginning. Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased.”*

Wise men seek to know who God is. Wise men seek to know the living God, for our Master said: *“this is eternal life that they might know thee, the only true and living God.”* The apostle Paul in writing Philippians, said: *“O that I may know him and the power of his resurrection.”*

Nowhere are the attributes of God seen like they are revealed in the salvation of sinners. God’s attributes and God’s character and those qualities that belong to God are seen in the heavens, in the things that God has made in His Word, in His promises, and in His revelations to men.

But nowhere are the attributes of God revealed like they are revealed in the salvation of sinners by the sacrifice of God’s Son. Listen to some of these:

The wisdom of God planned salvation. We see in the great plan of salvation the wisdom of our God. The love of God is seen in His sending His only begotten Son into the world to redeem us, *“for God so loved; God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.”*

“Scarcely for a righteous man will one die but God commendeth (committed) His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God is love!

The holiness of God is revealed in His obedience, in Christ’s obedience, in His obedient life before the law of God.

The justice of God smote Christ on the cross. The justice of God bruised Him on the tree. The power of God raised Him from the tomb; the immutability of God keeps His promises.

There you see in Christ’s sacrifice for sinners, the characteristics of God. He is wise, He is holy, and He is just and righteous. He is love, He is almighty, and He is unchangeable; He will keep His promises.

But, the fountain head and foundation of all salvation is the grace of God, *“for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”*

God said: *“I will be gracious.”* Moses said: *“Lord, show me your glory.”* God did not parade His wisdom before Moses. When Moses says: *“Lord, show me your glory;”* God did not parade His power, His miracles, and His majesty.

God almighty paraded His mercy, His grace, and His goodness. When Moses says: *“Lord; show me your glory.”* God said, *“I will cause all my goodness to pass before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful.”*

So while the death of Christ, the sacrifice of the Son of God for sinners, reveals unto us all of the characteristics and attributes and qualities that belong only to our God, nowhere, nowhere, in no revelation, do we see the mercy of God and the grace of God like at Calvary’s cross:

**“Amazing grace
How sweet the sound**

That saved a wretch like me.

**I once was lost
But now I'm found
I was blind but now I see.**

**Tw'as grace that taught
My heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved,**

**How precious did
That grace appear
The hour I first believed."**

Look back at **verse 4-6 of Ephesians 2**, it says: *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ: By grace are ye saved. And he hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*

What I am saying is this, while that every attribute of God is revealed in the gift of His Son, in the mercy of His Son, in the sin offering, in the atonement and in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners; the fountain head of it all, the foundation of it all, the source of it all, is the grace of God almighty, and His unmerited love.

First of all: Our election is of grace! In **Romans 11 verse 5**, it says: *"If the Lord of the Sabbath had not left us a remnant, we would be like Sodom and Gomorrah: But even so, at this time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace: If it is by grace, it is no more works."*

Our calling is of grace: I have a preacher friend down in Crossville, Tennessee who was sitting out in the yard one day reading the Bible. He said that he read a verse of Scripture in **2 Timothy 1:9** that he had never seen in all his life.

It was like God had sent a message from heaven directly to him through his Word. This was the verse which he read in **2 Timothy 1:9**: *"he hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, not according to our works."*

Even our calling is not according to our works, not only our election, not only our salvation, but our calling is not of works, *"but it is according to his own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world."*

Our justification is by grace. In **Romans 3:24** Paul said: *"being freely justified by his grace, (elected by His grace, redeemed by His grace, called by His grace, and justified by His grace), being freely justified by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."* In **Romans Chapter 8**, Paul said: *"it is God that justifieth."*

Also, our hope is through grace. Every believer has a hope; it is called a *“living hope; it is called a good hope.”* In **2 Thessalonians 2:16**, it says: *“he hath given us a good hope through grace.”*

Our prayers go to a throne of grace. We are told to *“come boldly before the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* But only through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Our trials are comforted by His sufficient grace. Paul prayed three times that God would remove that messenger of Satan, that thorn in the flesh, that heavy trial that was upon him. Our Lord said: *“My grace is sufficient.”*

Paul said: *“By the grace of God, I am what I am.”* So, like a golden, unbroken thread, all the way through the history and life of a believer runs the grace of God from eternity past to eternity future.

There is no point in the life of a redeemed man, anywhere; there is no point anywhere, from eternity past to eternity future that a redeemed man cannot say:

**“Twas grace that taught
My heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved,**

**Twas grace that brought me
Safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.”**

Let’s read our text again: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

Now, I want you to see three things from this passage of Scripture:

First of all: Salvation all of grace, a salvation that is all of grace and all of mercy gives hope to real sinners!

My friend; if salvation is by the grace and mercy of God; who out there needs to despair? Who out there can say, “It’s not possible for me to be saved; I am too great a sinner? I have done too many evil things; I have lived in sin too long.”

Now, if it’s by works, you can say that. But, if salvation is by the grace of God, is there anybody listening to my voice, and I don’t care if you are in the penitentiary; I don’t care if you are on skid row, and I don’t care if you are a crooked business man. I don’t care what you are or what you have been or who you are.

If salvation is a gift of God and by the grace of God alone, that *“not of works lest any man should boast,”* is there anybody out there that needs despair, especially when God says: *“though your sins be as scarlet; I will make them white as snow?”*

Now, if salvation is by works, it is for those who have earned it but if salvation is by grace it is for those who need it.

The songwriter said:

**“Let not conscience make you linger
Nor a fitness fondly dream,
All the fitness grace requireth
Is to feel your need of him.”**

So, if salvation is by grace and grace alone: *“it’s the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast,”* if salvation is bestowed upon a guilty sinner by the mercy of God through the sacrifice of God’s Son, who out there need despair?

I would say this; if salvation is all of grace then our many sins do not prevent our salvation. It doesn’t matter how great your sins, *“the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”*

The apostle Paul said this, *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.”*

Well, if Christ came to save the chief of sinners, why not you, and why not me? If Christ died for the chief of sinners, why not you, why not me? The Scripture says: *“He is able to save to the uttermost, them that come to God by him.”*

Someone said: “That means that he is able to save from the gutter-most, them that come to God by Him, to the uttermost extent of sin, of depravity.” It doesn’t matter; Christ is able to save.

Now watch this: if salvation is all of grace, there is no one great sin that can prevent your salvation! I want you to listen to me; there is hope here and there is mercy here! Salvation all of grace gives hope to real sinners; it gives hope to real sinners, not to hypocrites and Pharisees and religious self-righteous people, but it gives hope to all real sinners.

Now, salvation is all of grace and no one need despair that salvation is all of grace and it doesn’t matter how many sins I have committed; God is able to save. If salvation is all of grace then no one great sin can prevent my salvation.

Usually, when a person thinks of his relationship with God, usually I say, one great offense comes to mind. That’s right; when the average person sits down to consider his interest in Christ, his relationship with God; there’s one great sin!

He may have committed many sins or thought many evil thoughts or said many evil words or have committed many evil deeds. But, there is usually one great offense that is on his mind and heart, maybe a murder, maybe a divorce, maybe a betrayal of trust, or maybe a crooked business deal.

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It may have been an occupation that that person was involved in. There may have been some great sin, some great offense; some period in that person's life that causes them the greatest despair.

Every time they think of God, every time they think of mercy, every time they think of salvation, every time they think of a relationship with Christ, they think of that sin. Let me encourage you!

Jacob found salvation. He found grace, though he cheated everybody. David found grace and salvation though he murdered one of his best friends. David found grace, although, he committed one of the greatest evils, the betrayal of trust, and the murder of a dear, faithful soldier.

Rahab found grace though she was a professional prostitute. Peter found grace though he personally three times denied that he knew Christ.

The thief on the cross found grace although he was a professional criminal. He was being crucified one of the most horrible deaths that man could impose upon a fellow man because of crimes that he had committed.

Paul, the apostle, (Saul of Tarsus), found grace though he gave his consent to those who murdered Christians and though he did everything in his power to blot out from this world the name of Jesus Christ.

I am saying this: If salvation is of works, then you should despair, I should despair and so should everyone else. But if salvation is all of grace, then no one great sin keeps us from Christ.

Now, your past may keep you from fellowship with self-righteous hypocrites. Your past and the things you have done or the things you have been or the things you are may keep you from fellowship with the average self-righteous church member but it won't keep you from fellowship with Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the *"friend of sinners."* He said: *"I came to seek and to save the lost. I didn't come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."* He was called, *"the friend of sinners."* He said to those sinners: *"You come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; I will give you rest."*

My friend, this is what I am saying; the grace of God is an attribute, a characteristic of our living Lord. He is a wise God and holy God and a just God and a righteous God. But, our God is a God of grace and a God of mercy: *"He delights to show mercy. He is plenteous in redemption."*

His salvation is all of grace and nowhere is the grace of God seen like in the salvation of sinners, through Jesus Christ our Lord. This gives hope to real sinners.

Let me ask you another question. If salvation is all of grace, then my length of service in sin is no barrier to my salvation. What I am saying is this; God's saves the old and God saves the young. I know that the Scripture says: *"to remember our Creator in the days of our youth."*

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Let me tell you something; you who are up in years, you need not despair; our Lord is able to save a 10 year old or an 80 year old. God is able to save a 20 year old or a 70 year old. The length of service in sin is no barrier to salvation; come to Christ just like you are.

Charlotte Elliott captured what I am trying to say in that song she wrote that is so familiar that it loses its significance:

**“Just as I am
Without one plea
But that thy blood
Was shed for me,**

**And that thou biddest
Come to thee
O Lamb of God I come,**

**Just as I am
And waiting not
To rid my soul
Of one dark blot,**

**To thee whose blood
Can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God I come,**

**To thee whose blood
Can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God I come,**

**Just as I am
Poor wretched, blind
But sight, riches,**

**And healing of the mind
All I need in Christ to find
O Lamb of God I come.”**

Let me point out something else. Salvation by grace; it gives hope to real sinners. It gives hope to needy sinners. It gives hope to empty sinners. It gives hope to real sinners.

Secondly: Salvation by grace gives directions to real sinners who are seeking the Lord!

Here it is: Salvation is not to pay, it's to flee for mercy. It's not to pay. The Scripture said, "*Two men came to the temple to pray.*" One of them was a Pharisee and one of them was a Publican and one was a religious man and one was a great sinner.

The religious man talked about what he had done for God. He talked about what he had paid. He said: "I paid tithes and I have paid my alms to the poor. I have paid my dues and ceremonies. I have done all of these things."

But, "*the Publican would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but smote upon his breast*" and he didn't offer to pay and he wouldn't talk about what he had paid; he pleaded for mercy.

He said: "*God be merciful to me a sinner. Let thy blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat.*" Salvation by grace says: Don't pay; plead for mercy.

Thirdly: Salvation by grace says; don't labor; look to Christ!

**"It's not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill the law's demands
Could my tears forever flow?
Could my zeal no respite know
These for sin could never atone,
Christ must save and Christ alone."**

The Scripture says in **Isaiah 45:22**: "*Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.*"

Our Lord Himself said: "*As Moses lifted up that serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth (whosoever looks) on him, hath everlasting life.*" So, it's not the labor, it's just a look.

Then, it's not to render my merit; it is to receive His righteousness. **John 1** says: "*He came to his own, (to his own things, to his own nation, to his own people, to his own temple), and they received him not.*"

"*But as many as received him, to them gave he power (the right, the privilege), to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*" Just receive Him!

John wrote in **1 John**: "*This is the record that God hath given us eternal life; this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath everlasting life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life: these things are written unto you that believe, on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*"

Salvation by grace; it's not to pay, it's to plead. It's not to labor, it's to look. It's not to render your merit; it is to receive His righteousness and His merit.

It's not to come to an altar. It's not to come to an ordinance. It's not to come to a priest or to a preacher but it is to come to Christ. Don't miss Christ.

Our Lord said in **John 6**: *"All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out: For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me: and this is the will of him that sent me that of all which he hath given me I will lose nothing but will raise it up again at the last day."*

"No man can come to me except my Father which sent me draw him." Those that are drawn by the Father and are taught by the Father and hath learned of the Father come to Christ!

It's coming to Christ: *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."* He said: *"I am the bread of life. I am the water of life. I am the door: By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."*

So, if salvation is by grace, then we have His directions, we have His clear directions and clear instructions for any honest seeking sinner; it's not pay, it's plead for mercy. It's not labor; it's look to Christ.

It's not rendering an account of your merit: *"Lord; I preached in your name and cast out devils and did many wonderful works."* It's not to render your merit; it's to receive His righteousness.

It's not to come to those things that represent Him such as an altar or a preacher, or an ordinance or a priest; it is to come to Christ Himself. "Close with Christ;" that is what the old timers use to talk about, "closing with Christ."

Last of all in closing: Salvation all of grace, all of grace totally from first to last, Alpha to Omega gives assurance to those who believe, assurance!

Let me ask you this: is there any way that you can find comfort in your works? Is there any way that you can find any assurance in your religious deeds and your religious works?

Wouldn't you always be asking this question: "which works are works of God or how many works should I do or how long should I work or are my works sufficient? Would you ever have any assurance, especially when you came to learn from **Isaiah 64:6**, *"that all our righteousnesses (works) are filthy rags in God's sight?"*

So, you can't find any comfort or any confidence or any assurance in your works because they are never complete. They are never sufficient, they are never without sin, and they are never without self. How long could you keep them up?

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The works of Christ are perfect. The obedience of Christ is perfect. In fact, our Lord Jesus Christ came down to this earth in the flesh as a man and fulfilled the law of God, obeyed the law of God and the Father said from heaven: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*”

So, if my salvation and my redemption, my acceptance with God, are all in Christ, then God is pleased with me. If my acceptance and my hope, redemption, righteousness, holiness, sanctification, and obedience are all in what Christ did, and He gives it to me by His grace; He imputes it to me by His mercy, then I can have assurance; I can have confidence, and I can have hope, because the Father raised him from the dead.

When the Father raised His Son from the dead, He is saying: that all that Christ did and all that Christ accomplished, and all that Christ set out to do for his people is accepted in the heavenly Father. *“We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”*

Salvation is all of grace!