

Salvation all of Grace

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Ephesians 2:8-9

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Do you know what we mean by the attributes of God?

Most of us, unfortunately, grew up and our church life consisted of playing softball or basketball in church leagues and trying to see how big a Sunday school that we could get together and marking records and having socials and listening to evangelists try to get folks to join the church. And we weren't taught these things: imputed righteousness and justification and sanctification and the attributes of God, the glory of God in redemption. We weren't taught those things.

But a simple definition of the attributes of God—and many things have been written on this subject. One of Arthur Pink's greatest works is on the—and is almost must reading for everyone—is entitled *The Attributes of God*.

The attributes of God simply stated is the character of God, the character of God, the characteristics or qualities which belong only to God, the character of God or the characteristics or qualities that belong only to God.

For example, listen to these Scriptures. The heavens declare the glory of God, his attribute of glory. The heavens declare to us, preach to us. Their voice is heard in every language. The heavens declare the glory of God.

And then this. In wisdom, O Lord, thou hast made the world. In wisdom thou hast made the world. Wisdom is a quality which belongs only to God, real wisdom, true wisdom. The eyes of the Lord, omniscience, the eyes of the Lord are in every place. God is omnipresent. He is in every place.

And then the name of the Lord endureth forever. He is eternal. He is without beginning or ending. The Lord is eternal. The name of the Lord endureth forever. The Lord is omniscient. He knows...known unto God are all his works from the beginning.

And then our God is in the heavens. He is omnipotent. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. The heathen said, "David, where is your God? Our God is down here in the particular shine. Our God is over here in the high places and the groves which we have builded for him. Where is your God, David? Where is your God?"

David said, "Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he pleased."

"Whatsoever the Lord pleased," David said. "That did he in heaven and earth, in the seas and all the deep places."

Our God is in the heavens. He is omnipotent.

And then the cherubims and seraphims cried, "Holy, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts." He is holy. That is a quality that belongs only to God.

Justice. Listen to this. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne oh God. Justice, pure, immaculate justice and judgment. True judgment. Shall not the judge of the earth do right? Mercy and truth go before thy face. God is love. He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love.

And, really, most of the Scripture is dedicated to declare who God is, who God is. And wise men long to know the true and living God. If you will turn to John 17 I want to show you a Scripture. The Scripture is dedicated to declaring who God is. Who is God? And wise men long to know not a God, any God, some God, but the true and living God.

"You thought I was altogether such a one as yourself," he said. "Oh, you have got your ideas about God. But my thoughts are not your thoughts," he said. "My ways are not your ways. There is a way that seemeth right to man, the end is death and destruction."

And our Lord said in John 17:2 or three, "And this is life eternal," John 17:3, "that they might know thee, the only true God, know the only true God." David said, "As the deer panteth for the water brooks," thirsty, weary, hot and dry. He panteth for the clear, crystal clean water brooks, so panteth my soul in a dry and thirsty land for thee, the living God.

I have got to know God. For to know God is eternal life. Not to...and the only way I can know God is to know God in the character of God, in the characteristics of God, in the qualities that belong only to God.

I hear preachers trying to introduce me to a god, but his qualities and characteristics are not the same as the God of the Bible. That is the reason Paul cried, "Oh, that I may know him, that I may win Christ and be found in him whom to know is life eternal."

Nowhere are the attributes of God...remember what I said about the attributes of God. Nowhere are the attributes of God—his glory, his wisdom, his eternity, his deity, his love, his justice, his truth, his mercy, his righteousness—nowhere are the attributes of God seen quite like they are revealed in the way that God saves sinners, in the grace of God through Christ for sinners. The wisdom of God planned salvation. The love of God sent his beloved Son. The holiness of God is revealed in his obedience to the law. The justice of God is revealed in the death on Calvary. It pleased God to bruise him. The power of God raised him from the grave. The holiness of God accepted him and his

righteousness. The immutability of God keeps his covenant promises. All of the particular qualities that belong to God, the characteristics that are his only are revealed in the gospel of his grace, but the chief and the very foundation and fountainhead and the chief source of all of God's mercy through Christ is his grace and love for sinners.

And that is what I am reading here in Ephesians chapter two, verse eight. "By grace are you saved." We see in the redemption of Christ the wisdom of God, the power of God, the truth of God, the justice of God, the glory of God, all of these things. But the chief, the chief fountainhead and foundation is the grace of God, infinite grace. "For by grace are you saved," infinite grace, sovereign grace, marvellous grace.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, dead, blind, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, fulfilling the lust of the flesh and the will of the mind and the flesh. By nature a child of wrath. I once was lost, but now I am found. I was blind, blind to the mysteries of grace, blind to the glory of Christ, blind to my own sinful heart, blind, but now I see. It was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved. How precious did his grace appear the hour I first believed. By grace, amazing, infinite, marvellous, sovereign grace. It is grace that found us.

Look back here at Ephesians chapter two, verse four. In chapter two the apostle talks about what we were, what we were. We were by nature. We were dead in sin. We were dead in sin. We were by nature children of wrath. But God, but God... God made the difference. God in his mercy...God is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us. We didn't love him. He loved us. And he loved us even when we were dead, even when we were enemies, even when we were by nature children of wrath. And he quickened us with Christ and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ.

Watch this, now. That in the ages to come he might show off the trophies of his grace. He is going to show us off. He is going to hold us up before the angels. He is going to hold us up before all the redeemed. He is going to hold us up before all the universe and he is going to say, "Look, trophies of my grace, trophies of my grace." He is going to show the exceeding graces of his grace. He is going to show us off throughout eternity.

I can't, to save my life, find anywhere in the Bible where it is taught that he is going to point to us and say, "He faithfully served me. I want everyone to gather around him and pat him on the back and put another crown on his head. He faithfully supported my kingdom. He faithfully won souls to Jesus. He stayed true to the cross."

No, he is going to show the exceeding riches of his grace toward us, not our works to him and our goodness to others, but his grace in lifting us from the dunghill and making us princes and kings, in lifting us from darkness and translating us into the kingdom of life, the kingdom of his dear Son and lifting us from the grave and making us to live. It is his grace that did all that.

Let me show you that in the Scripture. Now, listen to me. Let me run through this quickly. First of all, our election is of grace. Ain't no reason for anybody to get frightened by the word "election." It is a Bible word. You find it time and time and time again in God's Word. You find the word "election" a whole lot more times than you find, "you must be born again." You find the word "election" over and over again in the Bible. You find it more than you find many of the things that people hold so dear. But our election is of grace.

It says in Romans 11:5, "There is a remnant according to the election of grace." And if it is by grace it is not of works. I didn't choose him. He chose me. That is what Christ said. I didn't choose him. He chose me.

When did he choose me? It says before the foundation of the world. It says, "In the beginning God hath chosen you to salvation." God chose me. I didn't choose him. He loved me. I didn't love him. He sought me. I didn't seek him. Our love is a response to his. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. How long has God loved us? Well, God has loved us with an everlasting love he said. God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. If God loves a man now, he loved him then before the children were born neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand. It was said to Rebekah, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

God never changes. We hear that song. He never changes. Some of the rankest Arminians in the world sing, "He never changes. He is always the same."

Well, now wait a minute. He never changes? Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever? Then if he loves me today, Cecil, he always has loved me. If he is going to crown me in glory, he intended to crown me before the world began. He declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done saying, "My counsel shall stand. I will do my pleasure." He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Our election is by grace.

You say, "Why did he choose you?"

Because of his grace, that's the only reason I can give, by his grace.

And then our calling is of grace. Listen to 2 Timothy 1:9. He hath saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace. It was grace that chose me. God didn't look down through the years and see what I would do. He knew what I would do. He knew I would continue in sin and continue in darkness and continue in rebellion if he didn't disturb me and quicken me and awaken me and call me. And he did call me. He was pleased to call you and call me by his grace. Our justification is by grace. Romans 3:24 says, "Being freely justified by his grace through

the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Our hope is through his grace, 2 Thessalonians 2:16. He hath given us a good hope through grace. Our prayers go to a throne of grace, don't they? That's what it says. Come boldly before the throne of grace.

You don't want to come to a throne of justice. If you come to a throne of justice this morning seeking justice, God is going to point out what you thought a few minutes ago and say, “Here, boy, hold on now. Hold on. You are not welcome here because nothing can come in here that worketh or maketh a lie. You are not welcome here. Your thoughts are perverted, twisted, warped, sinful. Your imagination is corrupt, filthy, sinful. You can't come in here. You come in here on your own merit you can't come. But now if you come through Christ by grace you can come.”

That's right. You can come in Christ's righteousness. You can come through his grace. Our prayers go to a throne of grace. Our trials...Paul said, “Lord, take this thorn away from me, this thorn in my flesh.”

And God said, “My grace is sufficient for you.”

Our trials are relieved by sufficient grace. By the grace of God I am what I am.

Brethren, I am going to tell you something. From eternity past, back yonder before the morning stars sang together, back yonder before the sons of God shouted for joy, back yonder before the seraphims and cherubims sang in glory, back yonder before the angels ever moved through space, back yonder before God laid the foundations of this world, back yonder before God almighty ever said, “Let us make man,” God almighty set his heart and his affection and his love upon a people in Christ. And by his grace he gave them to Christ. And from that time all the way through the creation of this world and the devastation of this world and the creation of man and the fall of man and in all the way through the promises and types and pictures and symbols of the Old Testament, to the coming of God's glorious Son through the virgin's womb and his perfect obedience and righteousness and rejection and death on Calvary and burial and resurrection, to the day I was born and lived in sin and God called me by his grace and made me a child of his to till the day I die and they bury me and Christ raises me from the grave and the angel says, “Let time be no more,” and with Christ I reign forever being made in his likeness, every bit of that as our body is grace. All the way from eternity past to eternity future runs that golden, unbroken thread of the grace of God through the whole life and history of every believer. There is no point from the day God set his love upon me to the day God crowns me, there is no point at any time that I depend on myself and my works. There is no time anywhere between eternity past and eternity future, there is no point in the life of any redeemed man that he cannot say, “It is grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.”

At no time do I make any contribution to that salvation. That's right. If it is of grace it is not of works. If it is of works it is not of grace. If there is any time between the day God set his affections upon a people and the day he sets his approval upon them, if at any time God has to stand back and wait for anything done by that sinner, it is not grace. It is not

grace. I don't care if you pay a nickel or a dime. I don't care if you take one step or lift one little finger or wiggle one little pinky. If it is anything the sinner contributes in any way to the redemption of his soul it is not grace, it is not a gift.

By grace, by grace are you saved. And the apostle sounds that note loud and clear.

Now, let me tell you something.

“Why are you saying that all, preacher?”

I am saying all that to make three statements. This kind of salvation by grace...for by grace are you saved. I am saying that so I can say three things. This kind of salvation gives hope to a sinner. I am talking about a real sinner. I am not talking about you play like sinners. I am not talking about you religious sinners. I am not talking about you pretty good sinners. I am not talking about you not so bad sinners. I am talking about this kind of salvation gives hope to a real bonafide, genuine sinner, a man who is described in these first three verses; dead in trespasses and sins, not wounded, not sick, dead. And dead means without God without life without Christ without hope without strength. Huh? That's what dead means.

They don't put folks out there in Rose Hill until they are dead. But once they put them out there you can come on home. Now, you can stay down at the hospital with your loved ones and you can stay by the bedside at home. But when you put them out yonder at Rose Hill, come on home. They ain't no hope. They are dead. That is the kind of sinner I am talking about, Richard...dead, dead, dead, not play like a sinner, dead.

And I am talking about sinners who walk according to the course of this world, I know it, who have their behavior in the lust of the flesh and the will and the desires of the flesh. And you know what we are by nature. You know what we are by nature, by birth, by practice, by choice. But I got hope...hope for that kind of man or woman. I got hope. If salvation is all of God and all of grace then there is hope for a genuine, bonafide, unadulterated, self confessed, unadorned sinner. Huh? There is hope for Christ died for sinners.

And the second thing I want to talk about is salvation by grace gives hope to a sinner. It gives directions to a sinner, directions and then, thirdly, gives assurance.

Now, let's look at these briefly. First of all, salvation, all of grace...I want you to understand what I mean by that. I don't mean the kind of grace you are hearing preached today that God has done all he can do, now it is up to you. I don't mean the kind of grace that says, “You take the first step and God will meet you half way.”

If I can take the first step I don't need God. If a dead man can take the first step, he is a alive, John. He doesn't need anybody to give him life. He has already got life.

The Catholics had an old tradition years ago about Saint Denis. They said he cut...somebody cut his head off and he walked 10 steps.

A fellow said, "I don't have any problem with that. I believe he could take 10 steps or 1000 steps or a million steps. I want to know how he took that first step. If you tell me how he took that first step, I believe he took 10."

People who are dead don't take steps. They have no concern. They have no desire. They have no response. They are dead. I got hope.

Salvation by grace is that God has quickened, God has called, God has regenerated, God has justified and God hath kept us by his power through faith. And he presents us and he raises our bodies.

All right. If salvation is all of grace and not of works then not one person here, not one person, not one person here needs to despair, not one person here needs to say, "Well, I can't be saved. It is impossible for me to be saved."

Why is it impossible for you to be saved?

"I am such a great sinner."

Now, wait a minute. Salvation by works is for those who earn it. Salvation by grace is for those who need it. Now, come on. Salvation by...I am not preaching salvation by works. Salvation by works is for those that earn it. And do you know what the law says? Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you hear the law? What does the law demand of those who work for salvation? It demands perfection. Why kind of perfection? Perfect as Christ.

There is only one righteousness our God has accepted and pleased with and approved of and that is Christ's righteousness, perfect. Now, if you are going to come that route, if you are going to come to salvation, if you are going to come to God by your works, by your good works, by your good deeds, they have got to be as holy as Christ in birth, thought and deed.

But if it is all of grace then our sins do not forbid our salvation. If salvation is all of grace...do you see what I am saying? If salvation is all of God and all of grace and all of Christ and all of his blood, then my sins do not prevent my salvation. He says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow." He says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." He said, "Where sin did overflow, Grace did much more overflow."

Let not conscience make you linger nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness Christ required is to feel your need of him. Who came to him when he was on the earth?

Helpless people. Whom did he help? Helpless people. Whom did he condemn?
Religious people.

He called the Pharisees a generation of vipers and hypocrites. He knelt down beside the harlots and the publicans and the sinners and that much a religious people said, "Look at him. He has gone to be the guest of a man that is a sinner."

Christ said, "The well don't need a doctor. Sick people need doctors. I have come not to call you righteous, but sinners to repentance. You go learn what that means." And when you learn what it means, then there is hope for the sinner, for genuine, bonafide sinners. Our Lord died for sinners, all sorts of sinners, sinners without qualification.

Let me tell you something else here. If salvation is all of grace my sins do not prevent my salvation. Secondly, if salvation is all of grace—now, stay with me, I know what I am talking about—then one great sin will not prevent my salvation, one great sin, one principle sin.

You know, I tell you this from experience. Usually when people start thinking about their relationship with God, usually when people start thinking about their relationship with God, usually when people start thinking about salvation, usually when they start thinking about being redeemed one great primary principle sin comes to mind. There is a divorce, a dirty, scandalous divorce. And you think about, "I can't be saved because..."

I knew a young woman back years ago that had an abortion when she was about 16. And every time you start talking to her about Christ that's what she would talk about, "No hope for me."

Perhaps a murderer. I had a fellow sit in my study who killed his wife. He shot her with a shotgun. He served time in prison and he asked me, "Do you reckon God would save me?"

I said, "Well, he saves sinners."

He said, "But I shot my wife."

See one? That's why I know what I am talking about. I know that people are in an occupation, perhaps you were in an occupation that was a dirty occupation. You cheated people. And you say, "Well, God won't save me because every time I think of God, every time I think of Christ, every time I think of heaven, every time I think of hell I think of that sin, that failure."

Let me tell you something good. Jacob found grace and he cheated everybody. But, Cecil, he didn't keep on cheating them after he met God. That's the difference. You see, when they brought that woman found in adultery, she had five husbands. She was living with a man who wasn't her husband. And Christ said to her, "Go and sin no more," and the harlot, "Go and sin no more."

Now he wasn't telling that individual, "You will never commit another sin." He was saying, "That one has got to be fixed up."

You don't go...God will save a harlot, but she is not going to be in the same business next week after she meets God. God will save a man that has been a crook, but he is not going to keep on being a crook. God will save a man that has murdered somebody, but he is going to go out of the murdering business.

Do you see what I am saying?

David found grace and he murdered his best friend.

Rahab found grace and she was a prostitute.

Peter found grace. He denied he knew Christ.

The thief found grace on the cross and he was dying under a capital crime.

Paul found grace and he killed Christians.

Your infirmity may keep you from the fellowship of the self righteous, but not from God. Huh? I know churches that won't ordain a man to be a deacon who has been divorced. But they will ordain a man to be a deacon who has been the biggest crook in town and some of them still are. That is silly. That is denying the grace of God.

Now, your great sin, that thing that happened to you back yonder, a young girl you made when you were 15 or 16 years old and that may keep you from the fellowship of these hypocrites, but not from the fellowship of God or his Son or his people. His people will love you. They will love you best of all because they love people that are sinners. They know what the are.

No, if salvation is all of grace...now if it is of works, the works gang can't offer you any hope. If you have made...if your life has been a mess and your life has been messed up, the works people can't help you. Don't go to them. You can't help yourself and they can't help you. But God's grace can cleanse you and make you as whit as snow.

Watch this. If salvation is all of grace, if it is all of grace and no man makes any contribution to it then my length of service in sin is no barrier to my salvation. Now, I know what these churches are operating on today. "Get them while they are juniors or primaries because if you don't get them then you won't ever get them." That is right. That's right. They will be too smart after a while to fall for your foolish plans and recipes. They will be too smart for that, "Raise your hand and go to heaven when you die." They will be too smart to fall for that, "Shake the preacher's hand and meet us in the Promised Land." They will be too smart to fall for that foolishness, "If you will give God something, he will give you something in return."

But I will tell you this. Mercy can forgive 10,000 sins as well as one. Mercy can save a man 75 as well as one seven.

Come to Christ when you hear the gospel. I don't care if you are hanging on a cross in the 11th hour of life or you are a little fair haired child with a filthy heart. You come on to Christ whenever you hear the gospel. Some of you have never heard it up till this time. But when you hear it, you run to Christ. You flee to the refuge when you hear it. When you recognize the danger, when you recognize your inability, when you recognize your need, when you recognize your nakedness, flee to Christ. When you get thirsty you will drink. When you get hungry you will come to the table. When you get weary and heavy laden and you can't lift that burden you will come to him who can. And you are not coming until you come to that place. Nobody has ever been saved until he has been lost.

If it is all of grace...Listen to me. If it is all of grace then the depravity of my nature right now does not hinder my acceptance.

Brethren, I know this doesn't set well with some people. But I am going to say it anyhow because it is the truth. God saves sinners and people who are saved are still sinners. Now, that's a fact. You don't go a day in your life that you don't sin. And I know we have catalogued sin. We have made sin to be this, that or the other. But sin is a nature. It is a principle it is a root.

When God called me I was all sin. I had an evil nature, a wicked nature, a nature that loved darkness and hated light, that loved sin and hated holiness. It loved myself and hated God. And when he saved us, that was the flesh. We were born of the flesh. We had a fleshly nature. But when he saves us, he gives us a new nature, the nature of Christ, a holy nature, a divine nature. That is the new birth, born of the Spirit, born of the Word. And now that a man is saved he has two natures. That is so.

Turn to Galatians, if you will, chapter five.

You wonder... you say, "Brother Mahan, I believe on Christ. I trust Christ. Christ is my Lord and Savior. He is my only hope. I want to be holy. I want to tell the truth all the time. I want to think pure thoughts. I want to think pure thoughts. I want to do good deeds. I want to understand the Word. I want to walk with God in holiness. But I have a struggle and a conflict and temptation and I fail and fumble and fall."

Join the crowd. Join the crowd. Everybody that is heaven bound and heaven bent has that same problem. Every man that is truthful in his heart and truthful to himself and truthful to God and truthful to others has the same problem. He said, "If you say you have no sin you are a liar and the truth is not in you. If you say you have not sinned you make God a liar."

But now look at verse 16, Galatians five. He says, "This I say to you." Paul says, "Walk in the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit." That is, walk in the Word. Walk in the fellowship of

believers. Walk in the fellowship of God. Walk in the fellowship of his Spirit and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. If you walk in the Spirit, if you walk in the atmosphere of godliness and righteousness.

Now, you know, here you are here this morning and this day we have got our Bibles open. You are sitting next to your wife and your children around you and your friends and we have sung beautiful hymns and we have praised God and we have prayed and we have given our gifts to be used for preaching the gospel and you feel...you feel a joy, don't you? Tomorrow you are around that crowd and your social crowd and the political crowd and the atmosphere and you are away from the Scriptures and away from prayer and away from the Church and away from the people of God. And that influence drags on you and pulls on you.

Well, read that next verse. But...here is what is going on. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. It makes war on the spirit. It tries to pull the spirit down. The flesh....

Now, let me tell you something. I don't care if you are saved, there are still things that appeal to you that you wish didn't. That's right. There are still things that appeal to you, the material things of this world, the lustful things of this world, the competitive things of this world, the pleasures of this world. There is pleasure in sin if it is just for a season, but let's don't deny it. And that is the flesh lusting against the spirit. But the spirit also lusts against the flesh or makes war on the flesh. Thank God for that. Thank God for that. And these are contrary one to the other so you cannot do the things that you would.

Let me tell you something. What does that mean: You cannot do the things you would? It means as you get up in the morning you say, "Now, today I am not going to think one bad thought. I am not going to say one bad word. I am not going to do one...I am going to be nice to everybody. I am going to pray all day. I am going to read three chapters in the Bible and I am going to witness. And this is going to be a good day."

No. I got news for you. I got news for you. You can't do it. You can't do it. Why? The flesh won't let you. It is going to...it is going to war.

But here you get mad and you say, "I am just going down there and I am going to give him a piece of my mind. I am going to tell him what for and where to go. I am going to..."

No, you are not. God is not going to let you do that. That flesh gets mad. That flesh gets all upset and you say, "I am not going to speak to him ever again, put him out." No, you are going to speak to him. You can't do that, not if you are a child of God. Do you see what I mean? You can't do it.

There is neither one of those, neither one of those natures is going to dispose of the other one until Christ comes and then we are going to dispose of that old fleshly nature. God is going to get rid of him. That body of sin, that man of sin, that principle of sin, when he

puts my body in the grave and raises my soul, he is going to leave that flesh there, leave it there.

I will be glad, won't you? But I know this and this is what I am saying. If salvation is all of grace...now wait a minute, friend, if salvation is of works you ain't got a prayer. That's right, not a prayer. If salvation is by goodness you are not good enough. If salvation is by holiness, you are not holy enough. If salvation is by faith, your faith is not strong enough.

And what are you going to do when your faith...when you get hardening of the arteries and you can't remember faith? Huh? What are you going to do then? You are going to have to...it is going to have to be somebody else's faith, isn't it? And it is. It is Christ's faith. It is Christ's faith.

If salvation is all of grace, if what I am preaching is so—and I am convinced it is—if I am from past to future it is all of grace then there is hope for a real sinner and there is hope for that little girl or that man or that man or woman or that grandmother or grandfather that has been a...that has made that horrible, principle error.

My God can forgive all sin. He delights to show mercy. Some of those that claim to know him don't, but he does. He delights to show mercy. He delights. And my length...the...

You say, "But I have been in sin so long."

But it is time you turned to Christ then, isn't it? But I am going to be in grace a whole lot longer than I was in sin. I am going to be in grace eternally. And what is five years or 10 years or 20 years or....A thousand years is as a day with the Lord. And if it be all of grace then the depravity of my nature has nothing to do with my being kept.

Now watch this. Secondly, and I am going to go quickly with this, but salvation all of grace gives directions to sinners. It is not pay, it is plead for mercy. That's right. It is not pay. Our Lord is not selling heaven. He is not selling salvation. He is giving it.

That publican said, "Lord, I thank you I tithe and give alms."

The publican said, "Just be merciful to me a sinner."

That is paying and pleading. The pleading was justified. It is not labor. It is look to Christ. It is not render my merit, but receive him and his righteousness. It is not come to an ordinance or come to an altar or come to a priest or come to a preacher. It is come to Christ. Come to Christ. Salvation is not down here. Salvation is not in there. Salvation is not in the bread and wine. Salvation is in Christ. He obeyed the law for me. He died on the cross for me. He ascended to the Father where he prays for us. And my salvation is what he did, who he is, where he is, what he does. It is all in Christ. He fulfilled it.

“Well,” you say, “What is your motivation then for living a righteous life?”

Love is the motive.

What is your motivation for nursing your children, mothers? Why do you put up with that? You love them.

What is your motivation for washing clothes and ironing and fixing meals? That’s a pretty hard job. What is your motivation? You are not going to get any reward for it? Most times your family don’t even say thank you. Why do you do it? You love them. Huh?

Daddy, what is your motivation when the alarm goes off 5:30 in the morning? Why don’t you just lie there? Phooey on that job. Why do you want to go out there and work and labor and sweat and get your hands dirty and listen to all that junk you have to listen to and take all that abuse you take and put up with what you put up with and send half of it to the government and try to meet your bills and buy your children a bicycle? Why do you put up with that back breaking labor, huh? Nobody is making you. It is you love them. Huh?

Well, now you tell me that I can be motivated by a carnal love to serve people and it takes something else to motivate me to serve God, Mike? Huh? You have got to give me a list of rules, 10 Commandments or something like that and threaten to whip me if I don’t mind him and threaten to send me to hell if I don’t serve God. You mean that? Oh, come on. You don’t know anything about the gospel.

You are Mr...you ain’t come...Barnard used to say, “You ain’t within spitting distance of it.”

The motivation for a believer is love for God, love for Christ, gratitude for his grace. I love him.

“Do you love me, Peter?”

“Lord, you know I love you.”

“Then you feed my sheep.”

That is all the motivation you need. That is all the...that is all the pressure you need.

“Do you love me? Then die on a cross upside down for me.”

“Ok.”

“Do you love me, Paul? Go to prison and suffer and be stoned and shipwrecked and beaten with rods.”

“What are you doing that for, Paul?”

“I love him. I love his Word.”

That’s all you need. That’s all you need.

Last of all, salvation all of grace, if it is all of grace it gives assurance to folks like me. The only assurance I have got, there is no way that any creature on this earth can find any confidence or assurance in his works because, brother, it comes back to you: Which works? How many works? How long shall I work? What if I stop working?

Now, that’s right. But I will tell you this. If it is in Christ I can say he has done it all. He has paid it all. He satisfied it all. He kept it all. He honored it all. I am already justified and already risen and already, it said, “seated with Christ.” All of my works are mixed with self anyway. Now that’s true. There is nobody here that has ever done a perfect work, never have, I am sorry. You never have, you never will as long as you are on this earth because every work you do, every prayer you pray has got a little self in it. Every gift you ever have ever given, come on, now, got a little bit of self in it. Every kind deed you have ever performed has got a little self in it. Yes, sir, and having a little self it has got a little sin in it. But the works of Christ are perfect, perfect works.

We are his workmanship. So we bow before his throne. And salvation is all of grace. It is a free gift. It is not a work. I don’t have one thing to boast of, not one thing. And you just tell all these little silly religious pious folks out here bragging about how good they are and how righteous they are and how God depends on them and how they are serving the Lord. You just tell them it is all of grace, all of grace, every gift, every mercy, it is all of grace, it is all of Christ. We don’t have anything.

We have got something boast of. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross. I glory in his cross.

Now, if that message is giving you a little help, a little hope, let somebody know about it. I believe you will. If you want to confess Christ in baptism we will run the water and we will rejoice with you. If you want to declare Christ as your Lord, then we will rejoice with you. But let me tell you this, salvation is all of grace. And that gives hope to a sinner. I am looking for sinners, looking for sinners. They are hard to find. They are hard to find. But when I find one I am going to tell him this. “Christ died for you.” Because it says, “Christ died for sinners.” And that gives hope. That gives direction.

Well a sinner says, “What shall I do, preacher?”

Look to Christ. Just look to Christ. Four letter word and two of them are just alike L-double O-K. Just look to Christ, not do. It’s done. It’s done. Look to Christ.