

CALL to PRAYER - did you say "grace"? thank God for graciously suppling your food

## Ephesian 2:1-9 - Saved by Grace Alone

INTRO - *Grace* is a wonderful and essential word in our most holy faith. It defines the reason God saves sinners. Grace is what moves God to save, it is His motivation/reason to save... but is grace the only reason? The last few weeks we have been looking at events in church history - *Reformation*. Today we tackle the place of grace in salvation. Rome said grace was necessary but not the solitary reason i.e. - sinners are saved by God's grace coupled with man meritorious action. It is gracious for God to save, but man must have some skin in the game. Rome teaches that God graciously saves those who cooperate and participate in His salvation (earn enough merits through the sacraments - baptism, penance are meritorious). The Protestants countered - Gods grace alone is what motivates God to save sinners. Gods grace is the sole sufficient reason. *Grace = unmerited favor*. There is no reason in the recipient of grace for why they received grace. Is grace the only ingredient/factor in the equation...or is it God's grace plus man's merits?

- What are MERITS? Did you ever earn a merit badge? (my dad is an Eagle Scout)
  - There are two reasons why you get merits in life
    - Self-worth because of who I am - I am worth it
    - Self-effort because of what I've done. I earned it
  - Do these kinds of *merits* ever motivate God to save us?
    - *My self-worth* - Eph. 2:1-3
      - Dead in sin - sons of disobedience - by nature a child of wrath
      - We lack spiritual life and are in the family of the enemy
    - *My self-effort* - Eph. 2:9 not as a result of works Rom. 11:35
    - It is by grace you have been saved Eph. 2:5,7-8
      - Romans 11:5-6 Titus 3:5 unmerited favor
- Going to try and illustrate what grace is, and is not, when we say "*saved by grace*"
  - I have had a few circumstances in life when I have saved someone (kind of)
    - My son Seth in the pool when he was young
    - Wife and sister-in-law in the ocean (floating false alarm)
    - Man on bike run over by van
  - None of that "saving" was by grace. Each had *merits* that motivated me to act
    - Special relationship and love with wife and son
      - I am a great gainer by their self-worth to me. Earned many merits
    - Even the stranger garnered compassion as an equal and fellow human
  - God is no gainer from helping any sinner and we are nowhere near His equals
    - God does not save us because we are worth it. (~~Black Friday bargain~~)
    - The cross shows our enormous debt not that we are a great deal
- Another analogy - My kids rolling downhill over an ant hill (ants in pants)
  - Without hesitation I was stripping off their clothes while swatting, smashing and squishing these creatures that were biting my kids

- No compassion is expected in such circumstances - only the protection of the child and destruction of the lesser enemy
  - After killing as many individual ants as possible I think I tried to drown the entire colony in liquid
- I hate mosquitoes and my wife hates cockroaches or any crunchy bug.
  - These insects are nowhere near my equal. They do not deserve my compassion or kindness especially when they are harassing me or my family
    - I don't think twice about swatting a fly
      - The fly cannot earn a merit to motivate me to be gracious to it
    - This is not an outlandish or silly comparison
  - The distance between me and an: ant/mosquito/cockroach/fly is miniscule compared to the infinite distance between God and man...much less sinful man
- Men are described as insects
  - Job 25:5-6 maggot and worm (Is. 41:14) Ps. 58:8 - snail/slug
  - Isaiah 40:22 grasshoppers
    - Heaven is His throne and earth His footstool...so what is man?
- What would motivate the Holy God to save a dirty sinner?
  - He is infinity greater than us and He is no gainer by us. We are not worth it
  - We are nuisance and are by nature His enemies that bite His Son
  - God regretted that He made us and flooded our world like I flooded the ant hill
    - Gen. 6:6, 8 "...but Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."
  - As sinners we are but slugs/bugs/maggots/worms/grasshoppers....
    - All the nations are as nothing Is. 40:17 Dan. 4:35
  - "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a \_\_\_\_\_like me"
- God does not save us because of who we are or because of what we have done
  - We are not worth it, and we cannot earn it
  - Grace = unmerited favor. We cannot attract God's kindness
- Grace = de-merited favor
  - I earned many more de-merits than merit badges
  - It is not just that we aren't worth it and haven't earned it...
    - We have done everything to dissuade God from it
  - Everything about me would repulse God from me
    - Yet He became like me
    - a greater humiliation than me becoming an ant and entering anthill
- What moved God to:
  - Become like His enemies so He could be kind to His enemies?
  - Embrace the rebel and to love the hateful?
  - To bless those who bit Him and care for those cannot benefit Him?
  - What moves God to save sinners?
    - By GRACE you have been saved