

By Grace Are Ye Saved Through Faith 4-18-10

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This morning I want to turn to Ephesians 2. Probably one of the most quoted verses in the bible. And like those that are most quoted by the world, the most distorted verses. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 – I want to read beginning in verse one and we'll stop at 10:

¹And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: ⁷That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We know the context of these verses that are given when people quote them about salvation. When we start teaching people and start preaching that you have to hear Christ; you have to hear and understand His ways before you can truly decide whether you're going to follow Him or not. If you don't know what direction He wants you to go, if you don't know what He wants you to do, how can you know whether you are willing to do it or not? When you don't know who Jesus is, how do you know how to follow Him? And we simply teach that the way to be saved is to hear the Words of Jesus and rise up and follow Him. That's what He taught. And right away, someone always comes and says, "well what about Ephesians 2:8, 9? You are trying to work your way to heaven, you can't do that! For by grace ye are saved! You can't go to heaven by obeying God, we are saved by grace!" And so people quickly dismiss all of the teachings of Jesus and run to these two verses and build their entire doctrine on grace and faith, and say they are 'saved' by grace, through faith, not of works.

I want to just look at these verses this morning and see that there is, very clearly, no contradiction on what this says here and obeying Jesus. There's four words: GRACE, SAVED, FAITH, and WORKS. Whenever we hear those words, we've been taught all of our lives, and our mind is triggered to go a certain direction when we hear those words. I grew up in church and people all my life – I heard the ages and the numbers roll right on. People would come to church every Sunday morning or every Sunday night when they opened up and had a time of giving a little testimony and someone would say, "I'm glad I have the opportunity to stand up for my Lord. Twenty years ago I asked Jesus into my heart and He SAVED me." Ten years later, the same church, same bench, same person, "I never want to miss an opportunity to stand up for my Lord." Same people. "Thirty years ago, the Lord saved me!" Ten years later, the same church, same person, same people, same preacher, "Forty years ago, the Lord saved me!" They haven't done a thing different in forty years. They've come to the same church, the only time they testify is to the church people who have heard the same message for forty years. And that word 'saved', has turned into "I'm in heaven; I'm going to be in heaven no matter what, because I was saved."

"Saved" is saved FROM, not saved to. The children of Israel were 'saved from' Egypt and bondage. How many out of the children of Israel walked into the promised land? Two ... out of two million that were 'saved from' Egypt. Two million roughly, they say, were saved from the bondage of Egypt, and TWO of those two million walked into the promised land. We are saved from, not delivered to. When I was first converted, when I first began walking with the Lord and was

saved from this world, I heard people say, “saved”, and I began to just despise that word. I thought, people are saved and they are using that word like it’s already over and they are in heaven and there’s nothing that will happen. And I remember talking this over with one of the men that I had fellowship with, and we just saw how people were abusing this word. We all but said, ‘well I don’t want to even use it! I don’t want to say I’m ‘saved’. Because, instead of saying, “Praise the Lord, I’m delivered from that unto good works”, it meant, “I’m saved and I’m going to be in heaven.” And people rested in that, and they got a false assurance from that. Instead of it being the very beginning of turning away from this world and walking on with the Lord, it became the be all end all of Christianity – “Are you saved?” and that’s as far as it goes. Whether that means being baptized or whatever. Being saved is just the beginning of walking with the Lord.

I remember one day when we were talking about it again and he said, “You know I was thinking about not using that word, but the Bible uses it, so I’m just going to keep on using it.” The problem isn’t that the Bible’s using it, the problem is how we are taking the word. We are saved! We are set free from! We were bound in sin! And if we read the context of Ephesians chapter two, starting in verse one, what is he talking about? *“And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins”*. What happened? You were saved from death, because you were dead in your sins. You are dead in sins. You are separated from God in your sins. *“Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world.”* Where’s this world headed? It’s headed for hell. It’s headed for God’s judgment. It’s against God. *“You walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.”* You are walking with Satan when you are walking in this world. *“The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience...”* What do you got there? You are a servant of Satan, walking in this world, dead, and don’t even care. *“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”* What was happening here? We were walking in the flesh, fulfilling our lusts, walking with Satan in this world. *“But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith he loved us...”* does that mean we had to understand and know about that love? No. *“When we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.”* Made us alive with Christ. *“By grace you are saved”* By grace you are delivered. Delivered from what? Right into the pearly gates? No. We are delivered from the world, from Satan, the prince of the power of the air, from the old conversation, the way we used to walk and live ... we are saved from that! He has redeemed us out of that “by grace”.

We’ve spoke about grace in other messages, but just to recap a little bit, here we are walking with the world, walking with Satan, just living after our own lusts and desires, living to pursue what we want. But God, in his great grace, reached down and convicted us of our sin. *“For by grace ye are saved”*. It’s just wonderful how God gives His own definition of words sometimes ... most of the time ... if you don’t understand something, just keep looking and you’ll find that He explains the words. Titus 2:11, 12:

¹¹*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,* ¹²*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

Grace doesn’t just deliver us into heaven. Grace doesn’t just take us and ‘save us’ into heaven. Grace wakes us up out of our death so that we can be saved from it. Grace is appearing to all men, trying to show them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live righteously, and soberly and godly in this present world. It’s not ushering us right into heaven, all we have to do is just bide our time until we get there. By grace we are saved!

Satan will never have grace extended to him. By the very conviction and condemnation we feel by God’s word, is grace – God extending His hand of mercy to us. He does that by reproving us of our sins. Trying to show us of His righteousness and judgment to come. But instead of clinging to that, men run from it. The children of Israel, when God appeared on the mountain, they all got scared and said, “We don’t want to see Him, we don’t want to hear Him.” They ran away from Him because grace shows you your heart. It shows you your life, the truth and where you are at. Grace teaches you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously and soberly and godly in this present world.

“For by grace” by God’s intervening in your life trying to show you to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world, denying yourself, you are saved from this world ... by grace you are saved ... through faith. “Faith” faith is responding to that grace, listening for God’s direction, and obeying Him. It doesn’t take long to get a Strong’s concordance and look up these words, “clinging to”, “obeying” ... if you follow the root of these words, that’s what faith is. Faith is putting your trust in this person, and if you don’t know who He is, you can’t trust Him. You don’t know who you are trusting, where He’s going to lead you. If you don’t know what He teaches and believes, how can you follow Him? People blindly thinking they are going to be saved because they say a stupid little prayer, and they don’t know who they are praying to or what they are praying for, except they think they are going to heaven if they say that prayer. They might quit doing a few bad things; they might quit singing the world’s songs and start singing the churches songs. They might quit hanging out at the bars and start hanging out at the church. Being saved isn’t a new life in Christ Jesus; it might be being delivered from an old life, but unless you put on the new life, there is no new life. People can sit in church all their life and say, “The Lord delivered me; He saved me”, but unless they follow Him, they are going to slide right off of their church pew right into hell. He didn’t save you to sit in church on Sunday morning ... we’ll find that out in verse 10, *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

Go back to verse 6, *“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* Satan will never get an opportunity to be saved. Grace is a song that angels cannot sing (there’s a song that goes that way) because it’s never been extended to them. They walk and live in their darkness, and they have no conscience about their darkness. They have no ‘twang’ about “I ought to live righteous, I ought to do what’s right, I ought to live godly and soberly in this world.” They never have that thought enter their mind. They never feel convicted or condemned because no grace is extended to them. They never feel like they need to change, that they need to improve, that when they fall down they need to just get right back up. They don’t know that; all they know is, down and down and down and down; worse and worse and worse. And that’s the way the world is, without God, without Christ. Grace teaches us to get back up and follow. *“For by grace ye are saved [delivered from]”*.

I looked at several verse here – Rahab the harlot was saved. How was Rahab the harlot saved? Because the children of Israel went to her city and killed everyone in it except her. She didn’t go through the same thing; she wasn’t killed, she was saved! How many times, the bible says, *“And God saved Israel that day”*. If you were drowning in a well and someone threw a rope down to you and pulled you out, what happened to you? You were saved out of that well! Does that mean you are going to go to heaven now and nothing is going to stop you? No it don’t ... you were saved from a bad situation. By grace, we were saved from a bad situation, and we didn’t deserve it or do a thing to get God to move to save us. We couldn’t do enough right things ... He chose to do it. He did not choose to save the Devil, but man he did, because He loved us. The Devil, he didn’t. The Devil is going to hell and there’s nothing he can do about it; not one thing, because God hasn’t extended His grace to him so that he could change and turn back to God’s ways.

For by grace ye are saved, through faith ... and that not of yourself, it is a gift of God. It is the opportunity of God – a gift. He didn’t give that gift to the Devil, but He did to man. *“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* What does He mean by ‘works’ there? Works – how did we get saved? Because God reached down and called us. How is the Devil going to get saved? He’s not because God is not going to call him. What made the difference between us and the devils? Was it because we were good part of the time? Because He saw someone down here on their own accord doing something good? No. There’s nothing humanity did that deserved or could do, there’s no work that man could have done, because from the very beginning of time God had chosen that He was going to give us an opportunity to be redeemed. It’s nothing that you and I can boast about. We are dead in our sins! We didn’t even have a desire for God at all. We were on the way to hell, following hand in hand with Satan, walking after the pleasures and worldly lusts. There’s no thing that would motivate us to do anything right that would make us saved, because it isn’t even in our minds or in our hearts. We still had choices to do what’s right and wrong, but it was because God intervened, while we had no care and no thought. There was nothing we could have done, because we were dead! But He did intervene, and He showed us that we ought to live godly and righteous. It’s two completely different things there. Being dead, there’s nothing we can do. God speaking to us and giving us an opportunity to come back to Him, and us responding with works, with obedience, with hearing, with seeing, walking, living by. Two completely different things; dead – having no desire for God, and then God calling and expecting us to obey Him. Two entirely different things, but they’ve become so twisted up that now men say that if you hear that call and you obey, you are trying to work your way to heaven. That has

absolutely nothing to do with what this verse is teaching; absolutely nothing. This verse is teaching that when we had no care for God, it was impossible for us to have done anything to wake ourselves up. Just like it is impossible for the Devil to follow God. There's nothing he can do to change God's mind to show him that he needs to repent.

Even after forty years later when the children of Israel went into the promised land, they had to fight for every city and every inch of ground that they got. Two million of their forefathers were saved; two made it into the promised land with their children. Once they got there, the fight was on. In fact, two of them found some land before they got there; two and a half of the tribes. They said, "well this will suit us just fine." The others rose up in anger and wickedness, "What do you mean, you are not going to help us fight? How wicked! You are not going to enter into the battle; you are just going to stay on this side? And they had to make a promise that they would go fight side by side with the rest of them until they all had their land, and then they could come back to theirs. They weren't delivered INTO, they were saved FROM, but they weren't delivered into.

WE talked about in Sunday school this morning – David had to fight for his kingdom. One little group at a time from a little small group of followers. They grew and grew until he had trodden down his enemies and the kingdom was won.

Jesus walked in this world, fought Satan, fought the world, overcame death. He had to live his life, until all of his enemies were trodden down, and then he was triumphant.

Everything takes a battle, you've got to pay your dues. And all the sudden Christianity comes along and says, "I'm saved! I'm on my way to heaven; I don't have to do a thing." No one in the Bible, no one in the world, no one in any form ever got away with it that way. You don't plant a crop without sweat. You don't just sit back and pretend it's going to happen and it just happens. The world is trying to go that way, with their welfare programs and all that kind of stuff. People are expecting it that way, and I think they are getting it from modern Christianity, but it isn't that way. It isn't over till it's over. You are not in heaven until you are there! *He that endureth to the end shall be saved.* Just look at the world, just look at the word of God. And the words that are twisted and turned around – it will fit together. If we follow Jesus, are faithful and are watching and waiting when He comes, then we'll be SAVED, like everyone else thinks they already are. The Bible condemns those that settle on ease, that say, "My soul hath many goods laid up." "Thou fool" God says.

For by grace ye are saved through faith. It's so drilled in our minds; I hope we can overcome how it's twisted. Many people will hear this and just will not accept it because it's just been drilled in their heads so deeply that they won't even listen to what the whole chapter is trying to scream out to them. That they are saved FROM – Noah was saved FROM the flood, the destruction, but he still had to get off the boat, he still had to ride it out.

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
[and God – without any hope ... anything that we could do, gave us his grace! Here's a WAY! And He expects us to take it]