



## GOD'S PLAN OF GRACE IN SALVATION

GOD'S PLAN OF GRACE is always misunderstood. Majority of Christians rest on false assumption that God\*s plan of grace is built on human love. As a result, they try to base their lifestyle, relationship with others and with God on these obscure, imprecise and unclear feelings called love.

In God\*s plan (see Tract No. 34), all the glory belongs to Him, He has all the merit, He receives all the credit, because He does all the work. Grace is the policy of God\*s plan which is extended to the undeserving, totally helpless and condemned individual. God treats us in His justice. He is always fair to every person. His justice conforms to the demands of His righteousness and everything He does conform to His righteousness. God cannot accept the imperfect righteousness and good work of men.

There is nothing we can do to earn the love of God or the right to live with God forever. We are qualified only by non-meritorious faith in Christ, which is express to man in the simplest form called grace.

SALVATION IS BY GRACE, NOT BY WORKS. Every person is guilty of sin, condemned by God, and needs to be saved. No one is worthy of salvation. Romans 3:10-12 *“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.* Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* There is nothing we can do to earn salvation. God only accepts the perfect work of our Lord on the cross on our behalf. Even our best human efforts are rejected by God:

Isaiah 64:6 *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags. The harder we work for salvation, the farther away it gets.* Romans 4:4 5 *Now to one who works, his wage is not reckoned as grace, but as debt. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. Good works are rejected by God as the means of gaining or maintaining salvation.* Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.* Romans 3:21-24 *But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law has been made known, to which the Law and the prophets testify.*

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are

justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ. Salvation is received non-meritoriously by depending on Jesus Christ. It is not the strength or the endurance of our faith but the object of our faith, Jesus Christ, that receives all the credit.

WE CAN DO NOTHING to gain salvation, and WE CAN DO NOTHING to lose it. Those who do not believe this are being misled. The idea that Christ did His part on the cross and now we must do our part by maintaining a certain level of morality or goodness in order to get to heaven is not the truth of the Bible but a lie from Satan. Morality or keeping the Ten Commandments cannot save! Christ made a wasted trip to the cross if we can get to heaven by being moral. In fact, hell will be full of good, moral people who have depended on themselves rather than Christ for salvation.

SALVATION IS A GIFT Just because salvation is free does not mean that it came without a price tag. The cost was tremendous! Jesus Christ paid for it in full by dying in our place on the cross. He was our substitute, taking the judgment for our sins on His own perfect body. That was His gift to us. A gift is free. It is either accepted or rejected, but it is never earned. If salvation could be earned, it would not be a gift. It would be payment that we deserve for something we did. Scripture makes it clear; salvation is a gift, no strings attached. God will not freely give a gift and then take it back. To do so would be completely out of character for Him. Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.*

“Grace” is receiving something we do not earn or deserve. Wouldn’t you agree that it is foolish to work for something that is free? Anyone who trusts in his own works and ability is in effect saying that Christ’s atonement was not good enough. He ignores what Christ said as he hung on the cross before he died: John 19:30 . . . *it is finished!* Salvation was completed, the gift was purchased, nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. We either accept the gift by believing in Jesus Christ or reject it by trying to work for it. Eternal life is a permanent gift. “Eternal” means infinite duration, everlasting, perpetual, endless, and something impossible to lose. There is not one account in the entire Bible where anyone received the gift of eternal life and then lost it.

Those who believe they must work for salvation will stand before Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Their sins, which were already judged on the cross, will not be mentioned. Since they rejected Christ’s perfect work on the cross as the only way into heaven, they will have to rely on their own works to get in. They will find that only Christ’s work is acceptable to God. Therefore, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

SALVATION RESTS ON GOD’S POWER AND HIS PROMISES. NOT OURS. Our salvation endures because its security depends on God, not on us. What a relief! What great news! I Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus*

*Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Jude 24 Now unto Him [Jesus Christ] who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory [God the Father] with exceeding joy.*

John 10:28 *I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.* Romans 8:35 & 38-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* There is no sin, no power and no person that can cause us to lose our salvation. Even if we change our mind and renounce Christ, we cannot lose our salvation. The gift of eternal life is permanent no matter how much our faith may waver.

I Timothy 2:11-12 *if we endure [suffering] we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him; He also will deny us [rewards]; if we are faithless [turn away from Him], He remains faithful [He does not take back the free gift] for He cannot deny Himself [His promise of eternal life still stands].* Our weakness does not diminish God's strength. Our failures do not revoke His promises.

**BELIEVERS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD** Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* Galatians 3:26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* A believer's relationship with his heavenly Father is similar to the one with his earthly father. Our confidence is strengthened by knowing that our spiritual relationship cannot be broken any more than our physical one can be. There is nothing a child or his father can do to sever their physical relationship, and there is nothing a believer or God can do to sever their spiritual relationship. It is permanent! The Bible never speaks of any child of God being disowned or disinherited.

**BELIEVERS ARE NOT CONDEMNED** Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* John 3:18 *He that believes on Him is not condemned; but he that does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 5:24 *Truly, truly I say unto you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed out of death into life.* It is impossible for believers to come under condemnation because they have gone from spiritual death to spiritual life. They possess eternal life because they were born again the moment they believed in Jesus Christ.

Believers still sin after they are saved, but they are not condemned for their sins. Why? Because Christ was condemned for these sins on the cross. It would be unjust for God to condemn us for the sins for which Christ has already been judged. Does this mean that there are no consequences for our sins? Of course not. Believers suffer divine discipline when they sin. Our heavenly Father disciplines His children, but He does not condemn them. There is a difference between divine discipline, which is temporary suffering, and condemnation, which is eternal death.

## “THE REALITY OF GRACE”

Luke 18:9-14

We hear about grace, we read about grace-- its magnificence, its awesome scope and magnitude, its unfathomable depths-- but what does grace teach? What is the actual practice and application of grace?

Luke 18:9-14 say's, "And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.'"

### Body

#### I. The Author of Grace Begins to Teach-- vv. 9-10.

The first thing we notice is who is speaking the parable. "He" is the Lord Jesus Christ-- immediately we recognize the principle that grace is revealed by the Living Word.

A. "Trusted" in v. 9 means that they had confidence. Where did they place their confidence? Where else?-- "In themselves."

B. What were they so confident of? "That they were righteous." This is nothing more than the self-righteous arrogance of religion, the inevitable result of ritual without reality!

C. What kind of viewpoint did this self-righteous arrogance lead to?

1) “Others” comes from the word *loipos* meaning- ‘the rest,’ i.e., all those who weren’t Pharisees, who didn’t belong to their exclusive sect.

2) “With contempt” is the Greek verb *exoutheneo*- ‘despise utterly, treat with contempt and scorn.’ This teaches us two things right away.

a. Self-righteous arrogance leads to contempt and scorn of everyone that doesn’t fit your lofty ideal.

b. The fastest way to move from humility to arrogance, from grace orientation to self-righteousness is to trust in yourself-- your strength, your knowledge, your power.

3) The point is that grace teaches us dependence. Is our reliance and dependence on God’s Power (HS) and God’s Provision (Bible doctrine) absolute? How much reliance is there in your spiritual life on self-- what self desires, what self can achieve, what self can accomplish?

D. In v. 10 we notice the two characters who’ve now taken the stage of our parable, both of them heading for the temple to pray-- the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer.

II. The Rejecter of Grace Begins to Pray-- vv. 11-12.

A. There is an amazing phrase that comes to life for us if we will read v. 11 with the utmost care and attention-- the Pharisee was praying “thus to himself.” While we may find this humorous-- I find it hilarious-- it is no wonder to him, because in his mind he really was as good as God. He was convinced God held his lofty standard.

B. The term “Pharisee” is a transliteration of *Pharisaios*, which literally means- the separated ones.

1) It was a name originally given them by their adversaries, however, they were indeed separatists-- legalists to an extreme!

2) They called themselves *Chaver*, a Hebrew term used in the Mishnah and in ancient Rabbinical writings for ‘one who strictly observes the law.’

C. He says “thank you” in v. 11 but there was no thanksgiving here. The statement about not being like other people was a bold-faced lie; he was exactly like other people.

D. In v. 12 we find the culmination of his impressive self-worth.

1) Notice throughout his entire prayer that the Pharisee has no praise for God, only praise for self; in the place of praise was self-exaltation. He makes no request of God because he is totally unaware of any need; therefore, he gets nothing because he asks for nothing!

Which brings us to an important principle: The trouble with our religious-- as opposed to spiritual-- ideals is that if we live up to all of them, we become impossible to live with.

2) “The gospel declares that no matter how dutiful or prayerful we are, we can’t save ourselves. What Jesus did was sufficient (Jn. 19:30). To the extent that we are self-made saints like the Pharisees or neutral like Pilate-- never making the leap in trust-- we let the prostitutes and publicans go first into the Kingdom, while we ...are in the background having our alleged virtue burnt out of us. The hookers and swindlers enter before us because they know they cannot save themselves, they cannot make themselves presentable or lovable. They risked everything on Jesus, and knowing they didn’t have it all together, were not too proud to accept the handout of amazing grace.” Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, pp. 77

“The blood of the Lamb points to the truth of grace: what we cannot do for ourselves, God has done for us.” *ibid.*, p 72

3) What to learn from this Pharisaic prayer.

Some Church Age believers find the Royal Priesthood boring, lifeless, unsatisfying and unfulfilling. They get nothing out of prayer, giving or the study of the Word. And you know why?-- Because they ask for nothing. They see absolutely no need for anything that God has to give in grace; consequently, they get exactly what they ask for. Some Christians never benefit from Bible class, no matter how on target, how intense or how practical. They don’t go away full because they don’t come in hungry.

a. In Luke 1:53 we find Mary, the mother of our Lord, praising the Lord God of Israel. She said, “He has filled the hungry with good things [‘hungry’ is from / root verb *peinao*, which metaphorically means- ‘crave ardently, seek with eager desire;’ Jesus uses it in Jn. 6:35 of / hunger for spiritual food]; and sent away the rich empty-handed [ / ‘rich’ here represents / arrogant, / proud, those who recognize no need for that awesome demonstration of God’s grace-- His Word].”

It’s interesting that the word for “empty-handed” here, *kenos*, also means- vain, devoid of truth; without content, power, profit or result. *Kenos* was used to express the ‘hollowness’ of something. Metaphorically it means- destitute of spiritual wealth. It was used of one who boasts of his faith and yet is without the fruits of faith, one whose labors and endeavors result in nothing, in vanity and fruitlessness.

b. Jesus told the religious Jews in John 6:35, that "...I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

III. The Recipient of Grace Begins to Believe-- vv. 13-14.

A. To understand the background you must understand that "tax-gatherer" was just another way of saying "a tax-collector for the Romans." These men were considered traitors by their fellow Jews, and were despised by almost everyone, especially the Pharisees, who classed them as 'sinners' ranking right alongside harlots and Gentiles.

Historical Note: The exclusive attitude of 1st century Judaism with its cultural, religious and racial arrogance led some Rabbis of this period to proclaim, that "Gentiles were created to light the fires of hell."

B. The fact that the tax-gatherer was standing away and apart, unwilling to even look towards God's direction was an indication of the emptiness in his soul. In utter humility he was about to fling himself recklessly at the mercy of God!

The main thing I want you to see in v. 13 is that grace teaches us about sinfulness. Who's the greatest sinner you know? If the answer is anyone but you, then you don't understand grace.

If you cannot look at yourself objectively in the light of the Word of God and in the light of grace, you will never understand the attitude of humility expressed by the tax-gatherer in Luke 18:13.

C. "Be merciful" is from the verb *hilaskomai*, which in the pass. voice means- be propitiated, be gracious and merciful. It reminds us of the fact that grace gives us what we do not deserve, it is extended to those with absolutely no merit; while mercy withholds from us judgment we rightfully deserve, for mercy is extended, in spite of human merit.

The principle is: The only people who can lay hold of grace are those who recognize their need for mercy.

1) The tax-collector-- hated, rejected, an outcast in his own nation-- stood in the temple and uttered seven words, seven words that form one of the most profound prayers in the entire Bible: "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!"

He had no grand illusions about himself, no egotistically inflated ideas about being good enough for God. He saw how awesome his need was, and he knew that nothing but God's mercy could sustain him.

2) Mercy and grace are vitally united, inextricably linked in the Word of God. Mercy naturally precedes grace.

Here's the principle: Mercy must remove the condemnation we rightfully deserve before grace can bestow the blessing that we cannot earn and never deserve.

D. In v. 14 Jesus tells us that the tax-gatherer left the temple "justified."

1) "Justified" is *dikaioo*, a legal term meaning- 'vindicate, acquit; declare legally righteous.'

2) This tells us that in the recognition of his need for mercy and grace the tax-gatherer had believed in the Messiah of Israel-- Yehowah Elohim-- for there is no other way to stand justified, vindicated, legally righteous before God unless we have received His absolute righteousness, the imputed righteousness which belongs to us through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).

Paul said in Galatians 2:16, "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."

E. One man went up to the temple in humility, and for his faith received eternal life; the other entered with an attitude of arrogance and for his self righteousness received nothing.

Jesus gives us the reason why in the closing phrase of v. 14, "for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

#### In Conclusion

"The deeper we grow in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the poorer we become-- the more we realize that everything in life is a gift. The tenor of our lives becomes one of humble and joyful thanksgiving. Awareness of our poverty and ineptitude causes us to rejoice in the gift of being called out of darkness into the wondrous light and translated into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. ...The poor in spirit are the most non-judgmental of peoples; they get along well with sinners. ...The" humble "man and woman have made peace with their flawed existence. They are aware of their lack of wholeness, their brokenness, the simple fact that they don't have it all together. While they do not excuse their sin, they are humbly aware that sin is precisely what has caused them to throw themselves at the mercy of the Father. They do not pretend to be anything but what they are-- sinners saved by grace," and saints empowered by His Spirit. *ibid.*, pp. 79-80



