

HOW ARE WE SAVED? (Ephesians 2:8-10)

I. Some teach salvation is by grace only.

- A. You may have heard before that man is saved “wholly by grace.”
 - 1. This is the idea that we do not contribute at all to our salvation, it is all done by grace.
 - 2. They say if you have done anything to obtain salvation then you have earned it and it is not by grace.
- B. If this is the way we are saved, then one of three things is possible:
 - 1. God selected a certain group of people to be saved with no regard for what they have or have not done (this is what Calvinism teaches);
 - 2. All men are saved (this is what Universalism teaches);
 - 3. No one is going to be saved (no one believes this).
- C. God has made His grace appear to all men (Titus 2:11) and wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), so the first one can't be possible.
- D. Jesus Himself said that there will be many called but few chosen (Matthew 22:14) and inspiration tells us that some will be lost (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9), so the second idea can't be true.
- E. Jesus promised that some would be saved (Matthew 25:34), so the last idea is not true either.
- F. Teaching that we are saved by grace alone takes all the responsibility off of man.
 - 1. If grace alone saves us, God is the giver of grace.
 - 2. If I am lost, it will be God's fault not mine, because He did not give me grace.
- G. The Bible teaches that we play a part in our salvation in accessing grace.
 - 1. Philippians 2:12.
 - 2. Acts 2:40.
- H. Grace is not irresistible, it is accessible.
- I. From this it should be easy to see that we are not saved by grace alone.

II. Some teach we are saved by faith only.

- A. How many times have we heard someone say that all you have to do is accept Jesus into your heart or something along those lines?
- B. The only time the words faith and only are together in the Bible is to tell us that faith only does not save (James 2:24).
 - 1. Could a phrase be any clearer?
 - 2. What would God have to say to make it any clearer?
- C. James 2 plainly tells us that faith without works is dead (James 2:17, 20, 26).
- D. In that same chapter we read that the demons even believe and tremble (vs. 19).
 - 1. One who only believes in Jesus is no better off than demons.
 - 2. We read numerous times in the gospel accounts how demons acknowledged who Jesus was.
 - 3. It never saved them and belief alone will not save us.

- E. Notice John 12:42-43.
 - 1. Many of the Jewish leaders believed that Jesus was the Son of God.
 - 2. However, they would never confess Him as Lord for fear of the Pharisees.
 - 3. Were these men saved?
 - 4. We must confess Christ before men in order for Jesus to confess us before the Father (Matthew 10:32-33).
- F. From this we should be able to see that we are not saved by faith only.

III. **The Bible teaches we are saved by grace through faith.**

- A. Grace is God's unmerited favor to man that He has made accessible by man's faithful obedience.
- B. Jesus is the embodiment of God's grace and He is the Savior of "all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).
- C. Our text tells us that man is saved by grace through faith.
 - 1. God's part of salvation is His grace which He bestowed upon us by sending His Son Jesus (Hebrews 2:9).
 - 2. Faith is man's part that allows us to access grace (Romans 5:1-2).
- D. We are not saved by works of merit.
 - 1. Nothing we do outside of Christ, no matter how good it might be, merits us being saved.
 - 2. No works that we invent, no obedience to the Mosaic Law or just plain good works.
 - 3. Good works come after salvation (Ephesians 2:10).
 - 4. Once we are in Christ, we are to be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).
- E. The Jews created a problem for themselves by substituting the righteousness of God, which is His commandments (Psalm 119:172), for their own (Romans 10:3).
- F. When we are obedient to Jesus, we are working the works of God (John 6:28-29).
 - 1. That is a work that we must do.
 - 2. It is a work in which we must be actively engaged.
- G. People apparently don't understand what work is because they would have you believe, repent and confess in order to be saved but they will tell you those are not works.
 - 1. Work is something that takes effort.
 - 2. Believing, repenting and confessing take effort.
 - 3. Baptism is passive in that someone else baptizes you and you submit to it because that is what God commands.
- H. Saving faith is a faith that moves one to be obedient to the commands of God.
 - 1. We see this time and again in Hebrews 11.
 - 2. Noah moved with fear out of faith.
 - 3. Abraham sojourned in a foreign land by faith.
- I. God's grace plus man's obedient faith is how one is saved.

Idea for the sermon from an article by Virgil Hale.