

The Truth Part 2

The Truth

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I invite you to take your hymnal and turn to hymn #613, "We're secure in no one else."

"More secure is no one ever
Than the loved ones of the Savior;
Not yon star on high abiding,
Nor the bird in home-nest hiding.

God his own doth tend and nourish,
In his holy courts they flourish;
Like a father kind He spares them,
In his loving arms he bears them.

Neither life nor death can ever,
From the Lord his children sever;
For his love and deep compassion,
Comforts them in tribulation.

Little flock, to joy then yield thee,
Jacob's God will ever shield thee;
Rest secure with this defender,
At his will all foes surrender."

Let's take our bulletin hymn sung to the tune of "According to thy gracious word."

We welcome you this morning and we have been reminded again this morning that it is winter and it is January 5, and we've enjoyed such luxurious weather up to this point that it kind of comes a little bit hard, but we're thankful that these season changes remind us of the Lord's promises, they remind us of his faithfulness, and they remind us that his word is true, his word is true.

I was thinking about it as we sang that song, "More secure is no one ever," something that had been on my mind this morning about whether or not the Lord would save anymore people in our day. It seems like that there are so few that have any interest in the

Gospel, but the songwriter uses a term in this hymn that reminds us of what God said, that is, that his flock is a little flock, a little flock in comparison to all the people in the world, but they are his people, they are his elect, and if you look in Psalm 110, which I was already planning to read a few verses, we'll be reminded of the truth of God and we'll be reminded of the power of God.

1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

The rod there, I believe, being the Gospel, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus because he sends it out of Zion. And he gives this promise, he gives this promise to his Son, "The LORD said to my Lord," and he gives his promise to his people in this world,

3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Just as sure as our priest has offered the sacrifice, he will also for those that sacrifice was made for, be their intercessor forever.

Let's pray this morning.

Our Father, it is in the name and the worthy high name of the Lord Jesus Christ that we come before you this morning and we humble ourselves before thee, recognizing that you have not diminished in power, in strength, in authority, in purpose, not one little bit. You rule and you reign as the Sovereign Lord of this universe, and you accomplish all your purpose, and you save all your people, Lord, and you do it in the midst of all this turmoil, all this wickedness, all these stirrings that take place on the earth. You do it in spite of all the rebellion that is natural to men, all the false religion that is spewed out by the false prophets. You demonstrate your power and you save everyone who is the object of your love, you save everyone that is redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and you save everyone that your Spirit calls mightily and effectually as promised. We pray that we might rejoice this day in the success of our Savior, not only to pay that price but to effectually bring everyone for whom he died.

We give you glory this morning and we pray that we might be enabled to worship you in spirit and in truth. We pray that you might help us and aid us in our deadened selves and bring us to life and faith in Christ and enable us to believe his word. We bring before you this day all of our cares and all of our trials and our troubles, remembering that they are but small things in thy sight. They're very small when we consider what you are able and have promised to do. We bring them all before you and pray for grace that we might leave them with you. Lord, if you have so effectually dealt with our sins, you are surely able having given us your Son and surely willing to freely give us all things.

We pray this day in this world that you would keep your people safe, you would be our protector and our provider in all things. Help us to know that rest, that peace, that satisfaction, that joy that has come to us in Christ. Help us to trust him alone, fix our eyes upon him alone, cause us to believe your promises alone in spite of all ourselves and all this world around us. We know that there is reason for you to be worshiped. We know that there is reason for us to give thanks. We know there is reason for us to bring all these cares and all these sick ones amongst us and around us, we know that you are able, you're able in all senses to save. We pray that you would forgive us of our many many failures, cause us to know that forgiveness that is already ours in Christ. Help us in our faithfulness. We know that in ourselves we're weak, sinful and unfaithful. Help us that we might in all things carry out that purpose and will that you've determined upon this earth and especially determined upon our lives for your glory.

We thank you. We thank you for being in our midst. We thank you for the privilege of worshiping you this morning. May everything that's said and done and sung and played and read be for your glory, for we pray in Christ and we ask in his name. Amen.

I would remind you that Wednesday night is the second Wednesday for fellowship.

Hymn #278, "How can it be."

"O Saviour, as my eyes behold
The wonders of Thy might unfold,
The heavens in glorious light arrayed,
The vast creation Thy hast made—
And yet to think Thou lovest me—
My heart cries out, 'How can it be?'

How can it be? How can it be?
That God should love a soul like me,
O how can it be?

As at the cross I humbly bow
And gaze upon Thy thorn-crowned brow,
And view the precious bleeding form
By cruel nails so bruised and torn,
Knowing Thy suffering was for me,
In grief I cry, 'How can it be?'

How can it be? How can it be?
That God should love a soul like me,
O how can it be?

How can it be? How can it be?
Was ever grace so full and free!
From heights of bliss to depths of woe

In loving kindness Thou didst go,
From sin and shame to rescue me—
O Love Divine, How can it be?

How can it be? How can it be?
That God should love a soul like me,
O how can it be?"

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for His own name's sake.

Yea, tho' I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy, all my life,
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be."

Turn with me to John 1. Last Sunday we started looking at what I've called "The Truth." The truth. And according to Christ's words, we're evidently in bondage until we know the truth. He said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." And I hope we made it clear and we understand that there is no truth apart from the Scriptures. The Bible is called the word of truth, and there is something else that is clear in the Bible about the truth and that is, it is inseparably joined to grace. You can't talk about the truth and not talk about the grace of God because what it says here in John 1, just to begin in verse 17, it says,

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ not only is associated with the truth but he's also associated with grace, and the truth is that everyone saved by God, everyone saved from their sin, everyone that has this soul salvation is saved by grace. Grace. And furthermore, grace, though it is an often used word and term in our day, grace is only what it is in the Scriptures. It's not what men say that grace is, but it is what God says in his word that grace is, and Peter wrote these words in one of his epistles concerning that which he had written and the man he had sent, he said, "I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein you stand." Being led by the Spirit of God, these who had believed the truth and these who had been the object of God's grace, this apostle by the Spirit of God assures them that this is the true grace of God, and the reality is that the truth – now listen – the truth exalts the grace of God as the sole and entire cause of salvation. Whatever is involved in being saved, whatever is involved in being saved from sin, whatever is involved in God's salvation, it can all be traced back to the fountainhead of God's grace.

Turn over to Ephesians 2. Everyone is so familiar with this often quoted verse, Ephesians 2:8, Paul saying to these Ephesian believers, "For by grace are ye saved," or are being saved, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." In other words, whenever we learn the truth, we will learn the truth that salvation is all of God's grace. It is, as is said here, even including faith, is a gift of God, that is, in the purposing and in the accomplishment, it is all of God's grace which we have now had to call free grace. In order to clarify from the world's grace, we have to use terms like free grace but if we knew anything about grace, we'd know it had to be entirely free. It has to be if it's by grace a gift. You cannot in any way deserve grace. You cannot in any way earn grace. It excludes all human effort and therefore all human boasting, and it is defined by some, though very poorly, I'm afraid, it is defined as the unmerited favor of God. The unmerited favor of God. But not only that, grace saves the undeserving but it saves not only the undeserving and the unworthy, but it saves the unwanting. Grace comes to sinners when they are even not only unworthy and undeserving, they're unwanting, they're unwanting absolutely.

It is unsolicited. It is unexpected. Just like the Bible says about Noah, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord but Noah wasn't looking for grace. That means that grace found Noah. He was as bad as anyone in that world before the flood. He was a sinner just like everyone of them. He fell in Adam just like everyone of them. But that which distinguished him and preserved him and saved him was God's grace. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And in the Bible that's what we're interested in, the truth, in the Bible though not in most of the preaching of our day, grace involves God's will, grace involves God's desire, and especially grace involves God's purpose as the first cause and the only cause of salvation.

God's grace. And when you understand grace, when you understand grace as it is in the Bible, you will know that absolutely the free will or so-called free will of man cannot have any part of salvation if it's by grace, by God's grace, and grace begins with God by involving a covenant grace, covenant of grace that was made within the Godhead even before one man was born. Grace begins with God, it begins before time, it begins before

man is even in the world, it begins that way in order to give all the glory of grace to God. And Paul writes to Timothy and he says it in this way, he says, "who hath saved us," past tense, "who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Grace is inseparably joined to the purpose of God in this world. All that is done and accomplished by God in this world is done according to his own purpose and grace which was given his people before the world began. And Bible grace as we find it in the Scripture, Bible grace involves an election of grace. God's choice to save a people out of this race of which we are a part was a choice made according to his election of grace. That's what the book says.

Turn over to Ephesians 1 and look at verses 3 and 4. Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." What for? Why is God to be praised and thanked and blessed? For his grace. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings," that could be "graced us," he's grace us with all spiritual blessings "in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." He graced us. As a matter of fact, that's what one of the following verses said, it talks about God having graced us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Paul writing to the Romans in chapter 9 says that in a very clear and distinctive way when he says using an illustration of twins in the Bible, he says, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God," the purpose of God, "according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." That the purpose of God according to the election of grace might stand. It was said of that one, "Jacob have I loved." It was given in Christ before the world began.

Election is the grace of God in action and grace, if it be rightly understood, grace in truth is definitely sovereign grace. So often when people ask me where I pastor or where I go to church, and I begin by telling them the name of this assembly, Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, when they hear that first word, they look awful puzzled. Why? Because they know nothing not only about the word, they know nothing about the Bible and the God of the Bible who is an absolute Sovereign so that if he demonstrates grace, if he shows grace to somebody, he does it as that Sovereign. That means he does what he will, he does it when he will, he does it how he will, and he does it to whom he will.

That's grace, sovereign grace. We use the term but we wouldn't have to if men knew the truth about the grace of God as it's demonstrated in Scripture. The reason that men do not know anything about the true grace of God is because they don't know how the true God is.

You remember Moses, and I've told you this so many times, but Moses who had seen amazing things, he'd seen God speak to him from a bush that didn't consume with fire when it burned, he'd seen miraculous mighty wonders, and yet he's still asking God in Exodus 33, "Show me your glory. What's your glory?" And God responds to him and you can read it for yourself in Exodus 33, and he said, "I will make all my goodness pass

before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."

Sovereign grace because you can't deserve grace. If you get what you deserve, you'll get hell. If you get what you deserve, what you are in your person and what you've done by your works, it will be total and eternal banishment from God. But he's gracious. I'm so amazed now that the Lord has brought me into the truth, I'm so amazed how we think God could have ever have been any other way, how we could ever think we could be saved any other way if we know the truth. You see, he says here, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," and he was demonstrating that time and time again, that right to do so when he dealt with the nation of Israel. He said, "You only of the people of the earth have I known."

Do you realize there is not hardly a day that goes by, I personally do not believe that the nation of Israel so far as anything spiritual or natural is favored of God at this time. It was up to Christ. But that name, the remembrance of that nation, the remembrance of how God favored that nation, the remembrance of how he dealt particularly with them, how he favored them and gave them and revealed himself to them and gave his prophets, the remembrance of that nation just continues to go on and on. You say, "Well, it's one of conflict." Oh, but it's one of remembrance. What did God do? He just simply because he would, favored graciously this earthly people in an earthly sense and demonstrated to us for all of time something about grace. Do you think that's why people hate that nation so much?

God took all that belonged to the Canaanite people, all those Hittites and Jebusites, all these people that lived in these days of Israel, when he brought Israel out of Egypt and into that Promised Land, he gave it all to them. All the land. All the crops that were already planted. All the wine that was already on the vine. Everything, he just said, "Go in and possess it." You say, "Well, that's not fair." No, it's grace. Grace. You see, it's not fair if you think you deserve something or if you think those people deserve something which they didn't and you don't, but if you're the recipient, that's wonderful grace. Those Israelites had nothing. They had been in bondage, slaves. And that's like the Gospel, when the Gospel of grace comes to a sinner's ears naturally, it sounds like an awful thing because they've got so much, they've got what they worked for, they've got what they live for, sacrifice for, they're holding that up as acceptable to God and when God comes to them in the Gospel of grace, it's like we naturally receive such word as God giving all that to Israel. You say, "They didn't deserve it." No, and neither does anybody else who has grace from God. Nobody else has grace. This is grace, sovereign grace that he gives to whom he will and no one knows the truth until he knows the truth about grace. It's predestinating grace.

Look over in Ephesians 1:7, he says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Why? Verse 5, "Having predestinated us." If we don't know anything about predestination, we don't know anything about grace because grace simply becomes that which God tries to do, or wants

to do, but predestination which means God marking off beforehand and determining beforehand and accomplishing beforehand, that brings it all home.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted," and that's where that term comes in, he has graced us, "in the beloved." You haven't been graced if it's not in Christ. He has graced us in the beloved and grace, according to this word, is grace, it's not just a willingness in God to do for men if they'll let him, but it's a redemption of his people by grace. It's a redemption.

Paul writes in Romans 3 and he says, "Being justified," or having been justified, "freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." No successful accomplished redemption, no grace. You can talk about the grace of God all you want to, but unless you know something about this redemption that is in Christ Jesus, which is a redemption wherein he redeemed us freely by his grace, through his blood, and therefore on that basis, he declared us justified. He declared us righteous in Christ. He counted us as righteous in his Son, in his death, in his bloodshed. Titus, Paul writing to Titus says the same thing in chapter 3, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

To be justified means to be declared or counted as righteous in God's sight, and when we look at the justification that we find in the truth, we don't find it just in one isolated place, the justification that's in the truth shows every sinner that God saves, in some sense, justified in eternity, justified by faith, justified by blood, justified by grace.

Grace and grace includes God's providence of grace. If you're one of the Lord's people and you're here this morning, how have you made it all the way? Oh my, the hardships. Oh my, the sicknesses. Oh my, the opportunities that evil had to come upon you and slay you, or steal from you, or put you into the most awful position. Why, why have you made it even here this morning? Grace. A gracious providence where God is working all things, he is controlling all things in order to show grace and mercy to you, his people. You think about that close call, that close call you had before the Lord revealed the truth to you, that danger you were in, your whole life as a younger person in Yugoslavia, Prisoner of War camps. How? Grace. Grace. God's grace, providential grace preserving and working all things to accomplish our salvation in all our lives, in all the world affairs, and especially in the coming of Christ and his death as our Savior. And he died alone. He by himself purged our sins. He finished the work. He put away our sin. He brought in everlasting righteousness. You can go on and on but it's always what he did, and if he did it and you haven't, or if it was done for you, it's grace. All of grace. You didn't even know anything about it.

Aren't you glad we can't thwart the purpose of grace? We can't stay the hand of God? "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Why? Grace. And it's providential grace that brings to us the Gospel of grace. Noah found grace. He wasn't looking for it and neither were you, and neither was I.

Grace. If we know the truth, we'll know something about the grace of God in truth. We will know something about the true grace of God. We read in Acts 20 Paul saying, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." They said, "Paul, you go to Jerusalem and you're gonna die." He said, "I already know something about that." "You're going to be mistreated, you're going to be cast into prison." He said, "I don't even think about these things. I'm going there sent of God to preach the Gospel of the grace of God and I'm oblivious to what any man can do. I'm oblivious to any weapon that's formed against me if God's got some people there and he wants me to preach the Gospel of grace to them."

Speaking of the Gospel in Colossians he says, "The Gospel which is come unto you as it is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit as it doth also in you since the day you heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth." He said it's going into all the world and it's had the effect just like it's had to you when you as one of God's children heard the grace of God. The grace of God because, you see, grace is like God himself. God's omnipotent. The Gospel of grace is not like something that's proclaimed as a take it or leave it thing, the grace of God is not a preacher being sent on a fool's errand, the Gospel of grace is God, is used of God to reveal to his people what God in grace has done for them in Christ.

When some hear it, it's just like when Paul preached and some believed and some believed not. Who believes? Who believes the Gospel of grace? Those that God's grace comes in that divine omnipotence to in the power of his Spirit, and he makes known to them his grace. He gets them the Gospel and he works in their heart to give them spiritual life and faith in Christ Jesus, and they cannot, they can't even believe anything else but the Gospel of grace.

Since the day that God began, even began in my heart in understanding to reveal his grace to me, there's never been any question, questions I often have as to what it is all about and how it works, and all that he reveals in Scripture, but in all this time, 40 years, I've not ever been able to get away from this fact that salvation is by grace. I might not be able to explain it all, I surely can't preach it all, but I'm sure of this, that salvation is by grace. It involves a regeneration of grace, the Holy Spirit coming to those who are being saved by grace in their deadness and giving them faith. He comes revealing this truth to them and enabling them to believe it.

Grace comes to dead ignorant rebels like Paul, or as he was, Saul of Tarsus, or as he came to the maniac of Gadara. Here is Saul of Tarsus, an upstanding, moral, religious man, reputable, well-taught in his day. Over here is this maniac that runs out to Christ there at Gadara when Christ comes upon the shore, a maniac so immoral, so irreligious, so lost, so blatantly wicked, cut himself in the tombs, lived in the graveyard – now listen – and it takes the same grace to save the one as it does the other. You say, "I'm glad I'm not like that fellow." You might be worse. At least I don't hear him flaunting his self-righteousness like I'm sure Paul and other of the Pharisees did. But the only thing that can save a religious, self-righteous Pharisee like Saul of Tarsus is grace, and the only thing that can save at the other end of the spectrum this maniac, this wild man, this immoral

person, the same grace. We make distinctions. Sometimes we think it takes less grace to say to that good, moral person, I'm telling you it takes, if anything, more grace to break down that facade of self-righteousness and works and will that is so enslaving people.

And through grace also, surely, is keeping grace. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." It doesn't depend on them at any point. They may at times in their falls and lapses of faith and sin, they may feel at times that they are in themselves lost, but not if they're saved by grace because it never depended on them in the first place. It certainly doesn't depend on them in the last place. They're saved by grace and that's why God gets all the glory, is saved by grace.

Peter says, "But the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while make you perfect, stablished, strengthen you, settle you, keep you." Grace that lets a man sin away grace is not grace. Grace that finds people out there being lost after they've been so foolishly saved, that's not grace. And grace, the truth about grace is that it's only in Christ crucified. You look at the cross, you look at the one dying on the cross, you look at his suffering on the cross, and you look at who he's doing it for, that's grace. That's grace.

So Paul said this could be his epitaph. What do you want to put on your tombstone, Paul? "I am what I am by the grace of God." It never was my works. It never was my thoughts. It never was my obedience. It never was. Grace even excludes faith as a cause of grace. It isn't that I, at some point, am saved because I believe. No, I believe because of what? Grace. Through faith but that not of yourself, it's the gift of God. As a matter of fact, any mixture of grace or with grace of the least legal principle, of the least doing, of the least being of any sense is not grace. And I'm afraid there's lots of people in this day which talk about grace, which they say they're grace or reformed or this or that or the other, they hold the doctrines of grace, they hold the confessions of grace, but to them grace only enables them to live and do in such a way as to be fit for heaven. No, that's not grace.

I thought about it this morning, it came to my mind a hymn, that hymn in the hymnbook we used to use and in most hymnbooks has five stanzas, five stanzas and a chorus. Two of those stanzas were written by a man named Philip Doddridge, three of those stanzas were written by a man by the name of Augustus Toplady who wrote "Rock of Ages." One lived in the early 1700s and the other lived in about the mid-1700s, and you can read those stanzas and they reflect something about being saved by grace. "Grace, 'tis a charming sound, harmonious to the ear." Harmonious to the truth. But there came a man along by the name of Ira Sankey, I can sing those first five stanzas with just delight in the grace of God, but he came along and he was the song leader in all the D. L. Moody crusades and stuff, and he decided it needed a chorus. All these verses good, grace, but the chorus, listen to it, "Saved by grace alone, this is all my plea, Jesus died for all mankind, and Jesus died for me." That's not grace. If Jesus died for all mankind, all mankind would be saved, the justice of God would require it. The hymnal we use now says a change, "Jesus died for sinners," well, that's true, but the truth says Jesus died for his people. The Shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. Christ purchased the church

with his own blood. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." That's grace. That's the truth of grace. No grace in that chorus. Sorry.

Universal salvation, universal redemption is not true grace. Grace is Christ laying down his life for his sheep and Paul said to the Galatians who were being troubled, he said, "Anything that is not grace is not the word of the truth of the Gospel, and I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel." Grace has no additive. It's not grace plus, it's not grace and you, it's not grace in your works, it's not grace and you making progress. Rather than a progressive holiness, the Bible teaches a growth in grace.

Look at 2 Peter 3 and this is the last verse of Peter's second epistle. He closes out, he says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." And I'll tell you what most think that means, they think it means you grow in goodness, you grow in holiness, you grow in graciousness, you grow in all these things but I'm telling you that's not what it means. He says, "But grow in grace," and when we grow in grace, we grow to see more and more our need for grace. We grow more and more to see that the only way that we ever could have been saved is by grace and we grow more and more to see that all God's grace is in Christ. He says, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and when you grow in grace and you grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he says, "To him be glory both now and for ever." Both now, I can glory in it. For ever, I'll now be able to glory in it because all the glory of grace is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are not many people saved by grace because if you listen to them long enough, you'll find that at least part of their hope hinges on something they felt, experienced, done, or planning to do but not Christ. "For by grace are ye saved," if you're saved. Truth is, as I said, inseparably joined to grace.

Father, we thank you this morning for your goodness and your grace to us in Christ Jesus. We pray that you would cause us to know to rest in your grace that is in Christ, that you would keep us from ever in any way imagining that we could be saved any other way or look to any other savior plus. We thank you for your grace. We pray in his name. Amen.