

## I'm Not That Bad

No one ever seeks God's grace until they discover a need for it. One of the great failures of modern evangelistic practices is trying to convert people who have no real sense of sin and no felt need of forgiveness. Until a man or a woman come to grasp their true sinful state before the holy Lord God they will have little interest in what freewill preachers have to offer and no appetite for what true preaching has to say.

### **In Adam all die**

We believe God created the first man, Adam, after His own image, and in His likeness; an upright, innocent creature, capable of serving and glorifying Him. However, Adam, in disobeying God, came short of the glory of God, fell into sin and justly came under condemnation of death. Because the first man sinned all his posterity sinned in him, and all his offspring, descending from him, inherited Adam's corrupt nature.

### **Sin ... brings forth death**

This is an important point. As a consequence of Adam's fall we may no longer speak of innocence. We are each by our first birth guilty and unclean, opposed to God, incapable of doing good, and prone to every sin. We are by nature children of wrath under a sentence of judgment. As Adam's offspring we are subject to death. This death is not merely physical but also moral, spiritual and, but for God's grace, eternal by reason of everlasting separation in hell.

### **Not subject ... neither indeed can be**

Being born in sin affects our entire mental, rational and spiritual capacity leaving us in our fallen state completely incapable of responding spiritually to God. Paul calls this 'the carnal mind'. The all-embracing nature of this condition means fallen man has no physical ability to serve God and no moral desire to please God. Our rebellious hearts have no spiritual insight or inclination towards God at all.

### **'They know not what they do'**

The effect of this all-round ignorance is to make us content with fleshly desires and careless in spiritual matters. We have an inflated opinion of ourselves and a deflated view of God. We imagine ourselves better than actually we are and capable of far more than our true abilities allow. Every aspect of our nature is compromised and fallen. In ourselves we have neither will nor strength to please God, or appease Him for our sin.

### **Noah found grace**

In all spiritual matters it is God who must take the initiative, thus we read, 'Noah found grace in the sight of God'. God did not find acceptance in the sight of Noah! Among all the world of fallen men at that time Noah alone obtained grace. Grace is God's prerogative. It is His gift at His pleasure. God must give spiritual life and open our understanding.

### **Sovereign grace**

By nature Noah was as wicked as every other man. Every imagination of the thoughts of Noah's heart was only evil continually. God was under no obligation to show Noah grace. It is God's distinguishing love alone that stirs up His mercy to forgive sin. It was an act of pure grace that God should deliver this man who habitually opposed Him. Every grace is an undeserved gift; grace is God's to give and His to withhold. That's why it's called sovereign grace.

### **Salvation is a Divine work**

God the Father chose a people to save from Adam's fallen race. Noah was one of them. In His death the Lord Jesus represented all God's elect, carried their sin, bore their judgment and cleansed their guilt with His blood. By His resurrection He freed them from death. In time, under the preaching of the gospel, God the Holy Spirit applies the blessing of Christ's death by quickening our spirit bestowing faith and leading us to a knowledge of the truth. God gives pardon, righteousness, life and faith by Christ's death. In salvation sinners are completely passive.

### **Grow in grace**

Only when this knowledge of truth is first granted are we equipped to understand the true nature of our sin and the true greatness of salvation. Conversion follows. Even then, it is partial knowledge for the Lord's people learn more about

themselves and discover more about their Saviour over time as they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

Amen

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