

018 - Saved Through Faith, Not of Works - Ephesians 2:8-9 - 2014-09-21

Call to Worship: Psalm 44:7-8

Scripture Reading: Daniel 6:6-23

Sermon: "Saved Through Faith, Not of Works" Ephesians 2:8-9

Benediction: John 14:1-3

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

The Son of God came down from heaven, taking to Himself human nature, becoming one of us, but without the sin we inherited from Adam; without the sin we have committed personally. He lived a whole life of righteousness, keeping the law of God perfectly, in love both for God and for His fellow men. He then took the sins of sinners upon Himself; God laid on Him the guilt we sinners deserved; He took our sins upon Himself and was executed for them by the cruel method of crucifixion. He laid down His life for us. He died, and was buried. But on the third day, God raised Him from the dead. He appeared to many witnesses for forty days, then ascended back to heaven, to the throne at the right hand of God the Father. He sent His Holy Spirit to empower His apostles. They preached the good news, the gospel, all over that part of the world, telling everyone what Jesus has done for us, and that anyone who turns to God in repentance of sin, believing in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will be justified in God's sight, forgiven of all his sins, and so saved from the wrath of God and granted everlasting life. This message was written down, but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so becoming the bible. This gospel message went all over the world, including where we live. In the course of time, the gospel message came to us personally, by the spoken word or by the written word. And we believed in Jesus Christ!

All of this is wonderful! But that is not at all where the story ends. Those of us who believe in Jesus Christ desire in our hearts to worship the God who has saved us. But when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we don't understand, we don't know what we should know about what that faith is, and about why we have faith in Christ, and how we came to have faith in Christ. We need to be prayed for, and taught.

That is the very work the apostle Paul engaged in during his lifetime. He prayed for us and taught us. Now we are engaged in that work---praying for ourselves and for each other, and teaching and learning together from the bible, so that we would know what we need to know, so we can give glory to God in our worship as we should and as we indeed want to do.

We are learning together that our coming to have faith in Christ was a work of God so powerful that it was a raising us from the dead---since we were dead in trespasses and sins, but now are raised to new life with Christ Jesus.

We are learning together that God has done all of this to demonstrate, to show, to manifest the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Last time we worked hard on an important truth, the definition of grace as used in the sense of being "saved by grace." This amazing grace God is putting on display in our salvation is the favor He freely shows toward us, undeserving sinner who merit not His favor but His wrath. By His unmerited favor are you saved.

That is how far we have worked together in Ephesians. Today, then, we take up what comes next. We have been told why we are saved, why it is us who are saved---because of God's grace. Now we are told how we are saved, that it is through faith.

TEXT:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Consider this with me today under three heads.

1. what saving faith is
 2. how we come to have saving faith
 3. how saving faith shows God's grace
- I. What saving faith is: in a way, the whole bible is a long explaining of what saving faith is
- A. known by considering the object of saving faith: the object of saving faith is the Lord Jesus Christ
 1. John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
 2. John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.
 - B. known by contrasting it with what it is not: it is not works
 1. Eph 2:9 through faith . . . not of works
 2. Romans 4:5 To Him who does not work but believes on Him
 3. Galatians 2:16 . . . a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law . . .
 - C. known by comparing it with what it is like; it is analogous to some things
 1. from daily life
 - a) It is like drinking water given by Jesus
 - b) It is like coming to Jesus
 - c) It is like receiving Jesus
 - d) It is like eating and drinking Jesus
 - e) It is like going into the sheep fold, with Jesus as the door

- f) It is like being a sheep and knowing the voice of Jesus the shepherd
- g) some of these combined in a passage from the OT
Isaiah 55:1-3 "Ho! Everyone who **thirsts, Come to the waters;**
And you who have no money, Come, buy and **eat.** Yes, come, buy
wine and milk Without money and without price. (2) Why do you
spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does
not satisfy? **Listen carefully to Me,** and eat what is good, And let
your soul delight itself in abundance. (3) Incline your ear, and
come to Me. Hear, **and your soul shall live;** And I will make an
everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David.

2. from OT types

- a) like being hungry, and eating the manna in the wilderness
- b) like being poisoned, and looking to the serpent to be cured - John
3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even
so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (15) that whoever believes in
Him should not perish but have eternal life.

D. known by observing its role [read in both Goodwin and Hodge]

- 1. saved *through* faith; saved *by* faith
- 2. not *because of* faith
- 3. typical, but wrong: God is not determined to save you, He merely wants to
save you. The reason that he does determine to save you is that you
believe (or are foreseen to be believe).
- 4. correct: God is determined to save all His elect; He saves them through
or by faith

E. known by hearing the careful language of the best confessions

- 1. 1689 & Westminster: accepting, receiving, and resting upon him [Christ]
alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life
- 2. 1925 BFM:
 - a) being deeply convinced of the way of salvation by Christ,
 - b) heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and
King,
 - c) and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.
- 3. 1560s Belgic Confession
 - a) embracing Jesus Christ with all his merits,
 - b) making him your own,
 - c) and no longer looking for anything apart from him

II. How we come to have saving faith; two parts to this: denial and affirmation

A. denial: not of ourselves Eph 2:8

B. affirmation: it is the gift of God

- 1. Eph 2:8b

2. John 6:63-65 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (64) But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. (65) And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."
3. confessions
 - a) 1689 and Westminster: faith is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word
 - b) 1925 BFM: faith is wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God
 - c) Belgic Confession (1560s): the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith
- C. observation: this salvation through faith must not be thought of as anything you have done for yourself; the status quo in religious life around us is to understand that what Jesus has done for you on the cross is the gift of God, but your having faith is your own doing, a response of yours to the gift God offers you; but that is not right! both the work of Christ on the cross AND your believing are both part of the gift of God to you

III. How saving faith shows God's grace

- A. If it weren't through faith, it would have to be by works
 1. Romans 9:31-32 Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. (32) Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.
- B. If it were by works, it would be deserved, not undeserved
 1. Romans 4:4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.
 2. Ephesians 2:9 not of works, lest any man should boast
- C. So, to be by grace, it is through faith
 1. Romans 4:16a Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace

CONCLUSION

Now may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightend, that you may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, that He took us, who were dead in trespasses and sins, and made us alive with Christ--by His Spirit working in us faith, that we would be saved through that faith, by God's grace, making a great demonstration of the exceeding riches of His grace. May we come to know this, and so to give no praise to ourselves, but all praise to the glory of God's grace.

How we can know what faith is

By the Lord Jesus' speaking of believing "in Him"

John 3:16

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

By the Lord Jesus' descriptions of faith

John 4:14 drinking of water Jesus gives

John 4:42 "Now we believe"

John 5:40 coming to Jesus

John 5:43 receiving Jesus

John 6:37-40 coming to Jesus

John 6: 47-51 eating Jesus as bread from heaven

John 7: 37-38 drinking Jesus as water

John 10:9 entering the sheep fold by Jesus as the door

John 10:14-16 knowing the voice of Jesus the shepherd

By the Lord Jesus' fulfillment of OT types

serpent

By what it is the opposite of

the opposite of rejecting Jesus and not receiving His words

John 12:46-48 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. (47) And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. (48) He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

the opposite of doing works

Romans 4:5 "does not work but believes on Him"

God taught us in the Old Testament that salvation was through faith.

In stories such as we heard read from Daniel

In statements such as

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

We receive faith as a gift from God

John 6:63-65 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (64) But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. (65) And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

1689:

How we get it:

-faith is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word

What it is:

-accepting, receiving, and resting upon him [Christ] alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life

1925 BFM:

How we get it:

-faith is wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God

What it is:

-being deeply convinced of the way of salvation by Christ,
-heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King,
-and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

Westminster:

Identical with our 1689

Belgic Confession:

How we get it:

the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith

What it is:

- embracing Jesus Christ with all his merits,
- making him your own,
- and no longer looking for anything apart from him

[Acts 24:14; Psalms 27:7-10; Psalms 119:72; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 14:14; Isaiah 66:2; Hebrews 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11](#)

John 1:11-13 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. (12) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (13) who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Goodwin

it was through faith that it might be by grace

[not quoting] caution that you do not think of salvation as being *because* of faith; only *through* faith

Waldron

“centrality of faith in God’s scheme of salvation”

Arrow:

head: object of faith

shaft: nature of faith

feathers: instrumentality of faith

- I. Object of Faith
 - A. repentance is toward God, since sin is against Him
 - B. faith is toward the Lord Jesus Christ
- II. Nature of Faith - two distinct biblical perspectives (not contradictory)
 - A. conviction of the truth, the reliability of the gospel; “believing that . . .”
 1. Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
 - B. commitment to the Christ of the gospel “believing in . . .”
 1. commitment = entrusting oneself to Christ
 2. the abandonment of every hope and giving ourselves to Christ
 3. seen 4 ways
 - a) Greek word often used “to entrust or commit” John 2:23-24
 - b) frequent occurrence of “believe *into*”

- (1) John 2:11
- (2) John 3:16
- (3) transferrance of ourselves to another B.B. Warfield
- c) frequent occurrence of “believe *upon*”
 - (1) Luke 24:25
 - (2) Romans 4:5
- d) analogies/illustrations
 - (1) John 1:12 receiving
 - (2) John 3:36 opposite of refusal to obey
 - (3) John 6 coming to Christ
 - (4) John 6:47-53 eating the bread of life and drinking