

The Five Solas (2017): Sola Gratia

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[0 : 00] So I just kind of want to go ahead and let you know that I'm extremely physically fatigued this morning. Shorter breath. Really tired.

And I think I might even would have passed this off to somebody else, but I thought I'll let Caleb do it.! Wait a minute, Caleb's doing music. He can't do it. So I was kind of just thinking I have to deal with it.

So I'm really tired, but I wonder why sometimes God allows me to be so driven down at a time like this.

Where I'm like, this is so important. This is so rich. I want to feel good for it. I want to have energy for it. But, and two brothers have quoted the same scripture to me on separate occasions this morning.

But, ultimately, it's so that I may not boast in my own strength that God's grace is sufficient. And that His power has made perfect in weakness.

[1 : 05] And so I've got nothing. I have nothing for you this morning. Like, you're going to be, if you receive anything good this morning, it's going to be simply because of the grace of God and because of the power of His Word.

And so, throughout the service, just keep me in prayer. And I pray that. I was remembering Richard Baxter, who was a Puritan pastor.

He said, a man only preacheth well to others when he first preacheth to his own soul. And so I've been trying to remind myself that this is not just a lecture on grace.

This is something that's life-giving, even to me, as I think about it, pray over it, read it. And so, just join me in prayer one more time here.

Father, we gather this morning, not because of any other reason, but to celebrate Your greatness, to celebrate who You are and what You've done for us.

[2 : 15] So, Lord, I ask this morning that You would give me just enough to make it through this time, that Your Word would minister to people, that it would have its desired effect on people.

You would meet each one of us where we are. You would convict us of sin. You would break us down. But then You would build us up and fill us with life because of Christ.

Heal the brokenhearted. Set the captive free. Lord, have Your way this morning. In Christ's name, Amen. So last week, we started a five-week series on the five solos of the Reformation.

And so, if you don't know, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation is coming up on October 31st. And I just kind of want to be clear about this.

It's not a movement that we worship. It's not certain men that we worship. It's about the God that worked in that time and brought about certain things for His glory during that time that we worship.

[3 : 31] And so, we can learn from the past. We can learn from those who went before us. I think it's the height of arrogance, especially in our culture, that we don't need things from the past.

That we're much more advanced and smarter than a lot of the men and women who went before us. But, you know, as a pastor, as someone who does find much encouragement from history, I think you would be terrified if you could see the parallels between the modern evangelical church and the medieval church.

I think you would be really terrified. There's so much that has come back. And we have very much slipped back into medievalism in a lot of ways.

So, October 31st, 1517 is the day when the German Augustinian monk Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany.

And it was a protest against the selling of indulgences by the Roman church. The irony of it is that Luther actually thought that Rome was being misrepresented by the selling of indulgences.

[4 : 54] He thought this was something that if the Pope knew that this was happening, he would not be okay with it. So, the irony is he dedicated the 95 theses to Pope Leo.

Pretty funny. So, then later on he came to find out that, like, wait a minute, this has actually got Rome's stamp of approval on it. The selling of indulgences, a certified document from Rome that could absolve someone from their sins if they bought it, if they bought it with money.

And you could get yourself or a dead relative out of purgatory or out of hell to go to heaven. With an indulgence. And it started when a man named John Tetzel, who was like the number one seller of indulgences in the Holy Roman Empire at the time, came to Luther's area and he started corrupting his people with the teaching of indulgences.

And it really ticked Luther off. And so, he said, wait a minute, this is not Scripture. This is not what grace is. This is not what salvation is. And so, he protested, again, to his horror, only to find out at the end of the day that Rome was behind this.

Rome was supporting it. And so, instead of leaning into Luther's call for reformation, Rome, you know, bucked up against it and pushed against the need for reform.

[6 : 23] But I think it's important to say that Luther was not the first reformer. There were plenty of men who went before him who taught the same things, including people in England like John Wycliffe, which we talked about before.

A man named John Huss, who was a bohemian pastor, who taught that salvation was by grace alone, that the Scripture alone was our authority.

He taught in the language of the common people and not in Latin. And for that, he was eventually burned at the stake by Rome, stripped him of all his preaching garments.

And supposedly, okay, John Huss said to the bishop who was setting him on fire, in a hundred years, there's a man that's going to come, and you're not going to be able to stop him.

You're not going to be able to silence him like you're trying to silence me. And so, almost to the day, a hundred years later, is when Luther came into being a monk.

[7 : 28] And here's the irony. He was actually ordained as a monk in the same cathedral where that bishop was buried. Like, he was buried underneath where Luther was taking that oath.

And so, the joke goes that after John Huss said, in a hundred years, someone's going to come and you won't be able to silence, the bishop said, over my dead body. So, really, that was a prophecy that came true.

And so, but I want you to be clear that Luther, Swingley, John Calvin, John Huss, none of these men were perfect men.

If you study them, you will see that they were in just as much need of these doctrines as we were. They were not perfect men. And indeed, some of the things that they did would frighten you, I think. So, we don't celebrate them. We celebrate our God that they made much of, right? And so, the five solas really were consolidated as doctrines, maybe around the 20th century.

[8 : 32] So, it wasn't like the Reformers got together and said, hey, these are five things that we believe. It was just things that were being taught. And we brought them together probably around the 20th century.

And why is important? Why is that important? Because, well, first let me tell you what they are. I apologize. It means that Scripture alone is our authority.

The salvation is by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and all to the glory of God alone.

And why is that so important? Well, if it's not alone, then you're saying something has to be added. Then you're saying the Scripture and something.

Grace and something. Faith and something. Christ and something. And to the glory of God and something else. So, that's why it has to be alone, right?

[9 : 33] So, by stating these solas, you were stating what's true, and at the same time, you're stating what was false. So, the Reformers were saying, Scripture is not only necessary, it's sufficient.

Christ is not only necessary, He's enough. And that grace is not only necessary, but God's grace alone is what saves. So, those are just so important to keep in our mind that Rome taught these things, but they didn't teach them alone.

They just thought that they were necessary and good. So, today, it brings us to sola gratia, grace alone.

And there is so much about this. I think part of my problem was I had just a wealth of things I was looking at this week that I was just overwhelmed by it all. So, God's grace alone is what saves us. It encompasses all our salvation. And so, just to start with this, the Roman view of grace, the Roman Catholic view of grace, then, and now, is that grace, in essence, is God's merited favor or divine assistance that He dispenses to those who seek to please Him.

[10:59] Alright? Grace, in essence, is God's merited favor, which doesn't quite sound right. So, they were taught, then and now, taught that sinners are justified by God's grace plus some merit of their own, and that the road of salvation begins with the individual's efforts aided by the grace of God.

So, through keeping the commands of Christ, regular confession, penance, taking of the sacraments, God's grace is, in fact, infused into believers.

Like, it's something that God dispenses and strengthens you with. Right? So, when enough merit has been obtained, then and only then is it right for God to justify you and make you right in His sight.

But Rome, at this time, taught that actually no one could ever merit enough to have salvation. No one. Right? And so, that's why purgatory exists.

So, purgatory is not a biblical idea at all. But Rome taught, again, that no one can merit enough salvation, merit enough to achieve salvation.

[12:17] So, purgatory is a safety net. So, if you can't work it out in this life, you fall down to the next one and you are able to work it out there and then later on be admitted to heaven.

But if I could, I would, many people have summed up Rome's teaching on grace just like this. God helps those who help themselves.

Okay? So, that was a Roman idea. And, here's the shocking thing though. A study a few years ago of evangelicals, half of them thought that that was a direct biblical quotation.

Eighty-four percent of them believed it was at least a biblical idea. And so, it's not just scary to think that we are again, drifting back into medievalism.

It is very frightening indeed. In fact, Benjamin Franklin is the one who penned that. God helps those who help themselves in Paul Richard's Almanac in 1739. But he really was echoing something that the Roman church taught at the time of the Reformation.

[13:32] A very popular phrase that Rome taught to the masses was this phrase, God will not deny His grace to those who do what they can. So, deep down, right, man's sinful pride wants to believe that if we cannot save ourselves, that we at least can contribute something to aid in our salvation.

So, the Reformers came along and said, no, God is not, grace is not God's merited favor. Grace means His unmerited favor.

It's the very opposite of grace. You can't have grace and merit. You can either have merit or grace. And so, if you want a definition of God's grace, here you go.

God's grace means His unmerited favor and goodness towards those who only deserve punishment. God's grace means His unmerited favor and goodness towards those who only deserve punishment.

Romans 11, 6 says, if it is by grace, then it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace.

[14:51] So, you can't have both together. So, the Reformers were saying grace is not something God just dispenses. It's an attribute He possesses.

It's in His nature to be gracious. It's His kindness and His grace alone that saves. So, as we look at this, we're going to use Ephesians 2 to walk through this idea of grace.

And again, this is a scripture alone, not on just what people say. We're going to do it in the form of questions like I like to do a lot of the time. So, I'll read the text with you and we'll go from there.

Chapter 2, verse 1. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work, and the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once live in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and by nature, children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead and our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the

coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[16:37] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your undoing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. So that's our text, and there is so much to learn about grace in this text, so much.

So, the first question we're going to ask is, how great is our need for God's grace? How great is our need for God's grace?

We see this in the first three verses, one through three, we see that our need is very, very great for God's grace. We were created in the image of God, to walk with him, to know him, to live in joyful obedience and relationship with him, and to honor him in all we do, to reflect his image wherever we go.

We had a special standing with God, unlike anyone else, any other thing in all the created order. Yet, tragically, we know that each one of us have completely forfeited our special standing with God by rebelling against him, sinning against him, and turning away from him.

[18:01] Isaiah 53, 6, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. We all have done this, every one of us.

we have separated ourselves from God and now we are alienated from him in our lost, fallen state. So, that's the testimony of scripture.

It's the testimony of history. If you think that man has some goodness in him, you need to open your eyes to your own heart and the world around you, and you will see that it's not there.

St. Augustine, who was a fourth-century church father, he was one that a lot of the reformers looked to rediscover, to pick back up on the gospel.

He said, the whole humility of man consists in the knowledge of himself. So, let's look at this text so we can gain a better idea of that.

[19:03] First off, we see that man is dead in his trespasses and sin. So, again, many in our churches today, just like in the medieval Roman church, we believe in a lot of ways.

If you just go around the churches, listen to sermons, listen to what people look for in church, we really believe that we're born basically good, that we need God to help us a little bit and give us some moral guidance on how to live a good life, but we just need some encouragement. And that would be a heresy called Pelagianism because we believe that man is born basically good. Pelagianism. Man is not just born spiritually sick.

Okay? If you're sick, you just need a doctor to give you some medical attention to make you better. That's what would be called semi-Pelagianism or Arminianism.

You can cooperate. You just have to have somebody come and help you. Like you're sick, you're desperate for some help and all you need is someone to come and give you some attention. But we see that man is dead in his trespasses, born in sin and by nature spiritually dead.

[20:22] That word means corpse. So not just spiritually misguided, are spiritually sick, but we're spiritually dead. Meaning our souls are dead to all that God is and that we have no ability to do spiritual good.

before God or to initiate a relationship with God. We're born dead in sin. It says this in our text.

This is what he's trying to say. And he's setting it up for something else though. Not only are we dead in sin, let's see that our spiritual senses have been darkened by sin.

Men are born blind in death to spiritual truth. That's what the Bible teaches. Verse 3, they live in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.

Our minds are darkened by sin and our hearts corrupted by evil and fallen man cannot even begin to initiate to initiate something good with God.

[21:24] Paul wrote later on in the same letter, just turn up a couple chapters to chapter 4 in Ephesians, but verse 17, chapter 4, he says, Now this I say in testifying the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of heart, their hardness of heart.

They have become callous and have even given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. So look at those terms, darkened in understanding, alienated from God,

ignorant, hardness of heart, callous.

That is a description of who we are before Christ. It's terrifying. Not only this, if we keep reading back in our text in Ephesians 2, it says that we followed the prince of the power of the air.

That's Satan, the devil. This is terrifying. Before we are in Christ, scripture says that we are children of the devil, under his control, enslaved to sin.

[22 : 49] Alright? If you don't agree with that, just listen to this. Jesus was talking in John 8 with a large group of people who refused to believe that he was the son of God.

And this is what he said to them. This is not real seeker friendly at all. He says, you are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the will of your father.

That's scary. Paul later on prayed that unbelievers would escape the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will.

2 Timothy 2.26 God. So not all belong to God, and that's a frightening thought. It says that we are sons of disobedience and our end is wrath. That's what we read right here in our text.

By nature, we are children of wrath like the rest of mankind. So, left in our fallen original state, we are only objects of God's wrath and condemnation.

[23 : 53] So, not just sick, not just misguided, but desperately, desperately fallen. We are dead in our trespasses.

So, why is this so important, right? Well, you will minimize the grace of God if you hold too high a view of yourself. In the Roman church at this time, they had pragmatic theologians and they taught, at least in this time, right, they judged a doctrine to be true or not, if it was useful for contemporary life, and if it wasn't hard to grasp.

So, Erasmus, who was one of Luther's opponents later on, Roman Catholic theologian, Desiderius Erasmus, he basically said, look, Luther, even if Scripture does teach that man is so fallen, so depraved, so helpless, we shouldn't teach the people that, because if we do, they're just going to despair, and they're not even going to want to even try to improve their condition.

That's what they taught. Sound familiar today? As where the reformers and Luther said, no, it's the eternal idea of God's truth that matters, not our feelings, or whether or not we think something's helpful or not, and you will diminish, if you diminish our desperate spiritual condition, you will diminish the glory of God in saving us.

That's what they were saying. So it doesn't matter if it's helpful in our moment or not, in this moment or not. So, such a desperate spiritual state leaves us at God's mercy.

[25 : 48] And it goes to question number two. Go back to Ephesians two. You see this in verses five and six. Okay, the question is, how did God provide his grace for us?

Verses five and six. And we see beautifully that he did it in Christ by sending his son. this saving grace that we know, this unmerited favor of the Father came at a great cost.

It was costly grace because it cost the precious blood of Christ, the only blood of the Father.

Ephesians one, verse seven, it says, in him, in Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us.

So, we don't have really many places to turn this morning other than Ephesians two, but my classic text, go to Romans five, Romans five really quick. I just want you to see this.

Romans five and go to verse six. God provided his grace for us and he sent Christ to come and die on our behalf.

[27 : 14] provided in the Savior. Okay. Romans five verse six. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Okay, now, pause. So, God doesn't help those who help themselves. It says that we are weak and helpless. We cannot help ourselves. Right?

We're not in any position. At the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would even dare to die.

Listen to this. But God chose his love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since therefore we now have been justified by his blood, much more shall I be saved by him from the wrath of God.

For if we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son. Much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

[28 : 23] So good. Chew on those verses today when you go home. But you see these phrases that are used of a lost person? Without Christ, they are ungodly, they are weak, they are enemies,

they are sinners, and they are separated.

That is all scary news, right? But we see that Christ died for us, reconciled us to God, and made us right with God.

Beautiful picture. Okay? So, this is a picture of the work, how God provided his grace for us, that he sent Christ to die for us. So listen to this, if you can, just pull in, take this in.

again, it's in God's nature to be gracious. So God is not gracious to us because Jesus died for us. Jesus died for us because God is gracious to us. You follow that? God is not gracious to us because Christ died for us, but Christ died for us because God is gracious.

[29 : 33] gracious. So it is the grace of the Father who initiated with us and that Jesus came and died in our place.

He is how we have the grace of God. So in a sense, the reformers were saying that grace isn't some thing that God just sort of throws out to us.

He sent us Christ and in Christ is all the grace we need. In Christ, not outside of Christ. So, they were saying we can distort the character of the Father.

He is just, he is righteous, but he is also gracious and loving. Right? And that's how we see in Romans, right, that God remained just by punishing Christ, but in through that he became the justifier of the one who had faith in Christ.

Brings us to our third question. What is the means of receiving God's grace? Alright, look at verses 8 and 9.

[30 : 39] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not of the result of works, so that no one may boast.

So, as fallen human beings, we all have a tendency, every one of you, and me, we have a tendency to want to seek to earn God's favor. behavior. This is how the world operates around us, every day, right?

Kids try to be on good behavior to earn their parents' favor. Students work really hard to make good grades in class. You work really hard to make a sports team and perform well at work to hopefully get a promotion.

Our whole life is saturated with performance-based acceptance. acceptance. So, very easily that drips into our relationship with God. So, if you struggle with that, just know that's affecting, you know, your understanding of the nature of God, right?

And it's something that the other religions and cults of the world have picked up on. You know, work your way, earn your way to God, appease Him some way, and that's not how it is.

[31 : 51] The reality is that God's salvation is by grace alone. And that's a message that the whole world needs to hear. So, God doesn't even want you to contribute 1% of your salvation so that you have no grounds to boast, right?

So, imagine if someone committed the most atrocious crime to you, towards you, and then they tried to make amends by giving you just a little bit of money for it. You know, that makes no sense at all.

And that's how we kind of act with God, that, you know, we can displace His justice if we just do a few, quote, good things. And that's not how His justice works.

Remember, God's grace means that His unmerited favor and goodness towards those who deserve only punishment. None of us deserve it. Again, otherwise, grace would not be grace.

And He is not under obligation to show us grace. You should hear that. God is not obligated to show us grace. Exodus 33, 19, also quoted in Romans 9, Lord, the Lord said, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

[33 : 08] Yet, astonishingly, astonishingly, shockingly, God did choose to show us His grace. And it was a gift, a gift of God that we read, right?

That means like the faith, the faith itself is a gift of God towards you. So, one commentator I read, he said, faith is simply breathing the breath that God's grace provides.

Faith is breathing the breath that God's grace provides. So we cannot be good enough, we cannot do enough good works to make ourselves right with God.

we cannot. So, the only way to receive it again is by faith. And God's grace provides this. Question number four.

Thanks for bearing with me, I'm struggling right now. Question number four. Why, this is important, why did God choose to show us His grace?

[34 : 14] Why? See this in verses four and seven. God being rich in mercy because of the great love which He loved us.

And in verse seven, so that in the coming age He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. So, it could be said that the first two words of that are so beautiful, but God, right?

though we were helplessly lost, enslaved to sin, children of the devil, held captive to do His will, hearts darkened by sin, minds corrupted by evil, though we had done nothing but rebel against Him, but God.

So, why did God choose us to show us His grace? Not because we were worthy, not because we cleaned ourselves up enough to make ourselves acceptable to God, not because we earned His favor, we earned only death, Romans 6, the wages of sin is death, right?

only because of the riches of His mercy and grace. So, this word, this word rich right here that you see, it means overabounding without measure in mercy towards us.

[35 : 43] So, that is God's mercy, His pardoning, His forgiving. So, then we read because of the great love with which He loved us, agape, my favorite, one of my favorite words, agape, the highest form of love and existence.

So, it's not like, I think most of us can't get our heads around this. I think we minimize like how great this idea of love is. It's not brotherly love. It's not even like the affection that a marital couple has with each other.

It's higher than that. God in His nature is by definition, love. His love is infinitely greater than any human love can express.

And, this word, in Greek speaking culture, back then, it hardly ever pops up. It was never really used a lot because they didn't really have a right context for it.

But the New Testament, it occurs 320 times, speaking about God's self-sacrificing, unconditional love. love. So, it's a love not of human origin.

[36 : 58] Right? Humans don't have this kind of love. We don't die for our enemies. Right? This is only the God type love that Christ died for us while we were His enemies, while we were still sinners.

So, listen to this. You must have a high view of sin and depravity because if you do, it will help you magnify the love of God much more than those who have a low view of sin.

If you think that you're actually worthy of God's love, then God's love is puny. But God's love is magnified because He chose to love that which was unlovable.

Us. Right? It's so much more beautiful, so much more glorious when we see that He just simply chose to love us, not because we deserve it.

Right? It says that in 1 John does it not? We love why? Because He first loved us. Right? So that He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace.

[38 : 05] Each one of you who are in Christ, you're a trophy of God's grace. I like to deer hunt. I've only killed a couple of big bucks. I only mounted one of them, and that's my trophy.

I don't even have it in my house, in my parents' house. My brother is a deer slayer, though. He has like, deers all over the wall, massive deers. And, not a direct connection, but each one of us who are in Christ, we are a trophy of God's grace.

We are a trophy of God's goodness. Why, each one of us have been changed and redeemed by Christ. We are a trophy of grace, each one of us.

So, this is the last place I want you to look, but just flip over to Ephesians 1. I'm trying to keep you in Ephesians. Ephesians 1, verse 5.

And we see this, that God did this to the praise of His glory. Sola Dei Gloria. says, in love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, listen to this, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the beloved.

[39 : 28] In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

So, He did this for the praise of His glorious grace. That's mind-blowing to me. But listen to this, if God's glory is at stake here, that's huge, because it means that He won't suffer His glory to be diminished.

Okay, so that leads us to the fifth thing, the last question. How should we respond to God's grace? How should we respond to God's grace?

In a way, in verse 10, back in chapter 2, it says that we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which He prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So, I think each one of us would find ourselves in one of these two positions, naturally speaking. We would find that our natural tendency is either to drift away from God's grace with either legalism or licentiousness.

[40 : 59] We either de-appreciate God's grace. this is sad. So, let's just unpack this. These are two wrong responses to God's grace that each one of us will find ourselves in at some point.

The first one is the cheap grace mentality. We look at God's grace and we treat it like it wasn't costly, like it's not valuable. Many of you may have found yourself in this position.

This was the story of my life. If you ever heard me tell you my story, it would be filled with this kind of stuff. Or we say, grace, that's awesome.

Boy, I'm glad I'm saved, so no matter what I do now, I'm okay with God. I've got my get out of hell free ticket because of God's grace and now I can send all I want to.

I thought that way for years. So, as long as I go to church on Sunday and Wednesday and try to go do the thing, get baptized, join the church, I'm okay.

[42 : 08] Yet, if that's you this morning, know that Scripture says that a lot of people are deceived into thinking they belong to Christ and they are not.

2 Corinthians 13.5, a verse I had never read until about ten years ago when I became a believer. It says, examine yourselves to see whether or not you are in the faith.

Test yourselves. Well, I was told not to doubt myself, so I'm not going to listen to that. I pray my prayers, I'm good. No, he says test yourself to see if you are in the faith.

And I had no love of God. If you had watched my life, I had no fear of God. And that's the tragedy of the Bible belt in a lot of ways, that we are so accustomed to the good news that it's really just dull and old news to us.

And so, if you find yourself there, if you can walk up to Jesus, hang on the cross, and say to Him, I know that you're suffering now from my sin, and that you're dying wish is that I go and sin no more, but there's just one need I have that can only be fulfilled by sinning.

[43 : 24] So I hope you understand as I thrust this sword into your side. So now I'm glad that your blood forgives me because I'm doing this.

Those who are born of God cannot think that way. Cannot think that way. If you see God's grace as a license to sin, hear this, Paul says in Romans 6, what shall we say then?

Will we continue that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? Your sin killed Christ, right?

We can't be friends with it any longer. And if that's how you think, just advance at your own peril. You're getting a warning this morning. Stop and look at your life. That is not the right way to respond to the grace of God.

Paul actually says later on, Romans 3, 8, if you think this way, let us sin that good may come, he says, as some slanderously charge us, he says, your condemnation is just, if we think this way.

[44 : 34] So, that's the first wrong response. To treat the precious blood of Christ is cheap. the second wrong response, which is just as bad, is legalism.

There's so much talk about legalism. I think most people can't even really properly define it. But in our case, we're going to say that it's an attempt to basically improve upon the grace of God.

Like, I like God's grace, but I want to make sure that I still add a little bit of my own goodness into it, just in case. I want to have Christ plus some good things to my account.

And that is making a mockery of the sacrifice of Christ. It's a slap in the face of God to say that the blood of His Son was not enough. Alright?

You cannot add or try to improve the grace of God. Christ's death was sufficient. Okay? So, I'm going to try to spend the rest of this time on our right response.

[45 : 42] Alright? So, here's a few things, I think, four things that can kind of, what's the right response to the grace of God? For one, is obedience.

Listen to this. Saving grace not only sets us free from spiritual bondage, but at the same, saving grace also transforms our lives into joyful obedience.

obedience. Alright? Saving grace not only sets us free from spiritual bondage, but it transforms our lives into joyful obedience. Good works don't earn God's grace for us, but the church has taught for a long time, the Protestant evangelical church, the good works aren't the means of salvation, but they're the fruit of salvation, the evidence of salvation.

we want to serve God. Our hearts are changed. So that is the outflow, is a desire to want to follow God. There's a change in your heart.

I want to do what he says, not that I have to or whatever, it's a desire change. Joyful obedience, not legal obedience.

[46 : 55] Another thing that it accomplishes is humility. humility. So humility in this case isn't just trying to feel small or feel useless or inferior, but it's this idea that God is so great, so majestic, so glorious in his grace and we see ourselves in light of that.

So we're humbled by the knowledge that such a holy, righteous God would show us grace. That should make us just feel overwhelmed, completely humbled, humbled at that reality that he would show such amazing grace to us in Christ Jesus.

Like, why? Why? Why? Why me? Why you? Right? No sense of entitlement. It's a humbling reality. God's grace humbles us. And this is a great one. Assurance. Okay? Another response. Assurance. Because salvation began as a work of God's grace, it's also going to be brought to completion by God's grace.

God's, the same sovereign grace that saved us is the grace that leads us home. Right? That's what Newton said. It was grace that taught my heart to fear, in grace my fears relieved.

[48 : 20] How precious did the grace appear the hour I first believed. Christ. So, he will finish it. Paul says, I am confident that he who began the good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

Humans are notorious for starting projects they can't finish. I'm the best example. And it's usually either a lack of resources or lack of desire to finish a project, lack of time, whatever.

God lacks none of those things to finish what he starts. He always finishes what he starts. And so, take comfort in that reality that grace started this and grace is going to finish it.

And then lastly, worship. As we find our minds expanded by the grace of God, our hearts should correspondingly be enlarged for love for him, for what Christ has done.

So, we should fall at Christ's feet and worship because of the greatness of this grace. 2 Corinthians 9, listen to this, he just says, because of the surpassing grace of God that is upon us, thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift.

[49 : 41] Grace is an inexpressible gift of God. And I hope that you're taking comfort in these realities that salvation and our acceptance, our standing with God is solely based on his grace, his unmerited goodness and favor towards us who don't deserve it at all.

Join me in prayer.