

SOLA GRATIA

10.8.2017

EPHESIANS 1:3-10

- **The second major PILLAR of the Protestant Reformation was SOLA GRATIA.** Which means, “We are made right with God by *GRACE ALONE*.” For hundreds of years the Gospel—the good news of salvation in Jesus—had been all but lost. It was a dark time. And it had primarily been lost because the Bible hadn’t been the sole of focus of how we can know God, know ourselves, and how we can know how we can be Made Right with God. The rest of the SOLAS: gratia, fide, Christus, and soli deo gloria all spring from Sola Scriptura. When the Church returned to Scripture ALONE as the measure of what is true, the rest followed.
- **What the Church most needed in 16th century was to recover the truth of the gospel**—the good news that we are made right with God by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus alone. And that only happened as the Church returned to Scripture alone as the final say in what we should believe and what we should do.
- **What individual local Churches most need today is the exact same thing!** The very message of the gospel is not lost, but sadly in many places it has been radically watered down, and exchanged for something that barely even resembles the true Gospel revealed in the Scriptures.
- **Q.** So, what do we see about the Gospel when we turn to the Scriptures? **A.** We see that...

1. WE ARE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD BY GRACE ALONE

(THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRACE and GRACE ALONE.)

- **The word Grace, in the Bible, is most easily understood by two different two-word explanations:**
 1. “**UNmerited favor.**” Which means there’s no prerequisite, there’s no pre-condition, there’s no earning it; it’s has nothing to do with the deservedness of the one receiving it, but everything to do with the one giving.
 2. “**ILL-deserved blessing.**” Which means you are not simply given something good you don’t deserve; it means *THOUGH* you deserve the worst, you are given the best!
- **It would not have been GRACE, according to the Biblical definition of the word, if when I was driving 16 miles over the speed limit a few weeks ago the police officer would’ve given me a warning instead of a ticket. That would have been MERCY, but not grace. GRACE would’ve been if after pulling me over, he would’ve not given me a ticket, and then took me out for steaks, paying the bill. > ILL-deserved blessing <**
- **This is the language Paul uses in Ephesians 1:3-10, concerning How we are made right with God.**
- **For the Apostle Paul, it seems the best way to understand the word GRACE, is ill-deserved BLESSING.**
 (LONGEST SENTENCE IN THE ENTIRE BIBLE - Ephesians 1:3-14)

EPHESIANS 1:3, 7b–10 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us *in Christ* with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. . . 7b according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

- **In the 16th century, The Roman Catholic church believed and taught that we are saved by GRACE, but not grace ALONE.** Their view was that people had “SINS” (plural) and then there were GRACES (plural). And in order to be in a right standing with God, you essentially needed to receive more GRACES than you had SINS.
- **Now, Rome taught that there are some who lived such wonderful lives that they died with more GRACES than they needed;** they were labeled *saints*, and the extra graces they held, according to their extraordinary good works, were kept in a treasure chest in heaven. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was at the front of the line of these saints and had a superabundance to give. The Pope held the keys to this treasure chest, and the Roman Catholic Church is who distributed these graces to people, all of course coming ultimately from the cross of Jesus and what He’s done. **Q.** How did you get these graces, according to Rome? **A.** By doing good WORKS of grace (Baptism, Communion, Confession, indulgences, etc.) THIS IS WHY ROME WOULDN’T SAY WE’RE SAVED BY GRACE ALONE.
- **At first this may seem preposterous, but only because we’re so familiar with the message communicated today.** How do we receive the grace of God? Well, you pray this prayer; get baptized; have ENOUGH faith...

Q. What does the LORD say, through the Apostle Paul, concerning how we RECEIVE grace/blessings in Christ?

2. HOW WE RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD

• GRACE ALONE *DEFINED*.

1. WE RECEIVE GRACE BY BEING CHOSEN BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

EPHESIANS 1:4a 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

- **Paul is saying**, “You want the big picture, zoomed way out? Anyone who has received the grace of God through Jesus (or ever will!) has done so based on the fact that God chose them before the world even existed.
- **Well if that doesn’t just sweep the legs** right out from under Rome’s doctrine on how to receive the grace of God.
- **Paul’s NOT saying**, “God chose you before the foundation of the world because He foresaw that one day you would choose Jesus.” That. makes. absolutely. no. biblical. sense.

JESUS, JOHN 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Q. Now, what is the end game of His choosing us? A. “That we should be Holy and Blameless before Him.”

- Look, Christian, God didn’t choose you because HE SAW you would be Holy and Blameless before Him; He chose you in order to MAKE you holy and blameless before Him.
- The second way Paul says...

2. WE RECEIVE GRACE (IS) BY BEING PREDESTINED FOR ADOPTION.

EPHESIANS 1:4b-5a In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ...

- **Adoption is a legal procedure** that secures a child’s identity in a new family.
- **Imagine yourself an Orphan at an orphanage.** And a well to do man is on his way to adopt you—and everyone’s telling what to do and what not to do to make sure he will take you home. And yet, when he gets there, you really blow it. But still he looks at you and says, “Let’s go home.” If you were to ask him why, he would say, “I don’t care what anyone at the Orphanage told you, I decided I was going to adopt you before I left the house.”
- If you’re in Christ, or if you would come to Him through faith, know this: **God the Father decided to adopt you before the world began.**
- **Q.** Have you ever feared that you would somehow lose your salvation?
- **In Christ, our salvation is secure because God is not our foster parent,** He’s our Father. This is why Christians love adoption!
- **40% of kids will go to bed tonight without a father who is present. Majority of kids born to women 30yrs and younger are born out of wedlock. Some of you had a dad but he was a horrible dad. He ignored you, he abused you, or he abandoned you. Some of you have a terrible family.**
- **And what the gospel says to you is that in Christ Jesus,** God is your loving Father who has predestined you for adoption into His family. The Gospel also says to those who have had families that left them wanting, the Church is now your family.

3. WE RECEIVE GRACE ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF GOD’S WILL.

EPHESIANS 1:5b-6 ...according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved...

- **If you liken the Gospel to a body of water,** these verses are the part that you can see down the deepest. **And if you liken it to a glorious skyscraper,** these verses reveal the foundation for such a grand building.
- **All the grand promises God gives us in the gospel flow from the grace** He chose to give to us before the world was founded.
- **Perhaps one of the greatest promises to Christians in all of the Bible is found in Romans 8:28:** “28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **WHY? ->** 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined...30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Q. Do you see why the Reformers were so insistent that salvation is by grace ALONE? Why we should be?

• Ulrich Zwingli definitely was! he was a pastor in Zurich, Switzerland. Statue in Zurich to this day, sword and Bible. Zwingli was at Basel, Germany with Erasmus, who completed the Greek text (1514-1516). He started devouring the Greek text - he even hand copied Paul's letters. And he started to work on the gospels. Started preaching January 1st, 1519 in Zurich on Matthew 1:1. "I don't see Lent in here!" "We are allowed to marry!" "Pipe-organs are not in the Bible!" "Remove these windows, they are a distraction to the gospel!"

Q. Do you see what this means for your everyday life? HE CHOSE YOU. YOU'RE HIS. This is Rest/Strength.

How do we receive the grace of God? By Him sovereignly giving it to us. We don't have to earn it, we could never deserve it. . .

3. IT'S COMPLETELY FREE FOR US BECAUSE IT WAS INFINITELY COSTLY FOR JESUS

• LOOK AT VERSE 7!

EPHESIANS 1:7 7 In him we have redemption *through his blood*, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

- **The Bible doesn't teach that we have quantity problem**, needing our graces to outweigh our sins. No, it says we're much worse off than that: in fact, one single act of disobedience renders us guilty before Holy God.
- **And on the cross, Jesus was made sin for us**—He was treated as *UNHOLY* and was *BLAMED*, so that we could be holy and blameless before Him.
- **On the cross**, Jesus was willingly slaughtered like a sinner like we deserve...so that **WE** could be embraced as a son like He deserves.
- **THE SWISS REFORMER, ULRICH ZWINGLI**: "Our confidence in Christ does not make us lazy, negligent, or careless, but on the contrary it awakens us, urges us on, and makes us active in living righteous lives and doing good. There is no self-confidence to compare with this."

• **ULRICH ZWINGLI**: "The summary of the gospel is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has revealed the will of His heavenly Father to us, and with His innocence has redeemed us from death, and has reconciled us with God. Therefore, Christ is the only way to salvation for all those who have been, are, and will be."

• **ULRICH ZWINGLI**: "Through Christ alone we are given salvation, blessedness, grace, pardon, and all that makes us in any way worthy in the sight of a righteous God."

• **ULRICH ZWINGLI**: "For when man through repentance has come to the knowledge of himself, he finds nothing but utter despair. Hence, wholly distrusting himself, he is forced to take refuge in the mercy of God. But when he has begun to do that, justice makes him afraid. Then Christ appears, who has satisfied the divine justice for our trespasses. When once there is faith in Him, then salvation is found; for He is the infallible pledge of God's mercy."