

Saved By Grace – Saul of Tarsus

Acts 9

INTRODUCTION

- A. A soldier was brought from the battlefield into the field hospital. He was seriously wounded and thought he was soon to die. A Christian nurse was tending to his wounds and tried to calm him by reciting the promises of the Bible, but the restlessness would not be quieted. At length his wounds were treated and in recovery began to read the Scriptures intensely. He came across the words of John 3:16 and could go no further than the word "whosoever." He kept repeating it to himself and was amazed at the scope of the term. He wanted to believe that it included himself but he was sure he was such a wicked sinner that he was not included. After all, he thought, he was wretched, vile, and hardened by years of sinful deeds. But the more he contemplated on the wondrous term, the more he thought that he too was included. He continued his study of Scriptures and before leaving the hospital became a Christian.
- B. 📖 Hebrews 7:25 contains another term giving hope to the hopeless. Christ is able to save to the "uttermost." His ability to save is extended to even the worst of sinners. No one is beyond the scope of salvation!
- C. To what are these terms referring? 📖 How is it that "whosoever" may be saved? How can Christ save "to the uttermost" one whose entire life has been devoted to sin's wretchedness? It is because of God's wonderful GRACE that such possibility exists. It is nothing that the vile sinner does but it is everything that Christ has done ("nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling"). 📖 How wonderful this grace of God is!
- D. The salvation of Saul of Tarsus illustrates this wonderful grace.
- A. 📖 Saul was a hardened rebel to God's will. He had deliberately rejected God's will and trusted in self-confidence, arrogant pride, and worldly accomplishments for his salvation (1 Timothy 1:12-16).
- B. He had dedicated himself to the destruction of the Lord's Church (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2).
- C. On the Damascus Road Saul of Tarsus was confronted by the grace of God (Acts 9:3-6). When Saul asked "what shall I DO, Lord?" Jesus did not say, "There is nothing you can do to be saved." Saul was told that God's blessing awaited him but he must go and understand what must be done (9:6). 📖 Saul was told how his sins could be removed (22:16). 📖 He did not earn the remission of sins by being baptized, he received forgiveness of sins because of God's grace! No doubt as he would later write to the Ephesian brethren about God's grace he would reflect upon that memorable trip (Ephesians 2:8-10). The account of Saul's conversion clearly illustrates the wonderful grace of our Almighty God.

DISCUSSION

- I. 📖 The elements of saving grace analyzed:
- In considering how grace offers salvation to a lost soul, we discover that saving grace involves three critical elements (John 3:16).
- A. **A GIVER** – The Almighty God the Father is the giver.
God was motivated by His compassion to help fallen man reclaim the lost bliss of Eden.
- B. 📖 **A GIFT** – Jesus Christ, God the Son, was the only way lost man could be reconciled to God. Christ was willing to come and die so that man could live. Christ's coming was the result of His choice — nothing compelled Him to come.
- C. 📖 **A RECEIVER** – Mankind is the receiver of God's wonderful grace. Mankind is to comprehend the great tragedy of sin and the marvelous blessing of God's gracious salvation. He is to hear God's Word, believe that Word, and demonstrate a "living and active" faith in obeying God's commands.
- NOTE:** These three critical elements are found in the conversion narrative of Saul of Tarsus. Saul

could not force Christ to appear to him. No meritorious works of the Law of Moses would ever be sufficient to compel Christ to save Saul. God loved Saul, Jesus' death applied to Saul, that is why Christ appeared to him.

- II. 📖 The grace of God, in Saul's conversion, is evident in these facts:
- A. Saul saw a light that blinded him (Acts 26:13).
 - B. 📖 In the Hebrew language Jesus spoke to Saul (Acts 26:14).
 - C. 📖 Jesus told Saul that he was to become a minister and witness (Acts 26:26).
 - D. 📖 Jesus told Saul where he could find the answer to his query (Acts 9:6; 22:10).
 - E. 📖 The Lord appeared to Ananias to send him to teach Saul (Acts 9:10-18; 22:16).
- III. In Saul's conversion we observe that there are two critical sides:
- A. 📖 God did for Saul only what he could not do for himself.
The Gospel provided the plan of salvation and Christ's appearance provided Saul with the evidence to believe and to become an Apostle. This was the DIVINE SIDE of grace.
 - B. 📖 The HUMAN SIDE of grace is evident in Saul's reaction.
He had to accept and comply with what God's love had provided; he had to obey the gospel (Acts 22:16; Romans 2:8; 10:16). Paul verified his willingness to obey (Acts 26:19). He understood the Lord's Word, went to the place designated, and patiently waited for the answer. When Saul received his sight, the message was confirmed and Saul obeyed (Acts 22:16). In so doing, Saul received what he did not deserve and what he could never earn. If Saul had never obeyed, all the favor God demonstrated, all the praying made, would not have been sufficient (John 12:48).

Conclusion:

- I. 📖 The wonderful grace of God brings great blessings into the world by offering salvation from sin. Sadly it has been "turned" to condone ungodly practices/beliefs (Jude 4). A proper understanding of God's saving grace involves five simple points:
 - A. 📖 God offers blessings which mankind cannot find elsewhere.
 - B. God gives mankind the instructions as to what must be done if man is
 - C. to receive the divine blessings.
 - D. Man demonstrates a "living and active" faith that responds to God's will by having a willingness to "do" what God commands.
 - E. Man shows obedience to God's instructions by doing "all" commanded.
 - F. Man receives the blessing offered by God's grace.
- II. The saving grace of God is clearly illustrated in Matthew 7:13-27.
 - A. 📖 Grace demands that those who are saved enter the strait gate and walk the narrow way (7:13-14). One "enters" this strait gate by . . .
 1. 📖 Hearing the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
 2. 📖 Believing what the Word of God says (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)
 3. 📖 Repenting of self's direction and turning to God's direction (Luke 13:3, 5).
 4. 📖 Confessing the deity of Christ (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10).
 5. 📖 Being baptized FOR the remission of sins (Matthew 28:19; Acts 22:16).
 - B. 📖 Grace demands that we follow the right doctrine (7:15-23). We must beware of false prophets (7:15); be "fruit-testers" (7:16-20); be discerning so we will not be led away from God (7:15); and, be careful that we are not led into error (7:23).
 - C. 📖 Grace demands obedient living to God's Word (7:24-27). Grace demands that we HEAR and DO Christ's teaching (7:24, 25). 📖

Source: The Spiritual Sword, Personal Class Notes on "Grace," John L. Kachelman, Jr.