

## **Saved by Grace Through Faith – and All of That is God’s Gift (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on April 10, 2011*

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In England years ago, there was a large historic church that had its people come up to front to take communion kneeling. The church ‘had three mission churches under its care. On the first Sunday of the New Year all the members of the mission churches [which I think means smaller inner city church plants across town] came to the big ... church for a combined Communion service. In those mission churches, which were located in the slums of the city, were some outstanding cases of conversions - thieves, burglars, and so on – but all knelt side by side at the Communion rail.

On one such occasion the pastor saw a former burglar kneeling beside a judge of the Supreme Court of England – the very judge who had sent him to jail where he had served seven years. After his release this burglar had been converted and become a Christian worker. Yet, as they knelt there, the judge and the former convict, neither one seemed to be aware of the other.

After the service [the judge and pastor later talked about it] ... the judge said, “What a miracle of grace!” The pastor nodded in agreement. “Yes, what a marvelous miracle of grace.” Then the judge said ... “... I was not referring to him. I was thinking of myself.” The pastor surprised, replied: “You were thinking of yourself? I don’t understand.” “Yes,” the judge replied, “it was natural for the burglar to receive God’s grace when he came out of jail. He had nothing but a history of crime behind him, and when he saw Jesus ... he knew how much he needed that help.”

“But look at me. I was taught from earliest infancy to live as a gentleman; that my word was to be my bond; that I was to say my prayers, to go to church, take Communion and so on. I went through Oxford, took my degrees, was called to the bar, and eventually became a judge. Pastor, it was God’s grace that drew me; it was God’s grace that opened my heart to receive it. I’m a greater miracle of his grace.”<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle Paul who wrote Ephesians 2, that we’ll studying again today, felt the same way about himself. He felt his own conversion was the greatest miracle because he felt he was the greatest sinner. In fact he’ll say in Eph 3 “*To me, the least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach ... the unfathomable riches of Christ.*” God’s saving religious people like him and me is a massive miracle. Any conversion is a miracle but ours should be most amazing to us if we really believe we were really as bad as Eph 2 really describes.

Ephesians 2:1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins ...*

*... <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

John Peterson put his this way in a hymn a few decades ago:

It took a miracle to put the stars in place; It took a miracle to hang the world in space.  
But when He saved my soul, Cleansed and made me whole, It took a miracle of love and grace ...

... Though here His glory has been shown, we still can't fully see  
 The wonders of His might, His throne [v. 6 *seated w/ Him*], it will take eternity [v. 7 *ages*].  
 ... The greatness of the Lord is seen in everything He made,  
 But greater far the work He did when on [Christ] my sin was laid  
 ... when He saved my soul, Cleansed and made me whole,  
 It took a miracle of love and grace (Hymn #518)

*But God*, v. 4 says, our miracle-working merciful God, *because of His great love with which He loved us*, the miracle in v. 5 is *when we were dead, He made us alive together with Christ – by grace ...*

#### OUTLINE:

The Riches of God's Grace (v. 7)  
 The Results of God's Grace (v. 8-9)

#### The Riches of God's Grace (v. 7)

The word "rich" is used twice in those verses and "grace" 3x. The first time "rich" is used is in v. 4: *but God rich in mercy...* And v. 7 says God is rich in grace, it speaks of "*riches of His grace.*" God is not only merciful and gracious; He is rich in mercy, rich in grace

*Mercy* – not getting what we deserve (v. 3, wrath)

*Grace* – getting what we don't deserve (everything in v. 5-7, life with Christ, now and eternally, raised and seated with Christ in His presence/place of blessing, v. 6)

Mercy is what keeps believers from God's wrath and hell

Grace is what gives believers salvation and heaven with Jesus

Again and again the OT says God is not only merciful, gracious, loving, kind, but He's "*abounding in mercy / lovingkindness*" (OT equivalent of v. 7 "*the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness*")

Your translation may say "*the incomparable riches of His grace*" or "*exceeding riches of His grace*" or "*immeasurable / limitless,*" i.e., surpasses boundaries, over-the-top, over-above-and-beyond. This Grk word for surpassing or super-abounding is used 3x in Eph:

1:19 "*and what is the surpassing greatness of His power...*"

2:7 "... *the surpassing riches of His grace ...*"

3:19 "... *the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge ...*"

This great adjective is reserved for His *love, grace, power*

His **love** has no limits, His **grace** has no measure  
 His **power** no boundary known unto men;  
 For **out of His infinite riches in Jesus He giveth ...**

**2:7** ... *so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

In context, 2:7 is the conclusion of a long sentence that began in v. 1 in the original letter Paul wrote – it’s the “so that” statement, the purpose clause, the climax he’s been building to, God’s goal in all that He’s done for us in v. 5-6; making us alive, resurrecting us, seating us with Christ in the heavenly places, all <sup>7</sup> *so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace...*

The “ages” (plural) I take as referring to the age of Christ’s coming kingdom on earth, and the age of the new heavens and new earth. 1:21 says Jesus at His ascension was given a place above all, and a name above every name, “*not only in this age* [i.e., age between Christ’s first and second comings] *but also in the age to come.*” In 2:7, Paul uses the same phrase but makes it plural “*in the ages to come...*” (i.e., end of Revelation; millennium/1,000-year reign of Christ in Rev 20, and then a new heavens and new earth in Rev 21)

John Piper: ‘God is graciously disposed to us and intends to show us lavish kindness. He has planned the coming ages for the purpose of showing the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us. The amount of this grace and kindness is described in terms of “riches” or “wealth,” and the degree of the wealth is called “immeasurable.” But ... [it] is not like a trust account out of reach in a bank; it is something God intends to “demonstrate” or “show” us. The whole account will be withdrawn and spent on us. The scope and variety of God’s kindness toward us is so great that it will not take one age but multiple “coming ages” to accomplish. This simply means that his kindness will never be exhausted. God will never run out of fresh ways for us to revel in the profound joy of being loved! The wealth of his grace is immeasurable. It will take eternity for him to show us all the kindness he has to show. That is what it means to be God. In him there is always more to know, more to marvel at, and more to enjoy.’<sup>2</sup>

But before this age comes to a close, Jesus commanded we share these riches with all people, proclaim the gospel, spread the wealth and wonder of our God being rich in mercy. Lift up the light of this gospel to our dark world. Hide it under a bushel? No! We’re gonna let it shine! Don’t let anybody blow it out! Don’t hoard the riches of grace you’ve received, herald God’s grace, share the good news. We exist to spread the fame of His name for the joy of all peoples!

Eph 3:8 ‘*to proclaim the unfathomable riches of Christ...*’ If we keep our voices silent about Christ, stones will cry out. If God has taken our heart of stone, given us a new heart, we should cry out, shout to the Lord, let us sing, power, majesty, praise to the King!

Spurgeon, reflecting on God’s great love in v. 4 and rich mercy and surpassingly rich grace in v. 7, says God’s regenerating dead sinners (v. 5), new creation is a greater miracle than His first:

‘It was love which made him breathe into Adam the breath of life, and make poor clay to walk and speak; but it is far greater love which makes him now after the fall has defiled us, renew us with a second and yet higher life. He might have made new creatures by millions out of nothing. He had but to speak, and angels would have thronged the air, or, beings like ourselves, only pure and unfallen, would have been multiplied ... If he had left us to sink to hell as fallen angels had done before us, who could have impugned his justice? But his great love would not let him leave his elect to perish. He loved his people, and therefore he would cause them to be born again. His great love wherewith he loved us [v. 4], defied death, and hell, and sin [v. 1-3].

Dwell on the theme you who have partaken of this love! He loved us, the most unworthy, who had no right to such love: there was nothing in us to love, and yet he loved us, loved us when we were dead [v. 5]. Here his great love seems to swell and rise to mountainous dimensions: love to miserable sinners, love to loathsome sinners, love to the dead and to the corrupt. Oh, heights and depths of sovereign grace, where are the notes which can sufficiently sound forth your praise? Sing, O ye redeemed, of his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins.

And cease not ye to praise God, as ye think of the riches of his mercy ... explore the mines of Jehovah's wealth if you can. Take the key and open the granaries of your God, and see the stores of love, which he has laid up for you. Strike your sweetest notes to the praise of God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us ... "By grace are ye saved."<sup>3</sup>

### Which brings us to the next part of our study: The Results of Grace

Paul moves from its riches (v. 7) to its results (v. 8-9) past, present. In fact, the tense of the verb "by grace you *are/have been* saved" in v. 8 is perfect, which emphasizes something that happened in the past and has continuing effects in the present also. Daniel Wallace, in his *Greek Grammar*, cites Eph 2:8 as an example of an intensive perfect, which emphasizes the resulting state from the past action.<sup>4</sup>

### The results of grace in our text: Regeneration, Faith, Humility

#### **1<sup>ST</sup> Result of Grace in salvation: REGENERATION**

"For by grace you have been saved..." – in v. 5 the same phrase is used when Paul says God made us alive while we were dead in sin. Regeneration is God's life-giving grace in our salvation, which is man's only hope. But there are different views in the world/church.

**Humanism** –mankind is basically good (that's why he seeks God)

**Pelagianism** – man is basically neutral, he can go bad or good

**Semi-Pelagianism** – man is sinful but not depraved; he's capable of doing good or choosing God by the power within his free will

**Classic Arminianism**–man is depraved, but not totally spiritually dead, conversion by *grace+free will* (grace needed not sufficient)

**Princess Bride View** – mankind is "only mostly dead" spiritually

**Paul's Biblical View** – mankind is truly dead spiritually in his sins and unless God does what v. 5 says we would never be in v. 8

Humanism is by far the majority view, or some form of it. One of the US Gulf War hostages who experienced firsthand the atrocities of Saddam Hussein, said in an interview "Despite all that I endured I never lost my confidence in the basic goodness of people."

Pelagianism was named after Pelagius (lived in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century AD) who taught man is neutral: no inherited original sin nature or guilt from Adam. Man ‘becomes a sinner when he sins’ because of influences and environment, but we all have a will as free as Adam before he fell into sin. Pelagian theology says mankind is capable of choosing good or God *on his own*. Pelagianism was refuted by Augustine and considered a heresy even by historic Catholicism but it still survives among many modern Christian churchgoers.

Semi-Pelagianism – Schaff’s authoritative *History of the Christian Church* says its ‘leading idea is, that divine grace and the human will jointly accomplish the work of conversion and sanctification, and that ordinarily man must take the first step. It rejects ... entire corruption and bondage of the natural man, and substitutes the idea of a diseased or crippled state of the voluntary power.’<sup>5</sup>

This view that man by free will can and does initiate salvation on his own, then God’s grace kicks in and completes what man starts, as Cassian taught, the church officially rejected this view as well.

Roger Olson, a classical Arminian: ‘that people are capable of exercising a good will toward God even apart from any infusion of supernatural grace ... was condemned by the Second Council of Orange in 529...rejected by all the Reformers [1600s but sadly] ... Today, semi-Pelagianism is the default theology of most American evangelical Christians. This is revealed in the popularity of clichés such as “If you’ll take one step toward God, he’ll come the rest of the way towards you,” and ‘God votes for you, Satan votes against you, and you get the deciding vote,’ coupled with the almost total neglect of human depravity and helplessness in spiritual matters.’<sup>6</sup>

Arminianism – developed about 100 years after the Reformation, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, rejecting Reformer’s teaching on conversion and election, following the teachings of J. Arminius. Refuted at the Council of Dordt in Holland by Puritan and Reformed Protestants.

Arminius taught *universal prevenient grace* overcomes full effects of the fall for all, not a special sovereign grace. Man’s will is freed to overcome depravity and can choose to complete what God starts (unlike semi-pelagianism where God completes what *man* starts). This view was officially rejected by the Reformation mainstream and America’s Pilgrim forefathers but later became common here.

Olson argues that most American Christians aren’t even Arminian, but are semi-pelagian if not outright pelagian. His book basically says Arminius would roll over in his grave if he knew what those in his tradition today espoused. Ideas church history considered heresy, including what careful Catholics rejected, are held by many Christian churchgoers today, and I suspect everyone in this room at some point to some degree has some of those ideas short of Eph 2.

Many Christians sound like humanists when they talk about their own unsaved little kids: “he’s really basically a good kid at heart.” That’s a line straight from humanism, not from the Holy Bible.

Jesus said categorically “*No one is good but God alone*” (Mk 10).

Romans 3:10 “*There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is ... no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away ... there is no one who does good, not even one ... <sup>13</sup> The poison of vipers is on their lips*” ... Little kids are little sinners, they’re vipers in diapers!

<b>Many “religious” people think</b>	<b><i>But the Bible says</i></b>
Man is not perfect, but is basically good	Man is evil, desperately wicked and corrupt (Rom. 3, Jer 17:9)
Man is a victim of environment / circumstances, not his fault	Man is a villain, responsible for his sin (Eph 2:3)
Man is deprived	Man is depraved (Rom 3, Eph 2)
Man is struggling in sin, needs some renovation or rehab	Man is dead in sin, needs resurrection (Eph 2:1-5)
Salvation involves man’s work or part	Salvation is a work of God alone (Eph. 2:8-9)

It’s great that many of us have memorized Eph 2:8-9 but we need to remember the verses before and after (ex: v. 10 for next week). See, when Paul says “*for by grace you have been saved*” in v. 8, he assumes you know what he means by what he just said back in v. 5 “*even when we were dead in our transgressions, [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) ...*”

It’s ok to recite v. 8-9 by itself but make sure you remember what that means from v. 5, which is a longer fuller explanation of when and how God saved us: “*when we were dead ... He made us alive.*”

Look at v. 5: do you see parentheses around “*(by grace you have been saved)*” or do you see a dash before “*- it is by grace you have been saved*”? What the translators are recognizing is a connection between the phrase “*by grace you’ve been saved*” and “*while dead God made you live.*” Salvation by grace defines what Paul just said about making alive the dead in v. 5 and raising up with Christ, v. 6, in other words, quickening, life-giving, regenerating, resurrecting.

Paul is making clear that God making spiritually dead people alive is the biblical essence or explanation of salvation by grace. It is the definition of salvation by grace: *God made us alive while we were dead in sins* [or in other words, *by grace we have been saved*].

To say we’re saved by grace is another way to say that *God made us alive when we were dead*. Regenerating grace is the unmerited favor of God to the unmoving unresponsive spiritual dead. It’s not that we were drowning, crying for help to Jesus who gave His hand and *we of our ability* lifted our hand to grab His hand, then God did the rest to rescue the rest of the way us who were wanting to be saved and strong enough to stick out our hand while others didn’t.

No, the biblical picture is we all refused God’s help and because of our sin we died spiritually (v.1). The weight of our sin drowned us.

We’re down at the bottom of the pond; dead, decaying, corrupt. But God (v. 4) when we were dead, v. 5 says, God made us alive.

God's Son laid aside His princely robes and dove into this dark swamp of dead sinners, despite the stench of decomposing bodies that were an offense to the nostrils of God. We couldn't see Him, wouldn't seek Him, didn't swim to Him, but He swam down there for us, He saw us, He sought us, He got us up off the bottom, He brought us up to the surface. It was a miracle of love and grace!

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost, not just try to, He actually rescued. He came all the way down to the dark depths, pulled us out, carried us on His back to a place of grace where He gave us a new heart, breathing into our nostrils the breath of life. It wasn't me or my doing, it was a miracle of God's love and grace!

Then He called us like Eph 5:14 "*Awake ... rise from the dead.*" As we heard His voice, His effectual life-giving call, we responded! That same command and same word for dead we saw last time, when Jesus commands "*arise*" during a funeral, the closed casket becomes an open casket and the dead boy sits up and gets up.

The boy didn't stay dead. He responded because he was raised. Jesus didn't resurrect Him *because He responded*, the boy responded *because he was resurrected!* Dead people don't initiate their own resurrection. S. Lewis Johnson said "Jesus didn't look into Lazarus's Tomb and say, "Yes, I see that hand!" The same word dead and same command "*arise*" is used another time for the girl where Jesus takes her by the hand and says *arise, child*.

That's the spiritual picture of Ephesians: the Lord regenerated us and He calls us to rise up, in the words of 2:5 *when we were dead He made us alive, v. 6, and raised us up with Him ...* As our eyes open and we see Him and hear Him, we reach out our hand to His hand offered to us and He helps us up, and teaches us how to walk, gives new cleansed garments, new life, a whole new creation.

But when He saved my soul, Cleansed and made me whole,  
It took a miracle of love and grace

The miracle is called regeneration, by His love not ours, by grace not a good inclination in us, by a miracle not by me. He didn't give us this grace because we responded, after we responded (v. 5). We responded because and after we received this grace given to us. We then looked at Him irresistibly, we trusted Him completely, we believed in Him genuinely, we followed Him willingly, we loved Him wholeheartedly, *because He first loved us so amazingly!*

Did I decide, did I believe, did I repent? Yes. But *I never would have without His grace first acting upon my spiritual deadness*, in what theologians call effectual grace. I call it "*resurrecting grace.*" Dead men tell no tales but regenerated men do tell their testimony. v. 5: *when we were dead God made us alive-by grace we're saved.*

We didn't know when we got saved all God had first done for us before we even looked to Christ and trusted Christ and received His help. All we knew at the time was His hand was there, we saw Him, heard Him, and knew we couldn't get up, we trusted in Jesus. I did see Him, seek Him, and believe in Him, and later learned how much I needed Him. Now I sing of Him:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
**He moved my soul to seek him**, seeking me.  
 It was **not I that found, O Savior** true; no, **I was found by thee.**

**Thou did reach forth thy hand and mine enfold;**  
 I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea.  
 It was **not so much that I on thee took hold, as thou, dear Lord, on me.**

There's another part of the picture: In order for Jesus to save from the depths of our sin at the bottom of that swamp, He would have to die to do so. When He dove down to rescue us, Jesus knew He would end up swallowing the bitter deadly poisonous substance. Jesus said He had a bitter drink from the Father He had to drink. It was the wrath of God, one drop would kill a man, and Jesus drank down a huge amount for many men; and in saving them, He died.

But God, v. 20 says, when Jesus not mostly dead, *dead*; God made Him alive, and raised Him, and seated Him in the heavenly places. “*And you were dead...But God,*” 2:1-4, v. 5 “*when we were dead **made us alive** (by grace we are saved)” [that’s regeneration] <sup>6</sup> and **raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,** <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved **through faith** ...*

Which leads to the 2<sup>nd</sup> result of saving grace: Faith

The wording and word order of v. 8 is important. God’s grace is what saves us, not our faith. It says “*by grace **through faith.***” The object of faith is what’s critical, Christ Jesus in context of v. 6-7. It’s not so much *your* faith in Christ that saves; Christ saves those who have faith. In the Greek grammar, faith is the **means** not the cause of our salvation. It’s the channel, what salvation is **through**.

*The Expositor’s Greek Testament* points out that the NT never uses the construction of faith as the **cause or basis of** salvation (*dia* plus the accusative *pistin* – because of faith). The *dia* plus genitive case in Greek grammar means “by/through” not “because of/on account of.”<sup>7</sup> The point? Faith doesn’t *cause* regeneration. God causes it.

Acronym for F.A.I.T.H.: **Forsaking All I Trust Him**

Forsaking all thoughts of what you can do to be saved, trust Christ alone and what He did on the cross as the only way to be saved. Forsaking sin is tied with faith (Mk 1:16 “repent and believe”). Forsaking all others to follow Christ is also what He called for. If that language of forsaking all others as long as you live sounds like marriage – good, because that’s how Eph 5 defines the relationship of believers to Christ, covenant language, commitment language. Faith is not intellectual belief: Forsaking All I Trust Him, my Lord.

It’s important we don’t put faith *in our faith*, faith/trust is in Christ alone. Don’t put faith in a prayer you prayed as a kid, faith must be in the person of Christ. Faith wasn’t our part, grace God’s part. v. 8

“... *through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*  
<sup>9</sup> *not as a result of works*[what we do], *so that no one may boast.*”

He already made clear before v. 8 that being saved by grace is all of God, making us dead when we were alive. Paul also labors to make clear when he finally mentions faith in v. 8, Paul doesn't want us to misunderstand it so he gives 4 qualifiers and clarifiers:

Negatively:

- Not of / from yourselves (v. 8)
- Not of / from your works or what you do (v. 9)
- Not something we can take any credit for or boast of (v. 9)

Positively: All of it is the gift of God (v. 8)

Twice the negative Greek preposition *ek* or *ex* - "out/from" is used [root of *ex-it* (go out from) or *ex-tract* (take out from) or *ex-press* (something from within us that comes out in expression)]. He uses that little word *ex* to say grace and faith was not out of/from us. It's not just that this grace and faith didn't come out of/from our works (v. 9), it's not out of/from *us or ourselves* (v. 8, there's a gift from the outside). In the same way it's not as a result of works, it's not a result of what was in me, whether works or willpower or what I do

Look at v. 8: "*through faith, and that **not of yourselves***" (literally not *out of* you, not something *in* you, *inherent* in you, *from inside* you). It's not from you, through you, it's from Him, through Him, to Him be the glory and not even part of 1% to me! 2 translations have "... *through faith—and this is not from you*" or "*yourselves.*" ESV "... *through faith. And this is not your own doing ...*"

The word "gift" in v. 8 has the idea of free and not caused by us. In fact, the root word in its adjective form is translated in Jn 15:25 as "*they hated me **without a cause.***" In other words, nothing in Jesus caused that or brought that about, and the idea of this same root word in v. 8 is nothing in us caused this or brought it about.

In the Greek grammar, it's not just faith that is not of/from us or our own doing, but is a gift from God. It's the whole process, the whole statement, the whole of salvation. All of it is all of grace and all a gift from an all-sufficient all-supplying all-satisfying Christ. It is all God's gift – the pronoun doesn't single out one part of what Paul has just said. It's all a gift, salvation, including faith, grace.

Each of those words in their noun forms are spoken of as gifts of God in the NT: alvation/eternal life (Rom 6:23), grace (Eph 3:7). Faith is also a gift, something granted to us in NT:

- Phil 1:29 "*unto you...it is given...to believe on Him...*" KJV and v. 6 *He who began a good work in you will complete it*
- Rom 12:3 speaks of the "*faith God has given you*" NIV
- In John 6:65, Jesus said "*no one can come to me unless it has been granted him from the Father ...*"
- Gal 5:22 uses the same Greek word for faith as Eph 2:8 and says it is something the Holy Spirit produces, its His fruit
- 1 Cor 12:3 says no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit and v. 9 says "faith" (same Grk word) is a gift

- Rom 11:36 says “*From Him, of Him, through Him are all things to Him be the glory*” – don’t say, “not my faith - that was from me, not from Him, I get credit/glory for my part”
- Heb 11 uses this same word faith 26x time in one chapter and then Heb 12 says “*therefore...fix our eyes on Jesus, the author of our faith and the finisher/perfecter of our faith*” (NKJV f.n. says “author of our faith” means “the originator of our faith”). He’s the cause, captain of salvation (2:10)

You say, but this doesn’t match the poem “Invictus” I memorized in HS? “I’m the master of my fate, I’m the captain of my soul”? Better to stick with verses you memorize from the Bible. Better to have Christ as my Master, Christ as my captain, Savior of my soul. That secular poem, “Invictus” epitomizes humanism/pelagianism:

I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul.  
It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.

That poem was reportedly important to Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, who recited it on the day of his execution. If we are our own masters and captains, we’re in trouble eternally. I am so glad Jesus is my Master of my fate, my captain, my King, my Savior, because I deserve the same fate as Timothy McVeigh!

I know Christ didn’t choose me because He saw something better or different in me than others, a superior choice/inclination in me.

1 Cor 4:7 ESV “*For who sees anything different in you [NAS “superior”]? **What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?***”

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NIV) *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Which brings us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> result of saving grace: Humility

By the time you get to v. 9 there is nothing to boast in or take credit for in salvation, all is a gift from start to finish, even our response in faith is not from ourselves but is part of God’s gift. Instead of opening our mouths to boast or try and claim what we think we did or decided to bring our salvation about, the end of v. 9 is intended to leave us speechless, stunned by grace, humbled by it.

To study more, you can read *Amazing Grace: God’s Pursuit, Our Response*, by Timothy George. Next week we’ll see this grace empowers humble service. We’re not saved by works (v. 9) but we’re saved for works (v. 10).

If Jesus is not your Master and Lord yet, here’s a better poem than “I’m the master of my fate, I’m the captain of my soul.” Pray this:

God, what can I do? You alone can mercy show.  
You can save my soul this hour. I have neither will nor pow’r.  
Sovereign over all You are, Even of my sinful heart!  
Make Your saving power known, —Take away my heart of stone.

Come, subdue my lusts obscene; Make this filthy sinner clean!  
 Make me willing to believe! Life eternal, Savior, give!  
 ... make me willing now; Force my stubborn will to bow!  
 Grace almighty, Savior, [You] Make this wretch a creature new!  
 Nothing is too hard for You; Work in me Your will and do.  
 Let my prayer not be denied, —Grant repentance, break my pride.  
 Stop the madness of my will; Speak, and bid my heart stand still.  
 Your Salvation let me see, —Jesus crucified for me!  
 Bow the heavens, Lord come down; Take me, Savior, for Your own.  
 Wretched unbelief overthrow; Lay the highest mountain low.  
 Conquer me, oh, conquer me; Get Yourself the victory!  
 Save the vilest of the race, [Cause] me to be saved by grace!

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<sup>1</sup> Kent Hughes, *Ephesians*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *A Godward Life : Savoring the Supremacy of God in All Life* (Sisters, Or.: Multnomah Publishers, 1997), p. 292-93.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Spurgeon, “Resurrection With Christ,” *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 14, # 805.

<http://spurgeongems.org/vols13-15/chs805.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 574-75.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Chapter IX, 159.

<sup>6</sup> Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities*, p. 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> See Salmond, *Expositor’s Greek Testament*, and Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 368-69.