

The Oologah Informer

Dec 24th, 2017

Thoughts from the Preacher “Selfish Pit”

“Until selfishness is behind you,
you won’t see the pit in front of you.”

Weekly Article “The True Meaning of Grace” Part 2 of 2 By Wayne Jackson

Is Grace Conditional?

Yes, the reception of God’s grace is conditional.

Calvinism erroneously asserts that grace is bestowed unconditionally by the sovereign will of God. The Bible negates this concept.

The principle is illustrated by the example of Noah, who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8); and yet, as the writer of Hebrews shows, the patriarch and his family were saved by preparing an ark in obedience to God’s instruction (Heb. 11:7; cf. Gen. 6:22).

Jehovah offered the grace. Noah, by faith, obeyed the Lord, and so was blessed. While God extends grace, human beings must be willing to receive the favor (2 Cor. 6:1).

Grace Is Not Earned

Grace excludes merit.

We must constantly remind ourselves that humanity is not deserving of salvation. No one can “earn” pardon by works of human merit. If such were the case, we could boast regarding our redemption; however, that is impossible (Eph. 2:8-9).

Even if one were able to perform everything God commands, he still must regard himself as an “unprofitable servant” (Lk. 17:10). Jesus taught that our sins have put us head-over-heels in debt, and no person has the innate ability to liquidate that obligation (cf. Mt. 18:24-27).

When this concept is truly grasped, service to Almighty God will flow with a freshness and zeal that invigorates the soul. Doubtless a failure to fathom the true significance of grace is the reason many church members are spiritually lethargic.

How Can I Access God’s Grace?

Grace is accessed initially at the point of gospel obedience.

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Service Times

Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 A.M.
Worship: 10:30 A.M. & 5 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7 P.M.

Preacher:

Russ Earl

AM Sermon:

Paul Praschnik

PM Sermon

Doyle Jackson

Sunday AM Bible Class:

Old Testament Sojourns – D. Jackson

Wednesday Bible Class:

Proverbs 10 – R. Earl

In SEARCH of the Lord’s Way

On Channel 6-2 Sundays @ 7:30 am

The Truth in Love

on Channel 19 Sundays @ 8am

The Gospel of Christ TV Program

on Saturday @ 7:30am on Channel 53

Media & Podcast network

Visit www.biblewaymedia.org for more info.

The Oologah church of Christ only uses the **KJV, NKJV or ASV** translation of the Bible in classes & sermons.

It is shocking that so many sincere people are unaware of the fact that “grace” and “obedience” are not enemies. Paul affirmed that grace is accessed by faith (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9).

It is not, however, a faith void of loving response to God. It is an active faith (James 2:21-26).

Consider this fact. In Ephesians 2:8, the apostle states that one is “saved by grace through faith.” Later, in the same document, he says that sinners are “cleansed by the washing of water with the word” (5:26).

“Saved” and “cleansed” represent the same idea. Further, scholars almost universally acknowledge that the “washing” is an allusion to baptism. It is clear, therefore, that the reception of grace, by means of the “faith” system, includes immersion in water.

Again, note that eternal life is the result of grace (cf. “grace of life,” 1 Pet. 3:7, i.e., life resulting from grace). But one experiences that “life” when he is raised from the water of immersion (Rom. 6:4). Heaven’s grace plan system includes obedience.

To express the matter another way, Christ “saves us, through the washing of regeneration [acknowledged to be a reference to baptism], and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Yet this is equivalent to being “justified by his grace” (Tit. 3:5, 7).

Obedience and grace do not stand in opposition to one another.

Continuing in Grace

The state of grace must be embraced continuously; otherwise one will fall from divine favor, and his initial reception of Heaven’s grace will have been “in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10).

It is incredible that many, who identify themselves with Christianity, should contend that it is impossible for the Christian to fall from God’s grace.

If one cannot fall out of grace, why did Paul urge his fellow-believers to “continue [present tense — sustained perseverance] in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43)?

The Scriptures warn of certain Christians who attempted to revert to the Mosaic regime for salvation. As a result, they were “severed from Christ” and “fallen away from grace” (Gal. 3:26-27; 5:4).

Conclusion

Grace is a soul-thrilling concept; it must be deeply appreciated, but never manipulated or distorted.