

## **Sermon Notes: *Saved by Grace through Faith for God's Glory (Ephesians 2:8-9)***

**Intro:** Similar to John 3:16 and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, these two verses are some of the best known most deeply treasured words in the Bible! Paul has just said that God made us alive with Christ when we were utterly dead and that we have this new life by God's grace (5). Now he pauses to tell us more about the nature of our salvation and by doing so gives us one of the most cogent summaries of the gospel found in Scripture. There are three parts to Paul's summary of the gospel.

**#1: We are saved by grace.** "saved" in the passive voice here emphasizes that the energy and initiative of our salvation is from God. He intervened in our dead state and gave us life just as irrigation water introduces life into an otherwise dead desert. Why did God irrigate us with the living water of his Spirit? "Grace." Here is an attribute of God which Paul exults in continually! Out of the 155 occurrences in the NT, Paul uses it 100x. In this verse pride of place belongs to "grace." He has put the word at the head of line! Earlier in this letter, God's grace is "glorious" (1:6). In vs. 7 it is compared to riches which God has "lavished" on us. In 2:7 it describes the riches of God's kindness which he will shower on us throughout eternity. Clearly among all the gems of God's attributes, this one shines supremely! The preposition "by" underscores the centrality of God's grace. "By" means God's grace is the only basis of our salvation. If Paul had used another word such as "through" or "because of" we might have misunderstood. We might have thought he was saying we are saved by God's grace plus something we can contribute. He removes our confusion. Grace is the only "why" of our salvation. We are saved by God's grace alone! Why is grace glorious? *Three reasons:* Inexplicable grace. We were dead in our trespasses and sins (2:1ff). In bondage to powers over which we had no control (world, flesh, devil). By our very nature we were sons of disobedience, children of God's just wrath (Jer. 17:9). Yet, God inexplicably loved us (2:4)! Why? Not because we were deserving or lovely but because he chose to when he had every right to banish us from his presence eternally. How inexplicable! Unexpected grace. God had great love for us when we were dead in our trespasses and sins. More than that however he revealed his "rich mercy" (4) to us in Jesus Christ. He did not simply feel our pain. He entered into our pain. As God and Man, Jesus came down from heaven into our world of sin. How unexpected! He lived a perfect life, loving God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength and fulfilled every human obligation. Yet God rejected him and had him nailed to a Roman cross. There he cursed him body and soul (Mk 15:34). How even more unexpected! Why did God judge his much loved Son as though he hated him, his righteous Son as though he was the chief of sinners? Because he loved chosen sinners that much! Our holy Judge whose wrath and disfavor we deserve loved us and mercifully judged his Son in our place to save us. He loves depraved sinners as much as he loves his righteous Son. How utterly unexpected! Extravagant grace. Jesus came to give us life abundant (Jn. 10:10). That life began three days after Christ died for our sins. On the third day he rose victorious from the dead (5). Forty days later he ascended into heaven and advanced into God's highest favor (6). Now he reigns with all authority (6). But just as a branch is joined to the life of the trunk, through faith we are joined to Christ and have been raised, exalted, and seated with him! We are pardoned by his blood. More than that we already have life and liberty by our reign in the heavenlies with him! *Raised:* no longer under the dominion of the world, flesh, devil. *Ascended:* his wounds answer every accusation. His crown assures us of God's highest favor. Our consciences are stilled despite our daily failings. *Seated:* we taste the life, joy, glory of heaven. We will share in Christ's coming triumph! How extravagant!

**#2: We are saved *through* faith.** In verse 5, Paul said we are saved by grace. Here he says it again but adds “through faith.” Paul’s preoccupation is with grace but not to the neglect of personal faith in Jesus. Such faith a surefire mark of grace and an essential condition for being saved (cf. 1:13). “Through”--the channel of grace. As water is channeled through a pipe so is God’s grace channeled to us through faith. What is faith? Trust in God’s grace. (1) Must have *knowledge* of the truths about Jesus (Rom 10:17). (2) Must *agree* this knowledge *is true*. (3) Must *trust* in Christ. Rest your hope of salvation solely on him as you rest your weight on a chair! A work of God’s grace. Saving faith is “not our doing.” It is God’s “gift.” In a sense personal faith is “our” faith (1:15). Trust in Jesus and be saved. In the most basic sense though, faith is God’s gift. Must work it in us. Is it hard to believe Jesus’ blood will cover your sins? Seek God’s help and believe! God delights in mercy (Mic 7:18)!

**#3: We are saved *for* God’s glory.** If salvation is by God’s grace then it is not according to our ability. If through God given faith then not according to our merit. Salvation is of God first to last! The result? Let us not boast in ourselves but rather in God for his inexplicable, unexpected, extravagant grace at Christ’s expense! This is the purpose for our salvation (1:6, 12, 14).