

Salvation Not by Works

Ephesians 2:8-9

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“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Let's begin by looking at three vital Bible words in this verse. The first is grace. Grace is that which brings joy and delight. It is the friendly feeling that desires to shower loving kindness and good will. It is free and universal. It is spontaneous. It is the opposite of debt, works or law. As God's grace is bestowed on us it prompts a sense of thankfulness and gratitude.

The second word is faith, a much misunderstood word. It carries the concept of trust, implicit, absolute confidence, a firm conviction. It is in contrast to our present idea of any opinion held in good faith without any assurance or proof.

When we place our faith in God (trust in Him) we are on solid ground. Our faith rests in God Himself. The expression of that faith is our response as we claim His promises and live according to His commands and as we are brought to the obedience of that faith.

The third word is saved. Now, frankly, there was a time when this word was a bit of an embarrassment to me. I didn't have any problem with the words, “redeemed” or “justified,” but “saved” somehow just didn't sound right. I don't have that problem any more, because I've discovered what a great Bible word it is.

It carries the idea of deliverance, of eternal salvation, and of all the blessings of God; showered upon us in the Person of Jesus Christ. It also speaks of being brought safely through, or of being made whole or of being kept safe.

So this vital Bible verse contains three of the great words of the New Testament. We learn a negative lesson from this verse too: it is not of ourselves and it is not of works. Our salvation is not a product of our natural efforts or due to our own merit. All boasting is excluded.

He who glories must not glory in himself but in God. Nothing we have done merits such staggering favors from God.

On the positive side, it springs from God who is rich in mercy. God Himself is the author of this blessed infusion of life and His great love is the spring and fountain from which it flows to flood the earth. He is rich in mercy, inexpressibly great and inexhaustibly given.

We are made aware of it all by divine revelation. The natural outflow from us is a testimony to friends and neighbors. Our testimony is made credible by the evidence of our changed life and transformed interests and desires.

Let me inquire, have you experienced this great love, the mercy and grace of God resulting in eternal salvation in your life? You can, you know. Come to Christ today.

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