

Saved by God's Grace, Not by Our Good

This topic includes the fundamentals about salvation and the gift of eternal life.

Unfortunately, there are many religions, in fact **ALL the other world religions** that I know of, which teach that a person can only be saved **by their own good deeds**.

This false theology teaches that man can EARN his way with God by his own efforts, which according to the Bible is impossible.

So please ask yourself a simple question; **how can a sinner earn his way with a perfect, holy God??**

This question reveals to us the hopelessness found in man's religions.

Christianity is the only belief system in the world that differs, according to the one and only Word of God; the Bible.

The Truth of God's Word reveals a gracious and patient God who offers eternal life to those who have sinned against Him (that's all of us)....

... and the Bible says He offers this as a gift to us BY GRACE, which means **undeserved kindness**, NOT by our insufficient efforts to make it up to Him.

Therefore, no person can boast in himself, but only in the love and mercy of his Creator.

The word "grace" is not only defined as **undeserved kindness**, but is also as **God's unmerited favor**.

The key is that it is undeserved and unmerited!!

And while it's biblically true that a believer in the Lord will end up producing good works in his life...

... that only comes after first being changed by God's grace, through God-given faith in the Lord Jesus.

One's heart must first be changed by the Lord's forgiveness before he can do any good acceptable to God the Father.

John 6:63-65 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, "This is why I told you that **no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.**"*

GOD is the One who saves; the One who even gives man the faith to believe in His Son!

The Bible teaches that good works are NEVER THE SOURCE of our salvation; they are merely the good fruit that results from God changing a man's heart.

God changes the believer from the inside out, by grace. **Eph 2:8-10**

For example, look at the order found in Eph 2:8-10...

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

I hope you notice that even though good works will result (vs. 10), man is not saved as a result of his works (vs. 9)!

And **only God can change a person's heart**, and that's what happens for someone who finally repents towards God and places his trust **in Christ alone!**

This is the miracle of what the Bible calls being "born again".
John 3:8, 1Pe 1:3-5

The Bible reveals man is saved by God's grace, through faith in Christ, and by no other way!

That's why Jesus said *"I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one goes to the Father except through Me."* **Joh 14:6**

Let's begin examining Holy Scripture regarding this subject; that man is saved by God's grace, through faith in Christ, and not by his own good.

Acts 16:29-31 *And he (the Roman jailor) called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and **you will be saved**, you and your household."*

The New Testament was originally written about 2000 years ago in the Greek language, which is a very specific and descriptive language.

God used this language to give us great detail in His Word.

"Believe" = *Pisteuson* , which means **to believe, have faith in, be convinced of, trust, rely on, have confidence in.**

This is why we often remind people that **"believing" is more than just believing Jesus existed.**

Also, the word *"believe"* is in the aorist tense, which is a unique verb tense to the Greek language.

The aorist tense speaks of making a **one-moment decision** to believe in Christ. It speaks of one moment in time.

This reveals that when someone personally believes in the Lord Jesus as his Savior, he is saved on the spot at that very moment! (this really magnifies the grace of God, doesn't it?!)

At the moment a person places his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is "born again", or "born of the Spirit", as in **John 3**.

And let's also note; the Bible says this new birth is not of man's own will, but "of God", just like a man doesn't know where the wind comes from or where the wind is going. (**John 3:1-18**)

Is a person's will involved? Is a person's choice involved? - YES.

But here's the point:

Salvation is a supernatural event that takes place by the grace and power of God at one moment in time, for any person who willingly surrenders to Jesus as his Lord and Savior!

Joh 3:1 *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*

Joh 3:2 *This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."*

Joh 3:3 *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Joh 3:4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Joh 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Joh 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Joh 3:9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

Joh 3:10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?

Joh 3:11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

Joh 3:12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Joh 3:13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

Joh 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

Joh 3:15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God So Loved the World

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Joh 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the

world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Joh 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

This is the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!!

Again, at the moment a person places his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is "born again", or "born of the Spirit"!!

And this is all made possible by the grace of God alone!

Amen?!

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Now, that all said, we should also realize the conversion process of an individual (the journey leading up to a genuine faith in Christ) could be a long or short period of time.

The reality is that **everyone is different**, and it often depends on the stubbornness of one's flesh.

For example, some people have been humbled by life and come to Christ at a young age because they're ready to surrender and ask God for forgiveness for their sins!

Others will hesitantly seek God for many years before they're willing to admit they're a sinner and repent towards God, turning to Christ to be saved. **Act 20:21**

But, in **Act 16:31**, it was the moment of truth for this man. He was humbled and ready to receive the truth!

Acts 16:30-31 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

As we learned from the original language, Paul was basically saying to the Roman jailor; *"if you believe in Him, right now, in this moment, you will be saved. Place your trust in the Lord Jesus."*

This all from the Greek language of the word "believe".

The grace of God, as we will see, is eagerly waiting to grant the gift of eternal life to the humble person!

Every person is called to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus as his Savior. **Mark 1:15, John 3:16-18, Act 20:21**

But, in **Acts 16**, the Roman jailor already has a humble, repentant attitude, so Paul simply says "believe"!

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At this point, let's also remember **even the faith to believe is a gift from God**, according to Holy Scripture! **Eph 2:8-9, Rom 12:3**

Eph 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Rom 12:3 *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as **God has allotted to each a measure of faith.***

Do you see it?? - Notice, it is GOD who even gives faith to man.

That's because according to the Bible, the human flesh, our old sinful nature, cannot believe in Christ on its own!

In fact, it says we're spiritually "dead". Can a dead person do ANYTHING on his own???

The Bible reveals it requires **supernatural work** to make a spiritually dead person come alive (and we're all born spiritually dead, separated from God because of sin)! **Joh 3:5-8, Eph 2:1-10**

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Now let's go back to the Roman soldier...

Acts 16:30-31 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

"Believe" is in the active voice in the Greek; which reveals the subject must perform the action of believing.

But again, let's remember, we're talking about supernatural things!!!

Even though being 'born again' is a miracle of God and faith is a gift from God, man's choice/volition is also somehow involved in Salvation.

This may seem contradictory; but the Bible says BOTH are true. We take it by faith, trusting God and His perfect plan.

And this option to "believe" is presented to the Roman jailor!

And, **the imperative mood** states this is a command.

So, this is actually a command to "believe" in the Lord Jesus, if he wants to be saved.

Acts 16:30-31 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Now, here's a very important side note to understand in our world today:

"Believe" in Who??? - that would be the One and Only Savior ;
"The LORD Jesus"

The Greek word for "Lord" is *Kurion* ; which means Supreme controller, owner, master, lord.

It refers to Jesus Christ being THE LORD of the universe!

This is one of many reasons in the Bible that we know Jesus was more than just a man.

As the Lord Jesus said, **He and the Father in Heaven are ONE!**
Joh 10:30.

Jesus also said **when you've seen Him you've seen God the Father!** **Joh 14:9**

And from some favorite Christ-mas passages, we also know **the child** that was promised to us is called "Immanuel", which means "God with us", **Isa 7:14, Mat 1:23,...**

... AND, the promised child is also called "Mighty God", and "Eternal Father"! **Isa 9:6**

THIS is the Person we're told to "believe" in; the LORD Jesus!

And, **Colossians 1** reveals to us that **the Lord Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all things!**

Col 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Just WOW, right?!

So here's the point, in today's world...

With all this evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ, please note this: if someone only believes in Jesus as a good man, or a prophet, or even another of many gods, that is NOT going to save him!

One must believe in the Jesus described in the Holy Bible...

... the One who is not only a man, but the LORD, God in the flesh who came down from Heaven to save us from our sins!!! **Joh 1:1,14, 8:58, Act 16:31, Phil 2:6-8, Col 1:15-17** (and there are many more passages that reveal the deity of Jesus Christ!)

Otherwise, that person believes in "another Jesus". **2Co 11:4**

So that's an important sidenote; one must believe in the Jesus of the Bible to be saved (not in their own made-up version of Him)!

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Now, notice in our main passage, the Roman jailer asked them what he must DO to be saved.

Acts 16:30-31 *and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I **do** to be saved?" 31 They said, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

It is human, fleshly instincts that make us think we can "do" something to earn salvation from God.

Paul let him know he must "believe" rather than "do", in order to be saved by God.

In other words, this is GOD'S salvation plan! And HE'S the Savior!

When the people asked Jesus, "*What shall we **do**, that we might work the works of God?*" Jesus replied, "*This is the work of God, that you **believe** on Him whom He has sent.*" (**John 6:28-29**).

First, notice it's the "work of God" that matters, not the work of man!

This is because man can "do" nothing on his own to please a perfect God! (His requirement is perfect righteousness!)

Our Lord made it very clear that **trusting in Him alone** is the issue in eternal salvation....

... because **He's the only worthy One**, ala **Rev 5**, and He accomplished the perfect work on the Cross necessary to save us!

The Lord, Jesus Christ came out of Heaven to SAVE the world and those in it, and out of His tremendous love for us He paid our full price of judgment on the Cross!

Joh 3:17 *"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him."*

Joh 10:9-11 *"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."*

Joh 12:47 *"And if anyone hears My saying, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world."*

Again;

The Lord, Jesus Christ came out of Heaven to SAVE the world and those in it, and out of His tremendous love for us He paid our full price of judgment on the Cross!

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We must also note the clarity of the Scriptures regarding the Lord Jesus being THE ONLY NAME by which we can be saved.

Once you examine the evidence for the Divine Inspiration of Scripture and you realize that GOD inspired the Holy Bible (directly inspiring men to write it), then you must believe **what the Bible says about being saved.**

(See our lessons on Biblical Evidences, and Prophecies about The Messiah, so you can examine the evidence God has provided for us. Go to 4only1.org and click on the Prophecy tab)

Again, there is only ONE NAME under heaven by which a person can be saved from their sins, and that's because there's ONLY ONE who actually paid the price for man's sins!

Act 4:10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead —by him this man is standing before you well.

Act 4:11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

Act 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

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And HOW are we saved??? HOW can a man even come to

believe in Christ??? – It's only through the GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Even faith comes from His grace. It's God's grace that empowers us to even believe!

Eph 2:8-9 *“For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**; and **that not of yourselves**, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”*

1 Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who **by God's power** are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

It's humbling to consider that the Bible teaches God is even the cause of our believing.

Acts 15:11 *“But we **believe** that we are saved through **the grace** of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”*

The original Greek word for grace is "charis", and it means **an undeserved, unmerited favor; something freely given to someone, out of pure kindness.**

Some also define **grace** as a gift given with no strings attached.

Our Lord Jesus said in **Rev 22:17**

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

The analogy is this: just as the physical body needs water to live, the spiritual part of us, our soul, needs eternal water to live eternally!

And JESUS IS the water of eternal life!

And just as ANYONE can drink a glass of water, ANYONE can have faith in Jesus Christ and be saved...

... yet only by the grace and power of God!

Here's the same verse in the NASB version:

Rev 22:17b *"And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."*

The following passage explains the **finished work** of our Lord and Savior ("finished" as our Lord Himself said on the Cross in **Joh 19:30**).

Rom 5:8-10 *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God*

through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Think about it: if the Lord died for us while we were sinners and unbelievers in His name, then **much more now that we believe in Him, we can be certain we will be saved by His life!**

Again, we are saved by the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing more and nothing less!

Rom 5:15-18 *"But the free **gift** is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression (sin) of the one (Adam) the many died, much more did the **grace** of God and the **gift** by the **grace** of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. And the **gift** is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free **gift** arose from many transgressions resulting in **justification**. For if by the transgression (sin) of the one(Adam), death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of **grace** and of the **gift** of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."*

Notice how many times we see the word "gift", which is a sign of God's grace.

And there we see some more beautiful logic from the Holy Spirit, for our edification!

If we are all born trapped in sin because of our relationship to the first man, Adam, then MUCH MORE God is able to save us based on our relationship to the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In His divine love and integrity, the Lord decided to come down to earth Himself, to save us from our sins once for all!

It was part of His Master Plan... His all-knowing, all-powerful plan of Grace.

And even though we're all sinners and all guilty and deserving judgment, God provided salvation for us by grace, NOT to any of our credit!

And Holy Scripture is very clear that God's great love was His motivation in coming to save us.

Let's now read two beautiful passages IN CONTEXT.

Eph 2:1-10 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

*8 For **by grace** you have been saved through faith; and that **not of yourselves, it is the gift of God**; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

Does it get any more beautiful than that?? Do you see the beauty of God's grace shining forth for us??

That's one passage that clearly gives us the whole picture.

Here's another passage that spells it out for us so nicely:

Titus 3:3-7 *For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but **according to his own mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being **justified by his grace** we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

It's worth noting that these passages from the Church letters are NOT written to unbelievers who are still unsaved...

... but they're written TO BELIEVERS in the Lord Jesus who are now looking back on what God has done for us!

Note; it's the **mercy** of God that reached down to justify us, by His **grace**.

Simply amazing - why did God even consider us at all?!

Again, GRACE means an undeserved favor; or something freely given to someone, in kindness.

And how do we receive His grace, or His favor? - The Bible says it's **through this thing called "faith", and not to our own credit.**

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

And here again is a very interesting point to consider!

There are many passages revealing we receive God's grace through faith, and yet, **even faith is a grace gift from God! Mat 16:15-17, Joh 1:12-13, Act 11:18, Rom 12:3, Eph 2:8-9, Jam 1:16-18**

If faith is something "good", and it clearly is according to the Bible, then how can a sinner produce it on his own?? - HE CANNOT.

Sinners are spiritually dead, separated from God, and a dead man can do nothing on his own.

All of us being sinners, according to the Bible, we can do NOTHING truly good in God's eyes. Rom 3:10-23

This is why GOD must even grant us the faith that saves!

God must supply us with saving faith!

Matt 16:15-17 *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

Only our dear Heavenly Father can open our spiritual eyes. Only God, in His grace, can provide us with the faith to believe!

John 1:12-13 *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 **who were born**, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, **but of God.***

Even though we do make a decision to believe in Christ, HE PROVIDED IT!

Sinful man cannot will himself to be born again, he must be born "of God".

Is man's will involved in believing? - YES.

But to recognize that **even our faith comes from God** should be very humbling!

We're not the ones in control, GOD IS.

He is truly Sovereign, as His Word reveals to us.

That's why we are wise to appeal to His grace and mercy.

Rom 12:3 *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, **each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.***

ALL GOOD THINGS, of which FAITH is certainly included, come from our dear God above.

James 1:16-18 *Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

So, we must humbly conclude that **even faith is a gift from our Heavenly Father above.**

Amen?? 😊

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And for some extra encouragement, those who have been born of God through faith in Jesus Christ CANNOT lose this gift from God... because salvation is a gift, and God doesn't take back His gifts!!!

We believers are in His Almighty hands, once for all, by grace!

Disclaimer: This does not refer to people who were never saved in the first place, who might use Jesus' Name at times, but they cling to some form of religion for their salvation. **Mat 7:21-27, 1Jo 2:19**

There is such a thing as apostacy in the Bible. The prime example of this is the traitor, Judas Iscariot.

But, for those who repent and place their trust in Christ alone; the Bible tells us they are saved forevermore!

Look at what the Lord Jesus said:

John 10:27-30 *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 "I and the Father are one."*

Here's another way to look at the eternal assurance we have in Christ:

Hopefully you know by now, salvation is called a "gift" in **Eph 2:8-9**, right??

So, what does the Word of God say about His gifts??

Rom 11:29 *"for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"*

Holy Scripture tells us that this gift of eternal life is FOREVER, and there is SECURITY for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, because He never goes back on His Word!

Another example of this security is found in **1Cor 3** which states that even if a believer's works get burned up, HE HIMSELF WILL STILL BE SAVED.

We'll see this passage coming up, but you might be asking yourself; "How can this be?"

It's very simple! It's because God's salvation is NOT based on our works in the first place!...

... but upon His grace, through faith alone in Christ alone!

Our eternal salvation is resting upon the perfect foundation that IS Jesus Christ. He laid down this perfect foundation for us, purchasing our freedom with His own blood, once for all.

Either that's 100% true, or it's not.

Col 1:19-20 *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

1 Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

For those of us who have repented towards God and placed our hope in Christ alone...

... we believers are being guarded by God's power, through faith, and God is ALL-powerful, remember. 😊

So, if you're a believer in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, what do you have to worry about??

There's a reason the Gospel means the Good News. - It's Christ's **perfect** work on the Cross that purchased for us the gift of eternal life.

That's another reason why man can only be saved by grace through faith in Christ alone!

1 Cor 3:11-15 *For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; **but he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire.*

Believers will suffer loss of rewards in heaven, as none of us are perfect,...

... **but they will still be saved because they humbly placed their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ... and HE is perfectly faithful!**

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At this point, let's also remember, as a believer who lives his life for Christ, **your life is not in vain. Heb 6:9-12**

We just read **1Co 3** that reveals there are rewards in heaven.

You and I have an opportunity to be a witness for God and bring Him glory in the invisible spiritual war going on around us!

And we will be rewarded for our good labor for Him, by the grace of God.

...

And while that is all true and good, rest assured that your salvation is NOT based on your own supposed goodness, thank God!! (we ALL fall short of the glory of God, ala **Rom 3**)

Instead, it's based upon trusting in Christ's perfect work on the Cross, which He completed on our behalf.

John 19:30 *When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

When Jesus said "it is finished", I'm pretty sure He meant it. :)

Jesus completely paid our debt at the Cross; at least for those willing to believe in His Name.

Col 2:13-14 *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by **canceling the record of debt** that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, **nailing it to the cross.***

Does it get any more "finished" than that?!

Eternal salvation is based upon trusting in Christ INSTEAD OF trusting in yourself or your own religious ways. (Please think about that, and share it with others!)

It's one or the other, and everyone must ask themselves where their heart is on the matter!!

i.e. - In your heart of hearts, in your inner motivation, which person are you in the following parable???

Luke 18:9-14 *And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house **justified** rather*

than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

When I was a young man sitting in church, this parable slapped me in the face!

Are you trusting in God's grace to save you, through the precious blood of Christ, or are you trusting in your own supposed good works??

Hopefully you see the choice that each of us must make.

...

The title of this series is: Saved by God's Grace, Not by Our Good.

Now, some of you might be wondering; "where do good works fit into all of this?"

Doing good works is THE BELIEVER'S great opportunity to glorify God, and these works are NOT done in man's own power! (please think about that for a minute)

In other words... **the only good works that are truly good, and that God accepts, are those done in HIS power.**

And the Bible tells us that truly good works can only be performed by a believer who's empowered by the Spirit of Christ

Himself! (and the Bible says believers are each indwelled by the Holy Spirit 😊)

That's why we said good works are the BELIEVER'S great opportunity.

Human forms of good do not measure up with God's perfect standard and are therefore not acceptable to God! **Isa 64:6, Rom 3:10**

Christ must first make a person NEW, and then he's acceptable to God, along with his works that are done with proper motivation.

But our human works will NEVER measure up.

Isa 64:6 *We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*

Rom 3:10-12 *as it is written:*

"None is righteous, no, not one;

11 no one understands;

no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

no one does good,

not even one."

Think about it this way... **only works done when relying upon the grace of Christ are "good" in God's eyes.**

For the believer who now has the Spirit of Christ within him, his possibilities are totally different!

Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

And, we must always remember, good works are a **RESULT** of our salvation, **NOT the WAY TO** salvation!!!

Jesus said only HE is the WAY TO salvation...

John 14:5-6 *Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

So, what can we biblically conclude?

Good works are the FRUIT of a saved person, and they're also our way of thanking God for His salvation.

And yet, we must never forget; man can ONLY be saved by God's grace, through faith in Christ, and NOT by works, so no man can boast before God!!

Eph 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so*

that no one may boast. (it's AFTER one's conversion that the good works mentioned in vs. 10 are possible – please don't miss the divine order of things!)

John 5:24 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."*

So, we can certainly conclude we are saved by God's grace, not by our good! Amen??

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And at this point, let's also realize Holy Scripture tells us some people "**believe in vain**".

Do you remember our previous acknowledgement of **apostacy** in the Bible?? (those who leave the faith were never saved to begin with, **1Jn 2:19**)

The Bible does tell us that true believers will persist in the faith.

1Co 15:1-2: *"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, **unless you believed in vain.**"*

What does this mean? Let's talk about this for a minute... what might it mean to "believe in vain"?

For example - do you trust in Christ **ALONE** to save you?,...

... OR, do you add your own attempts at goodness and give yourself credit in earning your way to heaven?...

... therefore wrongly trying to pay for the gift of eternal life? (**Rom 6:23b, 11:6, Acts 8:20**)

If that's what going on in your heart, then you might not be saved, my friend!

For another possible example of believing in vain...

Do you believe in Jesus Christ as LORD, God in the flesh, the "Son of the Living God", as the Bible reveals Him??...

... OR, do you believe in Jesus as only a good man or a prophet, or just another god, or an angel?

If that's what going on in your heart, then you might not be saved, my friend!

That's NOT the Jesus found in the Bible!

As Jesus asked Peter, in **Matt 16:15-16** *"But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

And the title "Son of God" implies He is equal with God. **Jn 5:18**

You are not saved if you've believed in "another Jesus". **2Co 11:4**
(You need to trust in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, as Peter rightly said)

And you are not saved if you have added to the work of Christ on the Cross, thinking something you do contributes to going to heaven, wrongly thinking you can save yourself!

If you could save yourself, then why did the Christ come down from Heaven and sacrifice Himself for our sins?

In other words, you have NOT received His gift of eternal life if you have tried to earn it yourself!

If that describes you, then please surrender and repent towards God, right now! (Simply cry out to Him for His great mercy and forgiveness, as in Luke 18)

Because the Bible reveals it's actually IMPOSSIBLE for a sinner to please a perfect God on his own. (see **Rom 3:10-23**)

If he wants to be saved, man must turn away (repent) from trusting in himself and his own goodness to appease God.

Instead, he must trust in Jesus alone as his Lord and Savior. And it's between each of us and the Lord!

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Think about it... for Jesus to come down from Heaven and suffer the way He did for us, it must have been absolutely necessary to our salvation!!

And He is called the "Savior", isn't He??... and after all, isn't that what a Savior does??? He saves!!!

And the point is that CHRIST ALONE IS WORTHY, so place your trust in Him alone. :)

Hopefully we can now see how evil and foolish it is to trust in ourselves for salvation!

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Finally, part of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jesus of the Bible, is also believing that **He rose from the grave.**

Otherwise, we are again believing in "another Jesus", ala **2Co 11:4.**

The Resurrection is even the lynchpin of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! It is THE KEY!

The Corinthians had trouble believing that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, but this is a vital part of the Good News of Salvation!

The apostle Paul mentions that if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then our preaching and our faith are in vain! (what good is it?!!)

And if Christ has NOT been raised from the dead, then we are all still DEAD in our sins!

1 Cor 15:12-20 NIV

*But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 **And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.***

*15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 **And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.***

*18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 20 **But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.***

Again, Jesus' resurrection is a VITAL part of the Gospel of our Salvation!

People must know that He not only died for us on the Cross, but He also rose from the grave in victory!

How is the Gospel the "Good News" if we have no hope of eternal life afterwards?

Even up until today, 2000 years later, they still cannot find the remains of Jesus' body in the tomb.

And that's because it's simply not there, according to 500 eyewitnesses that saw Him 3 days after His burial!!

Here's what the Apostle Paul wrote, in context, about his meeting the resurrected Lord!

1 Cor 15:1-8 *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.*

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

And Paul goes on to say in **1Cor 15** that **he did not believe in vain**. Why? - Because he wholeheartedly believed and relied upon Christ's resurrection from the dead!

The Resurrection is the very proof that gives us the hope of eternal life; life beyond the grave!

And, The Resurrection proved that Jesus is who He said He is; the Son of God in the flesh, and the Savior of the world.

1Ti 4:10 *“For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is **the Savior of all men, especially of believers.**”*

Jesus came for all types of people around the world, not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles too. (by the way, if you're not Jewish, you're a Gentile :)

Some of you may be struggling to believe in Him, or in His resurrection.

Maybe it makes no sense to you, or you're stuck in your current beliefs, whatever they might be.

But, by the grace and mercy of God, your Creator and Savior is reaching out to YOU right now!

John 3:16-18 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that **the world might be saved through him.** 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, **because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.***

God has a certain love for you, even though you've sinned against Him... as have I.

He's calling you right now to believe in His precious Son; to place your trust in Him to be saved from your sins.

He wants you to be reconciled to Him, to have permanent peace with Him, through faith in the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior.

And you, yes YOU, can be saved for all eternity, no matter what you've done in the past... IF you are willing to repent and receive His offer of grace, who IS Jesus Himself!

2 Cor 5:20-6:2 *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; **we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.** 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

*6:1 And working together with Him, **we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain** — 2 for He says,*

*"AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU,
AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU."
Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE
DAY OF SALVATION" —*

It doesn't matter where you've come from, or what your background is... or even how you've sinned against God.

We are ALL guilty and have ALL fallen short of the glory of God.
(Rom 3)

But right now, RIGHT NOW, you have a chance at eternal redemption!

We beg you, on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God.

If you're willing to surrender to the Holy God of the Universe, you can ask Him for mercy and forgiveness for your sins,...

... and turn to His precious Son from the heart, turn to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Rom 10:8-11 *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."*

If you're willing to repent and place your trust in Christ alone (turning away from your own attempts at earning salvation), **then He will save you!**

We must remember and believe... Jesus was the **ONLY** truly good Person who ever lived... who **NEVER** sinned...

... and by repenting of our sins and trusting in His sacrifice, God promises to save us from both sin and death, forevermore!

In **Mark 1:15**, our Lord Jesus said:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

And as we began this series, Paul said to the humbled Roman jailor in **Acts 16:31**: *They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

Salvation comes to us by God's grace alone, through faith in Christ, and NOT by anything that sinful man can do on his own.

Amen?!