

PREACH IT ONE MORE TIME

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 • TV121B

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By

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Ephesians 2:8-9

“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.”

Turn in your Bible today to the book of **Ephesians**. Will you open with me to **Ephesians the 2 chapter?** I’m going to read **verses 8 and 9 of Ephesians 2.**

Here’s our subject today: **“PREACH IT ONE MORE TIME.”**

Paul says in **Ephesians Chapter 2:8-9:** *“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.”*

Now, not every preacher has the privilege of staying in one place and pastoring one church as long as I have been with the 13th Street Baptist Church of Ashland, Kentucky. September of this year I will have served as pastor of this same church for 29 years.

Now, that’s a privilege to be able to pastor and to preach to the same people along with the visitors who come for 29 years.

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Now, I hope by the grace of God that my attitude has improved. You know, the Gospel is offensive, no question about that. Paul talked about the offense of the cross. When our Lord Jesus Christ preached to the people in his day and told them the truth of the Scriptures, some of them were deeply offended.

The Scripture says: *“They went back and walked no more with him.”* Some said in anger: *“This is a hard saying, who can hear it?”* Some even took up stones to stone Him and finally, they nailed Him to a cross.

But, we don't want to be offensive in our personalities. We want to preach as a dying man to dying men. We want to be humble men, not weak men, but meek men. We don't want to offend people with our cantankerous ways, but if they are offended by the Gospel, then we have to accept that.

But, I hope my attitude through the years has improved by the grace of God and I hope that my ability to present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has improved. I hope that God has given me gifts and talents that enable me to preach the Gospel with the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

I hope that my knowledge of Scripture has improved. The Bible tells us to study. There's no excuse for laziness. There's no excuse for not studying.

We need to saturate our messages with the Word of God. We need the Word of God to fill our hearts and our souls and our minds, to be able to refer to the Scriptures.

I'm not to preach to you what I think or what I suppose or even what I personally believe. I'm to speak: *“Thus saith the Lord.”* The Scripture says: *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

So, I do pray by God's grace and for His glory and the good of the people to whom I minister and those in the television audience to whom I preach, that I exhibit the attitude and spirit of my Lord Jesus Christ, that my ability will be increased by the grace of God and my knowledge of Scripture, that I will be able to take you to the Word of God and show you, *“thus saith the Lord.”*

But my friend, I can say with sincere honesty and conviction and great emphasis: for 29 years I have been pastor of the same church (I have been preaching for 34 years in all); my message is the same, it's the same. It's contained within the circle of these words found in **Ephesians 2: 8 and 9**, *“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.”* That's the sum and substance of our message.

The sinner is saved not by works, not by law, not by deeds, not by tradition, not by custom, and not by religious ceremonial rituals. The sinner is saved by the grace of God through faith.

If you will take your Bible and look there at chapter **2 of Ephesians**; let's go back and pick up **verse 1**. You will find here the apostle in these verses gives us a good look at the three persons that are involved in this matter of what we call salvation or redemption. There are three persons involved.

If you will go back to **verses 1 through 3**, he talks about the sinner. He said: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead, dead in trespasses and sin."*

Man in the Garden did not die physically, not immediately; he lived for years after he sinned. He died spiritually: *"You that were dead in trespasses and sin, God hath quickened you who walked according to the course of this world."*

That's how natural men walk. *"They walk (not according to the course of holiness, not according to the course of God) but according to the course of this world, even according to the devil."* That's what it says.

That's not a pretty picture is it? It's not pretty at all but it's the truth. He said: *"We walk according to the course of this world and we fulfill the lust of our flesh, and the desires of our flesh, and the desires of our mind, and the lust of our minds, and we are the children of wrath, even as others."*

Now, that's not, I say, a pretty picture, but that's a picture of every man out of Christ by nature; *"dead in trespasses and sin, walking according to the course of this world, (according to the leadership of Satan) fulfilling lusts."*

And lust doesn't just apply to sexual sins only, it applies to lust for power, and lust for riches, lust for fame, and lust for anything, an unholy desire or panting or yearning after those things that are forbidden by God, lusting for them.

But, that's the picture of every man out of Christ. That's a picture of every man by nature. We know it's within us, the evil thoughts. Christ said: *"It's not what man puts in his mouth that defiles him."*

I know that preachers are stomping up and down the country hollering for people to quit this and quit that and quit the other, all of these outward sins, you know. But, that's not our trouble. Our trouble's not meat and drink; our trouble is our hearts, that where the trouble is; we have heart trouble.

"Out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts;" that's what the Lord said. *"Out of the heart proceeds murder; (hatred is murder) "out of the heart proceeds fornication. Out of the heart proceeds jealousy and envy; these are the things that defile a man,"* Christ said.

That's what we are by nature. We make ourselves all pretty on the outside but we wouldn't dare let people know what we think. We wouldn't dare let people look into our hearts, would we?

We will fix up the outside so we can impress folks, you know, so that we can justify ourselves before men but *“God looks on the heart.”* God does not look on the outward countenance; *“God looks on the heart.”* He said, *“Son; give me your heart.”* He said, *“Keep your heart; out of it are the issues of life.”*

So here, Paul lets us look first of all, at the sinner, dead in sins, without hope, without God, without Christ, without strength, dead in sins.

Then he goes on and lets us look at someone else in **verse 4**, but he says: *“But God; (I love those two words) you who were dead in sin and you who walked according to the course of the world, even following the powers of Satan, fulfilling the lusts of your mind and flesh and the desires of your heart.”*

“But God; (there’s the heavenly Father) but God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ.” God loves sinners.

Every attribute of God is manifested in this thing called redemption. Did you know that, God’s attributes? You may say that’s a big word. It just means the character of God.

You have attributes, personality, your nature, and those things that describe you. Well, there are things that describe God. God knows all things; God’s omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

God is righteous, God is holy, God is love and God is long-suffering. God is almighty. You see, those are attributes of God. That’s what we mean when we say attributes of God. We need to study these things.

Every attribute of God, every characteristic of God is manifested or revealed in the redemption of sinners, for example: His foreknowledge; He chose a people and He foreknew us.

His wisdom devised the plan of redemption. It’s His wisdom that said that Christ will be the Surety. His patience endured our rebellion, God’s long-suffering.

And then His love sent His son. *“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.”* His justice bruised the Son. *“He who knew no sin was made sin for us. It pleased God to bruise him.”*

You see, not only the love of God is manifested at Calvary but the justice of God. God cannot look on sin. God cannot tolerate sin and so, when His son was made sin, he turned His back on Christ.

You say: “God forsaking God; how can that be?” I don’t know. No man can understand that but that’s what the Scripture says.

His power raised Christ from the dead, His grace called us and His immutability preserves us (that means His unchangeableness), *“He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* His immutability preserves us, *“but God.”*

“You who were dead;” we look at the sinner; it’s not a pretty picture in his sins, and guilt, and rebellion, a servant of sin, under the dominion of sin, *“but God”* did something about it, but God in His mercy, but God in His love was not willing that man should be left in that condition.

But, He determined to redeem a people for His glory and for His eternal praise *“that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*

Then, **verses 5 and 6**, we have the Saviour presented; *“he quickened us in Christ.”* He made us alive in Christ. He quickened us together with Christ. *“He raised us up together with Christ and seated us in heavenly places in his Son.”* All of God’s mercies, grace and blessings are in Christ, in Christ the Lord.

In **1 Corinthians 1:30** it says: *“But of God are you in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”*

So, we see three persons here. We see the sinner in his deadness, in his depravity, in his decayed condition. Then we see God, but God in His mercy, in His grace, *“in his great love, wherewith, he loved us.”*

“God commended his love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Then we see Christ, Christ our Lord. *“In the fullness of the time,”* after God had promised Him and prophesied Him and pictured Him in the Old Testament types and shadows and prophecies, God sent Him.

“In the fullness of the time, God sent his son, made of a woman, made in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He took upon himself, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. *“He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ was tempted and tried in all points as we are, yet without sin.”*

He dwelt on this earth for 33 ½ years and then He died on that cross of Calvary for our sins and was buried. And after three days God raised Him from the dead and took Him to glory and seated Him on His right hand. And there, in Christ, *“we are accepted in the beloved.”*

Now; here’s the sum and substance of it all in the next verses, **verses 8 and 9**; *“For”* when you come upon the word *“for”* in the Scripture, (for example like this verse, **Ephesians 2:8**, starts with *“For”*) well you want to see what it’s there for.

It’s talking about what’s just been said. The sinner is dead, but God is merciful and Christ has died, why? *“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”* Salvation is a gift of God!

Now, sin's wages; we earn the wages of sin. Hell is earned, judgment is earned, and the wrath of God is earned, but salvation is not earned; it's the gift of God. Do you see that in **Romans 6:23?** *"The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Let's break this text down in about four or five points in the time that we have left!

First of all: The apostle says: *"For by grace, are you saved."*

What does the word grace mean? It means unmerited, unearned, unmerited and undeserved favor of God. It's free grace. Listen to this great, old hymn:

**"Grace, tis a charming sound
Harmonious to my ear,
Heaven with the echo shall resound
And all the earth shall hear.**

**Grace first planned the way
To save rebellious man
All God's attributes are on display
In that eternal plan.**

**God first inscribed my name
In his eternal Book
Twas Grace which sent the Lamb
Who all my sorrows took.**

**Grace taught my soul to pray
And made my eyes overflow
Twas grace that kept me to this day
And will not let me go.**

**Oh, twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious, precious, did that grace appear?
The hour I first believed."**

Grace is seen in our election. God chose us; Christ said to the disciples: *"You didn't choose me; I chose you. I set my love upon you. You didn't love me; I loved you."* We didn't love God. *"We love him because he first loved us."* Our love is a response to His but He loved first. Grace chose us. Grace loved us.

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Grace is manifested in our redemption. *“You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ how that he was rich, yet for your sake, became poor.”* It was grace that called us. The apostle Paul said, *“God who separated me from my mother’s womb called me by his grace.”*

It was the grace of God that sought us out. It was the grace of God that found Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and arrested him in his rebellion and brought him to faith in the Son of God.

It was the grace of God that found Abraham in the land of idol worshippers and said, *“Abraham; I will take you to a land and there I will make you a great nation.”*

It was grace that preserved Noah when the entire world was destroyed by a flood. It says: *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* My friend; it’s the grace of God that found you. You are what you are by the grace of God.

Now, *“Who maketh thee to differ?”* Paul asked this in **1 Corinthians 4:7**: *“Who maketh thee to differ? What do you have that you didn’t receive? Now, if you received it, why do you boast as if you didn’t receive it?”* It’s the grace of God.

It’s grace that keeps us. Every blessing of God is in Christ and it becomes mine by the grace of God. I don’t deserve anything from the hand of God but wrath and judgment and you don’t either. We don’t deserve anything.

The hymn writer said:

**“Suffer a sinner
Whose heart overflows
Loving the Saviour
To tell what he knows.**

**Once more to tell it
Would I embrace?
I’m just a sinner
Saved by God’s grace.”**

Just like you and just like everybody else. Old Richard Baxter said: “I preach as one who may never preach again. I preach as a dying man to dying men, *“For by grace are you saved.”*”

It begins with grace and it is completed in grace. Grace planned it, grace purchased it, grace applied it, grace preserves it, and grace will fulfill it.

Second: What’s the next thing? *“For by grace are ye saved.”* Now, if you will take any of the better translations you will find that it says this: *“for by grace you are saved or you have been saved.”*

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I was talking with a missionary this morning from France and he said that the French translation of this verse says this: *“By grace have you been saved.”* You are already saved. This is a present salvation; it’s a present possession.

John said, *“We have passed from death unto life. We are the children of God. Now are we sons of God.”*

If you say that a man is truly saved; (listen to me) he’s truly saved for all eternity, if you say that a man has a present salvation, certain, sure, redemption; it’s a sure thing, he is redeemed, he has been saved, you’ve got to precede it by grace.

You’ve got to precede it with the word grace. Do you know why, for there is no present salvation except that which begins and ends with grace? There’s no man who can preach or possess a present salvation unless he possesses it by grace, why, because in grace, the work of salvation is finished. If it is by works, it may yet fail.

In other words, if my salvation depends holy and completely on what Christ did, then it’s finished. But, if my salvation depends on what I do, it’s not finished because I’m not through yet and I may yet fail. In fact, it’s a sure thing, because every creature has always failed.

Let me show you some examples:

Go back when before the world was created, the angels that fell; when did they fall? Well, they fell before Adam; they fell before the world was created. The angels were made before men. *“Those angels have not kept their first estate.”*

They were in heaven. They were all around the universe. They had perfect surroundings and they had perfection in themselves, but they fell.

All right; Adam was put on the earth in a perfect Garden. He was created upright and holy and yet he fell. Noah saw the world destroyed by a flood. He wasn’t off that ark but a few months until he had planted a vineyard and had gotten drunk and caused one of his sons to sin a great sin.

Look at Lot, who was delivered from Sodom. The city was burned up before his very presence and yet it wasn’t long until he greatly sinned against God.

Look at David; David, one of the most powerful men that the world had ever seen. He had one of the greatest kingdoms that have ever been on this earth and yet David failed, utterly failed.

Look at Solomon; the Scripture says that Solomon was the wisest men who lived on this earth, other than Christ of course, as far as natural men are concerned, but he failed.

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The twelve apostles, Judas one of them who walked with Christ. He was with the inner circle and yet he failed. It is the characteristic of men to fail under any circumstances, in any environment. So, our salvation has got to be by grace: *“By grace have you been saved.”*

Third; watch the next term: *“By faith.”* You are saved by grace, *“by the grace of God through faith.”* Men are not saved without faith. You are not saved without believing on Christ: *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

In order to be saved a man has got to hear the Gospel and believe it. That’s what the Scripture says: *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how are they going to call on him in whom they have not believed and how are they going to believe on him of whom they have not heard and how are they going to hear without a preacher? How are they going to preach except they be sent, Romans 10:13 through 15.*

God sends His preachers, and people hear them preach the Gospel, the good news and they hear it and believe it and God almighty redeems them. We are saved by faith, we are justified by faith, not without faith. You’ve got to know Christ.

Now faith, you say: What is faith? The definition sometimes just confuses rather than helps us. But, I think that faith can be defined with three words found in **2 Timothy 1:12**. The apostle Paul says: *“I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.”*

Now, here’s faith in three words: knowledge, confidence (or trust) and committal, in other words, faith and knowledge. First of all, you can’t trust an unrevealed Christ; you’ve got to know who He is. Who is Jesus Christ?

Well where do you go to find out? Go to the Word; the Word tells us who He is. The Word tells us what He did. The Word of God tells us why He died, why He came to this earth and why He died on the cross, *“that God may be just and justify the ungodly.”*

You see, the law demands honor, it demands obedience and the justice of God demands satisfaction: *“The soul that sinneth shall die. The wages of sin is death.”*

Somebody has got to die for me. Either I die or they die, but Christ died for me. That’s why He did it and where He is now. You see, I know who Christ is.

It’s confidence! Now, we say: well, “Christ is willing to save,” certainly He is. Is He able to save? Well, Paul said: *“I believe he’s able. I’m persuaded that Christ Jesus is able.”*

Now, I’m not persuaded that the priest on the earth can save me. I’m not persuaded that a preacher can save me. I hear preachers talk about the power that is in their hand. I’m not persuaded that they’ve got any power in their hand.

I'm not persuaded all of them are even sincere. I'm not persuaded all of them are not hypocrites. I'm not persuaded that there is any ability in any man to do anything for me. But, I'm persuaded that Christ can do it, God can do it. God can do all things.

So, I rest my case in the hands of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul is saying: *"I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able, he is able to keep what I've committed to him."*

What have you committed to Him Paul, my soul, my life, my hope, my sins, my all; it's all been committed to Christ. Now, that is faith and *"by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves."* Faith is not even of you.

Look back over your conversion. You were brought one day to the place where you realized you were a sinner. You were made aware of your sins. Who made you aware of your sins? The Scripture says it was the Holy Spirit. *"When the Holy Spirit is come he will convince men of sin."*

I can't do it. I can stand up until I drop dead and tell people they are sinners and they will never believe me. But, if God the Holy Spirit ever comes in your heart and says *"you are a sinner,"* you will believe him.

Fourth: You heard the Gospel!

Who gave you ears to hear? Our Lord said: *"Blessed are your ears, they hear."* And you saw Christ in His beauty and glory and in His power to save. Who made you to see? Who gave you eyes to see?

Our Lord said one day to Peter and to the other apostles, *"whom do men say that I am?"* They said: *"Well, some say that you are John the Baptist and some say you are Elijah and some say you are one of the prophets."*

He said: *"Whom do you say that I the son of man am?"* The apostle said: *"Though art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Do you know what the Lord said? *"Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you but my Father which is in heaven. Blessed are your eyes they see and your ears they hear."*

Oh, look back over your conversion and you will find that God did it all. You saw the wisdom of God and the death of Christ. Who made you see it? Well, you have to say with the apostle Paul: *"I am what I am by the grace of God."*

Now, the last statement: *"For by grace are you saved."* By God's grace, God's sovereign grace, are you saved already, a present possession, by faith, not apart from faith. Lord; give me faith to believe. Like the Centurion, *"Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief."*

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“Faith is the gift of God.” It’s not of you; nothing is of yourself. The goodness of God led you to repentance. God gets all the glory. It’s the gift of God. Everything in salvation is the gift of God.

I heard somebody say: “Well; you know the Lord helps them that help themselves.” That’s not so. That’s just not true. God helps those who can’t help themselves. God helps those who are helpless.

That’s right! He gives a free salvation to the helpless and He gives a complete salvation. Nothing needs to be added to it and He gives a finished, certain, secure salvation, for He said: *“my sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they will never perish: no man can pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”*

This is the sum and substance of the message that I’ve tried to deliver to you for these past several years on this station:

“For by grace are you saved, (saved for time and eternity) through faith and that not of yourselves; it’s the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast: For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus.”