

**THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**  
**“SAVED BY GRACE”**  
**(EPHESIANS 2:8-9)**  
**FEBRUARY 4, 2007**

**MEMORY VERSE:**

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

**INTRODUCTION**

In the first part of Ephesians 2, Paul very definitively states that we are a people whose disobedience and sinful nature are an abomination to God. He goes on to say there is nothing we can do on our own to make ourselves righteous before Him. This is a bleak message on its own, but Paul gives us God’s answer to our hopeless condition – the gift of grace extended to all of those who place their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

During this study, we will examine the basis of our salvation that is obtained only by the gift of God’s grace. Our salvation comes only through our faith in Jesus Christ and has nothing to do with any work or effort on our part. Why did God choose faith, instead of, say, joy or humility or contentment, as the instrument through which justification is given? In the words of Christian Bible scholar, Wayne Grudem, “It is apparently because faith is the one attitude of the heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves.”

**UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT**

1. Read Ephesians 2:8. What does Paul mean when he says, “by grace you have been saved”? How would the meaning of verse 8 be changed if the phrase said “saved by faith”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why do you think people are not saved through their own power and strength? How do self reliance and individualism make it difficult for us to accept God’s free gift of salvation? What is the point of salvation being “a gift from God”?

3. Read Romans 5:1, 8:1-2, and Hebrews 10:22. What do these verses communicate to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ? What is the significance of these promises in the life of a believer in Christ?
  
4. In verses 8-9, three key words describing the foundation of the Christian faith are used. These words are grace, faith and salvation. Explain what each of these words means and what their importance is in the life of a believer in Jesus Christ.
  
5. Verses 8 and 9 explain clearly that saving faith is a gift from God. If our good works will not earn for us God's love, nearness or blessings, what does their purpose seem to be? (Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:12; Titus 3:8)
  
6. What does Galatians 2:21 reveal to us concerning our salvation and sanctification?

### **OUR WALK WITH GOD**

1. The Bible says clearly that salvation is a free gift from God. Yet, many people struggle with this truth, especially those who were raised in a faith that emphasized being justified by God's grace PLUS some merit of their own. Why is it so hard for these folks to accept this gift of unmerited favor from God? What might you say or do to help them understand this foundational truth?

2. Paul emphasizes in these verses that salvation is by grace alone. What difference should this truth make in your life? What changes do you need to make in your life today because of this amazing gift of grace that has been extended to you?
3. Out of a heart of thankfulness for what Christ has done for you, how might you serve Him this week? Think of something you have never done before that creatively expresses your gratitude to our Lord. Ask your small group to pray for you and hold you accountable to this commitment.

### **GOING DEEPER**

Read Romans 3:20 and Galatians 2:16, 3:11 and 5:4. What do these verses reveal to you concerning the “law” and God’s grace? Why do you think Paul continues to keep emphasizing these truths?

### **ADDITIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK**

“All the world religions can be placed in one of two camps: legalism or grace. Humankind does it or God does it. Salvation as a wage based on deeds done – or salvation as a gift based on Christ’s death.

A legalist believes the supreme force behind salvation is you. If you look right, speak right and belong to the right segment of the right group, you will be saved. The brunt of responsibility doesn’t lie within God; it lies within you.

The result? The outside sparkles. The talk is good and the step is true. But look closely. Listen carefully. Something is missing. What is it? Joy! What’s there? Fear! (That you won’t do enough). Arrogance! (That you have done enough) Failure! (That you made a mistake)

Spiritual life is not a human endeavor. It is rooted in and orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. Every spiritual achievement is created and energized by God.”

Excerpt from “He Still Moves Stones” by Max Lucado