

## Grace, Faith, and Works

Grace, faith, and works are three important words and concepts in the New Testament. Various passages point out the importance of each. In this article we want to understand what they mean and how our salvation is to each of them.

One, grace is defined as unmerited favor, or as a gift from God. It is truly undeserved. It's first used in the Bible when speaking of God's intention of destroying the world by flood due to man's sinfulness. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:8) Noah was not sinless but he was different from everyone else; therefore, God told Noah of the upcoming flood. In the New Testament grace is connected with Jesus. His coming, life, and sacrifice for our sins are all manifestations of God's gift to mankind. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) Nothing could ever or has ever merited deity leaving heaven to live and die for our sins.

Next, faith refers to the Word of God itself. For instance, Jude 3 reads, "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." The body of doctrine that is the Gospel of Christ is the faith. It can also mean to believe or to have firm conviction in the word of God. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) Specifically, our faith is in Jesus being the Son of God.

Then, a correlation exists between God's grace and our faith. This is expressed in Ephesians 2. "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God". (Ephesians 2:4-5,8) Some believe our salvation to only product of God's grace. They see no need for faith as they believe this minimizes God's unmerited favor. However, the inspired writers created no contraction when saying salvation is not earned and also teaching a condition of faith in order to be saved. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6) This connection is plainly

seen with Noah. Genesis 6.8 speaks of God's grace saving Noah. Also, Hebrews 11.7 reads, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Next, the element of obedience and works is evidenced. To explain, some have problems believing works being the earning of one's salvation. Such was a problem with the Jews as they looked at salvation being owed them by God. "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt." (Romans 4:4) If one reasons salvation is indebted to them, they are making the same mistake as the Jews. Works must be connected with God's grace, based on His word, and in obedience to His will. Stated earlier, Noah was saved by Grace (Genesis 6.8), motivated by faith (Hebrews 11.7), which required obedience, which resulted in being saved from the flood. "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did." ... "And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him." (Genesis 6:22; 7:5) All three parts are seen in Hebrews 11. God showed Noah grace, Noah believed God, and he prepared the ark in which he was saved.

The following comparison can be made, a doctor identifies a life-threatening condition, he then prescribed a course of action to save my life. I would then have to do my part and either take the medicine, an action. However, without the diagnosis I would have died, the diagnosis itself would not save me. Once diagnosed I still need to believe and trust the doctor. Yet, even with such faith I would die without applying the remedy (medicine). No one would argue that taking medicine undermines the doctor's diagnosis. If I don't have enough faith to believe the doctor I would still die. Faith is not antagonistic to grace but corresponds with it. Yet, without obedience I am still dead in my sins.

God's grace is sending His Son to die on the cross for my sins. Without faith such grave does no good and even faith without works is of no benefit. They all work together for my salvation. - Dennis Tucker