

DYERTHOUGHTS

== COMMON SENSE ==
APOLOGETICS

Salvation is Free

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8). The essence of grace is a gift, that is, a free gift. To properly think of grace we shouldn't think of 'getting what we don't deserve', rather, 'getting the opposite of what we deserve'. This is exactly what God has done for us. We deserved death but He has given us the opportunity at eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23). God worked out the system of salvation by grace through faith without any help from man. This is how we can say that salvation is fully from God and is a free gift.

God's Nature

To understand how salvation by grace works, we must understand the nature of God. God has essentially two sides to His nature (Romans 11:22). He is Holy (Isaiah 6:3) and He is Love (1st John 4:8). The question we must ask ourselves is which one is primary? If the two were to meet on a road which one would turn aside for the other? His love would turn aside because He is primarily Holy. We see this from the fact that He is described as HOLY, HOLY, HOLY in Isaiah 6:3 (Three-fold repetition is how they emphasized things, whereas we may use an exclamation mark), yet He is never called Love, Love, Love.

God's Dilemma

When sin enters the picture, God's holiness now expresses itself through wrath and His love now expresses itself through grace. God's dilemma is now this; His holiness demands punishment while His love desires forgiveness. How can God satisfy His wrath while at the same time extending grace and forgiveness to us? The answer is through the Cross of Christ. The primary reason for Jesus going to the Cross was not to show that He loved us, but to satisfy God's wrath. In satisfying the wrath of God we are able to see how much God loves us because he cancelled our penalty by paying it Himself. It was at the Cross that Jesus took on the sins of the world so that we might be able to take on the righteousness of God. (2nd Cor. 5:21)

If you were to steal someone's car and drive it into a lake you have now offended whoever owns the car. You now have a debt that you owe to the owner. Are you released from this debt when you feel released, when you think the owner doesn't care what you did, when enough time has passed so that you don't think about it anymore? You are forgiven the debt when the owner says you are forgiven of the debt. The same thing goes for our relationship with God. When we sinned we offended the absolutely Holy and Righteous God. We are not forgiven by God when we feel forgiven, when we think God doesn't care what we did, or when enough time has passed that we forget about our sins. We are forgiven by God when He declares us forgiven. Now that God's wrath has been satisfied through the sacrifice of Jesus, He is able to extend grace to all those who accept His son as the atoning sacrifice for their sins. Even though salvation is a free gift, there is still something we must do to accept the gift. Someone may offer to give you \$100 if you come to their house to accept the gift. You did not earn the \$100, but you did have to abide by the terms in order to receive it. This is the same with God. We did nothing to earn our salvation but we do have to accept the free gift of God. We must believe that Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16), repent of our sins and be immersed in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38). When we are immersed we are declared forgiven, this is called "being justified". Please see the pamphlet on Baptism for more discussion about immersion. God has already done His part. He has sent His Son to die on the Cross in order to satisfy His wrath so that He could extend grace to you. Are you willing to receive this grace today? If so, you must accept the person and work of Jesus Christ. That is, you must accept that He is God in the flesh (John 8:24), who came to die for your sins, was physically raised from the dead, and is a sufficient sacrifice to cover your sins. If you believe this then you must have a change of your will (repentance). You must make a decision that you are willing to follow Jesus as LORD of your life from this point forward and leave your past life behind (Luke 9:23). If you are willing to make this decision then it is time that you are immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16). Find a Christian now and submit to the watery grave of Baptism so that you can rise to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-11). For more information on the essential beliefs of Christianity see the Pamphlet entitled "Essential Beliefs".