

## **The Wednesday Word, May 17, 2017: What Does That Mean? (Part 1) - Grace Alone**

When we say we are justified by Grace alone, it means that, even though in and of ourselves we are unacceptable, we have divine acceptance through the doing dying and rising again of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Grace alone means favour and welcome shown to the rebellious and undeserving. Such is God's grace that sinners are said to be justified freely (Romans 3:24). To be justified "freely" means not only to be declared 'Not Guilty' but also signifies that we are declared not guilty without any cause in us.

It is only through the Gospel that we see God's gracious and righteous acceptance of unacceptable people. No amount of trying to obey God's Law on our part could have obtained our acquittal. No amount of personal character or self-denial by us ever causes God to regard us as acceptable in His sight. We have His favour only by pure and undeserved grace. That's part of what we mean by Grace Alone.

Grace pursued this sinner when I was pursuing sin. Grace found me, saved me and has kept me continually. Grace, you see, is not a one-time event. In this life, we stand in need of God's unfailing and unceasing grace. If we are attempting to find acceptance and welcome before the Father because of our moral character, we have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

Pastor Larry Criss says,

"I know this, I am a great sinner, and nothing less than great grace will do anything for me. I need reigning grace, grace that is greater than all my sin. I need grace to keep me from falling, and grace to present me faultless before the throne of God. I need grace to live by and grace to die by."

Just as it was grace that called me, it is grace that will not let me go. If God's great salvation is not grace from beginning to end, if anything about salvation is dependent on me, I have no hope at all. But thank God, that is not the case. God's grace has kept me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."

From beginning to end, we are saved by grace. That's another part of what we mean when we say we are saved by Grace alone.

Everything to do with our salvation is because of Grace. If we have been regenerated, it was by the power of God. That's grace! If we have repented, our repentance was the sovereign gift of God. That's grace. If we are believers, our faith was the sovereign work of God. That's Grace!

To recap, if we are to be saved, God must save us by Grace alone. No combination of Grace and works will do. Salvation comes from the hand of the all gracious God.

"Not what my hands have done  
Can save my guilty soul;  
Not what my toiling flesh has borne

Can make my spirit whole.

Not what I feel or do  
Can give me peace with God;  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears  
Can bear my awful load.

No other work save thine,  
No other blood will do;  
No strength save that which is divine  
Can bear me safely through.”

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And that's the Gospel Truth!