

Free Grace Salvation

by James Bourne

The free grace of Christ is the unmerited favor and mercy that God shows to sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 48:8, Malachi 4:2, Matthew 6:24, John 6:37, John 15:18, Romans 8:32, 2 Corinthians 4:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 2:5, Titus 3:5, 1 John 4:13

Topics: "Salvation By Grace", "Gods Mercy"

Description

James Bourne preaches about the profound message of salvation by grace, emphasizing the hopelessness of sinners under conviction and the necessity of understanding God's mercy and pardon through Jesus Christ. He warns against false teachings that lead to despair and highlights the importance of recognizing the free grace of Christ as the only means of salvation. Bourne encourages believers to stand firm in the face of temptation, keeping their focus on the love and grace of Christ that brings unspeakable power and raises spirits from despair to heavenly hope.

Transcript

"By grace ye are saved." (Ephesians 2:5)

What a wonderful mercy it is to an enlightened sinner to hear what the Apostle says, "By grace ye are saved."

Men under the conviction of sin and the discovery of God's justice and holiness often feel themselves utterly hopeless, and whatever men may say to them about amending their lives, it leaves them in more despair than before, being made to feel with all their amendment they cannot mend that which is past.

What is still more wonderful, if these convictions be of God, they will cut deeper yet, by showing the sinner he was not only a transgressor from the womb, but born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. (Isa. 48:8; Ps. 51:5) This puts the sinner beyond any help in himself. Some try to get over this mire by telling the people that infant baptism is regeneration, for not knowing the hidden secret [and] wisdom of God, they stretch their own wisdom into the utmost confusion by preaching baptism is regeneration, and yet teach children to say that baptism is only the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. We believe God has appointed this sign to show us the need of spiritual baptism, which Titus calls "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5)

When the convicted sinner has ears to hear this joyful sound, and a heart to understand it, then he finds his despair give way to hope. And though he finds his heart abounds in accusations of all sorts, yet these tidings of mercy and pardon to the returning sinner encourages him to hope. He is revived to perceive that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and that salvation is of free grace. Paul begins his Epistle to the Galatians with these words; "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father." (Gal. 1:3,4) This wonderful Scripture is to assure us that it is the will of the Father that a broken hearted sinner shall never finally despair; that the Lord Jesus Christ came to save self-despairing sinners. Not by teaching them to do many things, but by showing them the absolute necessity of Christ's mercy and pardon. Which he here declares shall bring peace and reconciliation with God, and the Father.

The Apostle tells us, there be some troublers that will preach another gospel and so pervert the gospel of Christ. These lead souls to utter despair, and hide the free grace of Christ and tell the people that by amending their lives they will obtain the favour and mercy of God. But we are taught that no inventions of men can reach the deep rooted leprosy of sin, nothing short of the blood of sprinkling can take it away. "By grace ye are saved." When we fall into distress, and deep temptation, we then find we have no power to help ourselves. What we would most willingly recommend to others, we find most terribly difficult to exercise ourselves. Despair seems to take hold of us. Yet even here, there is a cry and sometimes [it is] so feeble that we can scarcely believe it can be heard, but in the end we find it proves to be the cry of the poor and destitute, which the Lord regards. It is heard when all our strength is gone, and none shut up or left, to show to us that it is the free grace alone of Christ which saves us. When this comes, it always shows us all quarrels are made up with the Father, through this grace of Christ, and sensible friendship again renewed in the conscience. The Spirit bears witness to this truth, who brings along with it a sweet peace that passeth all understanding.

We are sure there are many pretenders to this gospel. They certainly are such as walk in craftiness, and handle the Word of God deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2) and hold their profession with drunkenness and mock God without shame, by a pretended worship and an untender walk. Hypocrites who are ignorant of this free grace of Christ, and yet are made to feel themselves guilty sinners, persuade themselves they can by some means gain pardon. The Apostle tells us plainly, that Christ gave himself for our sins, and that there is no other foundation for hope or mercy, and that this work of grace is so effectual on the heart as to deliver us from this present evil world of drunkenness, hypocrisy and every abomination.

We read, when the widow of Zarephath saw her son was dead, she cried out, "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" (1 Kings 17:18) It is often so with us. As soon as any peculiar affliction overtakes us, we begin to sink in spirit, and fear lest the Lord should enter into strict judgment with us for many things. This the enemy takes the advantage of and adds many accusations, and this is what David calls "floods of great waters." (Ps. 32:6) "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." (Ps. 69:2) These floods are said to lift up their voice. (Ps. 93:3) This means all the dreadful feelings the children of God often fall into, especially when afflictions threaten to be very sharp. Even here the Lord sits as our heavenly Pilot, so that we perish not, and we at length find that he raises as well as commands the stormy wind and says, "Hitherto shall thou go and no further." The Lord tells us, by these depths he melts our hard and barren hearts, and though we are made to stagger with fear yet the Spirit helps our infirmities in this dreadful place to cry unto the Lord. He makes this storm a calm and shows us more plainly our helpless ruined condition. It is only of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.

(Lam. 3:22) Then we know what the Apostle means when he writes, "Behold...what carefullness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation" and disgust at the sin of your nature; (2 Cor. 7:11) what zeal and revenge against those dreadful sins that bring a sad reproach upon the cause of God. The Psalmist then adds, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." (Ps. 107:8) He causes the watersprings to run in dry ground and thus shows us how free the grace of God is to returning sinners.

Never forget that Christ died for our sins. (1 Cor. 15:3) The Apostle tells us to be sure to keep in memory this truth. If we will seek to be justified by the works of the law, we are under the curse, but if we come with our broken hearts to Christ, he is said to redeem us from the curse, and the Spirit will enlighten us under his convictions to cry to Christ alone for mercy.

A false ministry will set many things before the coming sinner as needful for salvation, but the Saviour says he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 15:24) These lost sheep are called in another place dead, but Christ is said to quicken them who were dead. [These] must now make manifest they are partakers of true spiritual life by not walking after the course of this world, that in future ages may be seen the exceeding riches of this free grace in its effects in us. It humbles us, and makes us simple, sincere, transparent and shows the whole to be the gift of God. [It] gives us some comprehension of "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know" the sweet power of "the love of Christ which passeth" all natural "knowledge." (Eph. 3:18,19) It is for want of this divine secret and hidden power, there are so many fruitless professors. I sometimes wonder such do not look out for the dresser of the vineyard, and expect him to come and examine their fruits. It will be truly awful to hear him say: 'Here is a fruitless tree full of the leaves of profession, but a sad bitter fruit appears. Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? I have been digging and dunging this tree for three or four years and yet nothing but an untender walk at last. Cut it down.' (Luke 13:6-9)

The art of Satan is firmly to persuade a hypocrite he is a child of God, and that he will get safely to heaven although he is not so particular as some. He also comes to a poor sheep of Christ and tries with all his power to persuade him he can never be saved. He has no end of his terrifying accusations which raise up many fearful misgivings thoughts in the trembling child of God. [The child of God] cannot see at once this device of Satan, on which account he sinks into many despairing feelings, until the Sun of righteousness arises with light and healing, (Mal. 4:2) to discover the cheat, and cheer the drooping spirit. Thus we find out Christ's love to us and how he gave up himself a sacrifice to God, not for saints, but for afflicted sinners. If Jesus Christ thus fully gave himself for us, and God the Father is said not to spare his own Son, but delivered him up, how shall he not also freely give us all things needful for our salvation. (Rom. 8:32) Is not this free grace for a dejected sinner?

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. 8:35,37) It may be asked; how is it that so many fair professors seem to start so well, and yet are by no means conquerors over their lusts and drunkenness, and are not ashamed. Is it not because they never tasted of the true love of God? For some fair show in the flesh [they] have proved like the foolish Galatians to be bewitched from the simplicity of the truth, and find no grace to render a spiritual obedience to God's Word. These fall away in the hour of temptation. Though they appear to begin [to decline] with very little circumstances of showing their heart is gone, yet presently they become bolder, till at length they are not ashamed to be called enemies--enemies to God; to his Word; to his cause; and to his people. God makes them a reproach by darkening the little wisdom they seemed once to profess.

Therefore if by the grace of God any of us are enabled to stand our ground, let us all keep in remembrance the power that holds us up. All fullness is in Christ Jesus, therefore let us learn to magnify the riches of his free grace, who has brought us out of the spirit of this world, and has made us deeply to feel that it is of his mercy he saves us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Titus 3:5) which he often sheds abundantly on us when deeply immersed in grief and sorrow, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This blessing reaching us in the time of temptation and conflict, or death itself, has such an unspeakable and divine power as to raise our sinking spirits from hell to heaven, as both Jonah and David tell us. Therefore above all things, keep your eyes; your hearts; and your thoughts; and best affections upon the free grace of Christ. Consider it as your safeguard in all your afflictions; although it be defamed, and reproached, call to mind what the Saviour says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:18,19) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (John 4:10) Beloved, "hereby know we, that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John 4:13) We can but love him, because he first loved us. If we take up a profession merely to please men, we may obtain the favour of some, but let us remember no man can serve two masters, he will hold to one and despise the other. (Matt. 6:24) Therefore let us beg of the Lord, that he will continually reveal to us how freely he gave himself for us, that whatsoever conscience says of charges against us, to still come to Christ as an all sufficient sacrifice, believing he came to save sinners who are sick of their sins, and feel their need of a Saviour; to these he declares, "I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)

To him be all the glory, for ever. Amen.

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