

Grace - Not Works

Romans 11:1-6

1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

In our text this morning Paul addresses one of the greatest problems facing Christianity.

In Romans he addressing the Jews and their understanding of acceptance with God on the basis of works.

To the Jews they were far ahead of the Gentiles for they had a whole system of laws to be kept and on that basis they believed they would be accepted in God's sight.

But this is not only a Jewish problem but a human problem. Somehow, especially in the USA we have gotten the idea that God is watching all of us and when we finally get enough good works accumulated, God accepts us and will take us to heaven when we die.

When I talk to people about going to heaven when they die, they tell me they are trying to get the things in their life straightened out and hope to soon get God's approval.

When I hear that I wonder how good a job we are doing at preaching the Gospel.

I remember years ago, a young man coming to me and telling me that he had been a member of another Baptist church and been baptized in that church but now he wanted to be saved in our church. Do you understand that he was still in darkness concerning the Gospel.

When Paul comes to v-6 he gives us the summation of what he has been saying. Salvation cannot be by works. It cannot be a mixture of grace and works. It either has to be all of works for all of grace.

I. There is a remnant according to the election of grace.

A. Elijah

1. And Old Testament prophet to stop the rain for 3 1/2 years and called down fire from heaven.
2. But when Jezebel threatened him he ran away.
3. He went to God and complained that he was the only one left.
4. But God told him there were 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

- B. God has reserved them for himself.
1. Isaiah 10:22 (NKJV) 22 For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.
 2. He is not saying that these people had been faithful although they had.
 3. What he is saying is that God had kept these people faithful.
 4. Ps 115:1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.
 5. Php 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.
 6. Had simply been left up to the Saints the church would've passed out of existence in the first century.
 7. If it was just left up to you and me we would not be here the churches across America would be crumbling decays of a past generation.

II. Salvation is by grace alone.

- A. The essential meaning of grace in the Bible refers to God's disposition to exercise goodwill toward his creatures. This favorable disposition of God finds its supreme expression in Jesus Christ. By its very definition, this grace is rendered fully accessible to all humans with no other precondition than a repentant desire to receive it (Ti 2:11, 12). *Gilbert Bilezikian, "Grace," Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 900.*
- B. 2 Timothy 1:9 (NKJV) 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,
- C. Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV) 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

III. Works can have nothing to do with it.

- A. Even our faith is a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.
1. Php 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;
 2. 1Co 4:7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

3. It is Paul's emphasis on grace that reminds us that salvation is of God. Human beings, being dead in sin, can do nothing to initiate and produce their own salvation. If a remnant is going to be preserved in Israel, it is going to be by God's *grace—because he has a divine and appointed purpose for Israel to play in the salvation history of the whole world.* *Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, Holman New Testament Commentary – Romans, ed. Max Anders, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 11:1-36 - Israel's Future Vindicates the Gospel".*
- B. All the credit goes to God.
 1. Romans 4:2-8 (NKJV) 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."
- C. All the glory goes to God.
 1. Ephesians 1:5 (NKJV) 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- D. All the praise goes to God.

1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV)

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

Titus 2:11-12 (NKJV) 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

It hence follows, that it is absurd to blend foreknowledge of works with election. For if God chooses some and rejects others, as he has foreseen them to be worthy or unworthy of salvation, then the grace of God, the reward of works being established, cannot reign alone, but must be only in part the cause of our election. For as Paul has reasoned before concerning the justification of Abraham, that where reward is paid, there grace is not freely bestowed; so now he draws his argument from the same fountain, — that if works come to the account, when God adopts a certain number of men unto salvation, reward is a matter of debt, and that therefore it is not a free gift. *John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Chapter 11".*