

This morning we're gonna start a new series, so take your bible and turn to Ephesians 2. I wanna start a new series called Total Grace. I want you to understand that the Christian life from beginning to end is underwritten by God's grace, God's own merited favor, and we're gonna look at that over the next several weeks. We're gonna see different aspects of God's grace. This morning, we're looking at the aspect of saving grace.

You and I are going to heaven because of God's unmerited favor, nothing else. No reason beyond that. We're gonna look at that and then in next few weeks we'll look at others, next week we'll look at strengthening grace from Hebrews 4:14-16, but to get it started let's stand, let's read together Ephesians 2:1-10, a message I've entitled a new beginning.

Listen to what Paul says, as he describes the Ephesian Christians experience in Christ and you he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the earth, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature, children of Wrath just as the others, but God what a grid little statement, 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 and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he made sure the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of God. Not of works, lest anyone should boast, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them, so reads God's word and you may be seated. In recent days, I've been reading a tremendous book called Grace Focused Optimism. The author is a man with the name C.L Chase. And then he says this, too many Christians understand grace as nothing more than forgiveness. Forgiveness is grace. It's foundational, but it's only one masterpiece hanging next to many others in the grace gallery.

You betray a serious misunderstanding of grace if you don't see that and many don't see it. I know I didn't for a long time. He goes on, imagine someone visiting a famous art gallery, exhibiting the world's 100 greatest pin things on one wall you have Leonardo's, Mona Lisa on the last supper and Michelangelo's universal judgment. On another wall you have Dali's persistence of memory and Vaughn Gough's, starry night, on and on and goes, is everywhere. This and turns on artistic burning, Bush bakkens, but he doesn't turn. He stirs and sits at only one of the pin things as if there's only one wall and only one pin thing, and the Petrun does this again and again, day after day. I was the patron. I visited the grace gallery and set before it's forgiveness masterpiece as if it were the only pin thing hanging. I knew I was forgiven, justified to use the theological word, and that exhausted my grasp of grace because of my limited understanding grace didn't amuse me, it didn't inspire me. It didn't make me optimistic and by God and everyday living.

That is a good on a grid insight, that his Christians were always in danger of limiting our understanding of God's grace to the front end of our Christian life. Forgiveness, salvation by grace. But this writer wants to remind us that from beginning to end, the Christian life is a message, a miracle and a movement of grace. Doesn't John say in John 1:16, all of his fullness, speaking of Christ, we have all received grace after grace after grace. It's not just saving grace. There's serving grace and singing grace and strengthening grace. You and I live, move and have our being in grace. Grace is more than a push. It's

more than something that gets us started. It is the all-encompassing, inclusive and all sufficient activity of God on our behalf whereby he and his goodness and mercy lands us some day in his house forever.

God's grace is amazing, but it is a binding. It's the most basic Christian tenant and truth. What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night grace is to Christianity. Think about this. It's at the center of it. It's at the circumference of it and it's all things in between, the God we serve, the God we worship is described in first Peter 5:10, as the God of all grace. In Jesus Christ, the grace of God appeared bringing salvation to all man. Titus 2:11, the Holy Spirit. It's the spirit of grace. According to Zachariah 12:10, the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures is a word of grace acts 20:32. When you and I pray, we come to a throne of grace where we may receive mercy and grace to help us in a time of need.

Hebrews 4:16. We're forgiven. We're redeemed. We're received according to the riches of God's grace. Ephesians 1:7, not only are we given the gift of eternal life, we are given gifts and enablements to serve God and they're are described in first peter 4:10, as the varied grace of God. Listen, from top to bottom, the Christian life is a movement of grace, doesn't Paul say in Romans 6:14, that we live under grace, doesn't he say in Romans 5:1-2, we stand in grace. So here's the news flash this morning as we begin a new series, grace is more than forgiveness. There's a whole gallery of grace's. It's great to look at the forgiveness portrait, but you've got to move on. grace is the totality of the Christian life. That's why I've called the series total grace because when your life is written and when my life is written and some day we enjoy the unending story of heaven itself. It's all a bite, total grace.

In fact, here's my conviction this morning. I believe that's why I've started this series, that the work of God in the worship of God in our day needs to have a new unrenewed awareness of the grace of God. What it really is, we need to put amazing back in to our use of grace. Our understanding of grace is malnourished. grace is not a leg up in the Christian life. It is the Christian life. It's the grace of God that will see of it's the grace of God that will keep. It's the grace of God that will land us someday in heaven. Paul says what in First Corinthians 15:10, I am what I am. By the grace of God. That's my story and that's all our stories. The shoreline of our lives are locked every day by wave, after wave, after wave of God's grace, and we're going to see that.

In fact, before we're done, we're going to consider today saving grace of Ephesians 2, serving grace out of Romans 12, sacrificing grace of Second Corinthians 8, suffering grace side of Second Corinthians 12. Singing grace set of Colossians 3, speaking grace of Colossians 4, strengthening grace of Hebrews 4, which we'll look at next time and schooling grace at a Titus 2. That's the grace gallery. We've got to move on and come to understand that the Christian life is a matter of total grace, that God can make all grace abound to us in all things. Second Corinthians 9:8. So let's begin this morning. We're going to open our bibles where we read this morning, Ephesians chapter 2:1-10. When I speak about saving grace a message I've called a new beginning, I can't think of a better passage to address that issue than Ephesians 2:1-10.

In fact in this very passage, Paul addresses the issue of saving grace. Look at verse five, even when we were dead in trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ. By grace you are saved. Scroll down, to verse 8, you know it well, for by grace, God's on merited fever. God's undue kindness for by grace you have been saved through faith that not of yourselves. You realize it's a gift. Now that may put that text in its context, this passage bumps up against the former passage, which is Paul praying for the Ephesians, and if you go to his prayer in chapter one, which brings us to chapter two, you'll see that he mentions God's mighty power put on display in the raising of Jesus from the dead. And how Christ is

triumphed over principalities and powers, and he prays that God's power displayed in Christ resurrection would be at work and them.

And so is it any surprise when we get to chapter two, that he talks about that resurrection power at work in them for the same power that raised Jesus from the dead has made us alive who were once dead in our sin. We've been raised up with Christ. We're seated with Christ in the heavenlies, the same power in the same work of God that brought Jesus from death to life and from Earth to heaven will do that in our lives. And so Paul talks about it here. So let's look at this passage. There are three things I want to say you're taking notes, the need of grace verses 1-3. The nature of grace verses 4-9. And what I call the narrative of grace verse 10. So let's begin with the need of grace. The text is apparent. It's plain. It's for everyone to see that you and I are in deep need of God's unmerited favor and undue kindness because we are dead in our sin.

We're dominated by our sin, an unrepentant we're doomed by our sin. That's our conditioned by nature. John Stott says that Paul first plumbs the depths of pessimism about man, and then he rises to the heights of optimism about God. So he begins with the need of grace. So the need for grace. You see, the good news is the good news because of the bad news, it's good news, the Gospel, because of the bad news, we're lost. We're dead in sin, dominated by sin, doomed by sin. That's the bad news, but the good news is that God has loved us with a great love, and he's willing to forgive our sin and bring us from death to life and from Earth to heaven. That's the good news and it wouldn't be good news if it wasn't for the bad news. This kind of came home to me in a humorous manner a few years ago, I had the privilege of preaching and the evening service in the pulpit of my friend and mentor, John MacArthur at Grace Community and I preached a message from my series on Joseph here at Kenwood and the message was called It's not as bad as you think it was based on Genesis 50:20, that what men mean for evil God means for good, so life is never as bad as you think.

But what I didn't know was in the morning service, my friend Phil Johnson, who an elder at Grace, and I director at Grace had preached the message entitled the Bad News and the good news, and he had preached on hell. That's the bad news. You and I are children of wrath we're destined for hell a part from the Gospel. That's the bad news and the good news. And I didn't know that. So you've got to understand what happened that day. In the morning he preached the message, the bad news and the good news, and at night I preached, it's not as bad as you think.

In fact he poked his head and nailed his permit and he said, thank you Philip. We had a chuckle, but it is bad. It's worse than we think, but the good news is the good news because of the bad news. In fact, grace thing about this grace will never be amusing until you understand your desperate condition, the better you think yourself to be, the last you'll perceive your need of grace. You can only say amazing grace. How sweet the signed when you're also able to say that sea of a wretch like me, I'm a sinner. I'm dead I'm dominated and I'm doomed. That's what we're going to look out here for a few minutes. Bad, dominated, doomed because it's all here. Look what Paul says and you, he made alive who were dead in trespasses in sin. The natural born manner woman is born physically alive, but spiritually dead.

Every man and woman and child in this world are the walking dead. They're physically alive, but they are dead spiritually, they are spiritual zombies. That's what Paul is saying here. He says it twice. You're dead in trespasses in sins. You're dead in trespasses. Verse Five, there's no divine spark within, it's lights out. When it comes to our relationship with God, we were born in sin. We were shipping in iniquity, the wages of sin is death, and ultimately that's true even physically, but at the beginning of life, it's absolutely true spiritually. We're born alienated from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18-19, listen to that,

we are born because of our natural state because of our connection to Adam. We're born, alienated from the life of God. We're not his child. He's not our father. In fact, to help us understand the meaning of this, you need to kind of get the idea of separation, alienation because physically the Bible describes death is separation.

When someone dies physically, their body ceases to function and we bury it, but their spirit goes to be with God until that body is resurrected in the resurrection. That's what death is. It's Separation. It's physical death is separation of the spirit from the body. Spiritual death is separation of the spirit of man, from the soul of God. Man is born alienated from the life of God separated from God, and so you just need to understand according to the Bible, this is the coroner's report on your life, you're dead spiritually, you don't have a relationship with God. You're not on the right side of God. You're alienated from the life of God. Mankind is not healthy. It's not even sick. It's dead spiritually speaking, and you know what? If that's true and according to the word of God, it is true. If someone's dead, they need a resurrection.

That's the only remedy for death, resurrection, and that's exactly the language that you used here. That's exactly the language that conveys what Christ does in a life dedicated and given to him. He may start life alive. That was once dead. He uses the phrase in John 3:3-5, you must be born again. You know what? You've had one birth. It's natural. It brought physical life, but you need a second birth. That's supernatural that will bring spiritual life to be born once is to die twice, to be born, twice as to die once, that's the old preachers used to say. So I just want you to understand that the good news is the good news because of the bad news. The good news is Jesus can make you alive. The bad news is right now apart from Jesus Christ you're dead, separated from God, alienated from his life, and if that stands the case, you will be separated at physical death from God forever in hell where you have been served his just judgment.

We're dead. Let me say this is by way of footnote before moving on that all sinners are dead. The only difference is the state of decomposition. Alright? Some sinners look more like sinners than other sinners, but we're all sinners. We're all dead. It's just an issue of decomposition on the physical side of things you know what? The mortuary can do a great job, by dressing up death. You know, we've all had that awkward moment viewing the corpse when some decision. Oh, he's looking good. Isn't he? Well, what do you say? Yeah, but he's dead. We tend to dress death up and the Bible even would warn us, don't be doing that. You can do that when you look it. There's various states of decomposition, some sinners there sin is apparent and ugly and flagrant and undeniable, and they know what they are first to admit it, and then there's other who dress themselves up a little bit with a covering of religiosity or smearing of what is socially acceptable.

I just want you to know from God's eyes, the coroner's reports and you're dead, dressed up or not. You're in a state of decomposition spiritually. You need saved, you need a resurrection, you need to be made alive. Dead, dominated, dominated the life before Christ, one dominated by the world, the flesh and the devil. That's all here. Number One, apart from Christ and before salvation, you and I live our lives and conduct our lives according to the world order. Look at verse two in which you once walked. That is your trespasses on your sins according to the course of this world, and when we speak about world, we're not talking about the planet. We're not talking about earth. We're not talking about terra firma. We're talking about a philosophy of life, of values that govern this world.

Paul tells us that this world, according to Galatians 1:4, is a present evil world edge. It's a world in rebellion and for a moment we're born. We joined the crowd in the rebellion, we're carried along

according to the course of this world we adopt it's thinking it's values, it's ideologies in opposition to God. That's why I liked the words of Martin Lloyd Jones here. Speaking of the course of this world. They think as the world thinks, they take their opinions ready made from their favorite newspaper where either the left or the right, they're very appearances controlled by the world and it's changing fashions. They all conform. It must be done. They do not disobey. They're afraid of the consequences. When we're born, we're part of the world order that is set up in opposition to God. We're part of the broad road where people are on me, get carried along like a soccer crowd.

I remember being at several soccer games and as your comment, I'd done some narrow concourse. The crowd just presses in and you almost get lifted off your feet on not sure if you're walking or being carried, but you're carried along by the crowd and that's the picture from the moment we're born. We joined the crowd the world in opposition to God. We adopted its values, its thinking, we like it's movies. We like its values. We like its ideologies, we like what we're hearing from the godless professor in university, and we get carried along that way until we repent and go in the opposite direction and are made alive. But secondly, we're not only carried along, according to the world order, we not only follow the world, we follow the devil because Paul describes here the devil as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience.

The devil is the Pied Piper for sin. Now we can send jolly good by ourselves, but he's happy to come along and multiply our efforts because you see, he likes to work in the sons of disobedience because he's disobedient, he's fallen, and he laid out a minivan to the fall and he likes to come alongside fallen creatures and lead them in the more disobedience. Someone might ask me this morning, do you believe in the devil as a literal figure? I do because number one, the Bible says so, number two, I've done business with them. We follow the world, and we follow the devil. He tempts, he blinds, he leads a stray. He imprisons. He's an accelerant when it comes to sin. He's a nodular theater in the world against God. He stirs up the rebellion. He's the god of this world. And according to second Timothy 2:25, he holds people captive by his will.

When I think of that word agitation, I think about my dad's in the police in Northern Ireland. Some of you know I spent six years as a law enforcement officer during the height of the troubles. We were in a tough area in north Belfast where there was a lot of support for the IRA and it's desire to overthrow the rule of Britain and Ireland, and we were drawn into several riot situations. You're in my time and what you did when you looked at a crowd that was rebelling and rioting, you always looked for the agitator because there was an agitator.

In fact it was often more than one, and if you took long enough and watch them, you can find out who they were. They were the one going to the ranks of the people, stirring them up, agitating them to fight the police and bring disorder into the community, and we often we're able to identify them and we sent a few plastic bullets in their direction.

The devil is an agitator. He's an agitator. We're part of the crowd and he's in front of the crowd agitating the crowd, my friend this is our life apart from Christ. It's dead and it's dominated by the world and the devil and our flesh. Paul goes on to describe our conduct. It's not only fashioned after the world ideals and accepted standards under rebellion against God, and it's not only conducted by the agitation of the evil one as we've said, we can send all by ourselves. The crowd doesn't need to produce it and the devil doesn't need to trigger it. It comes from within because according to Paul, we once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh of the mind. The flesh is our fallen human nature and inside of us there's a bias toward sin. We go astray like sheep, right?

Isaiah 56. There are desires within us that are disordered, I'd say the will of God, and as we expressed them and follow them, we do it in rebellion against God. There's this principle of sin. The Bible calls the flesh and it marks us and it mass us with disorder and disobedience. The power of sin in our lives is overpowering. My friend you will sin because you are a sinner and that power is overpowering. Those desires are strong and they take root in our lives early on and we fulfill them. That's why Sean Lucas in a booklet called what is grace said, we are not free, not to sin, we are not free, not the sin. We will fulfill the desires of our flesh which rises up against God, wasn't a woody Allen, the Hollywood actor and director who offered this tour excuse in 1992 for leaving his longtime lover and running off with her daughter.

Remember what he said the heart once what the heart wants. There's no logic to these things. You might meet someone fall in love and that's that, but there is a logic to these things. The hard pursues that which is forbidden because the hardest deceitful, and desperately wicked and what the heart wants is not what God wants, not what pleases him. The human condition is one marked by death and one marked by domination of sin, and there are three contributing factors. The world, the devil and our flesh, and it leads us to this thought were not only dead. We're not only dominated, we're doomed. That is until God makes us alive. Hallelujah. But until then, apart from Christ, the text tells us because of all of that, we're under the condemnation of God. I know that's not a fond or favorite doctrine today, but Jesus spoke more about hail than he did about having.

You talked about a place of darkness. He talked about a place of unending agony and torment. It's real, and people go there who are not made alive in Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us here, look, not only are we children are sons of disobedience we're children have wrath, we're vessels of wrath were the target for God's destructive power. Let me tell you this about God's wrath. It's not petulant and it's not moody and it's not temperamental, God's wrath is his settled and just and holy and perfect hostility towards your sin and my sin as we set ourselves up against his rule. He's a good holy and Donna's judge, and he must've judge our sin and he will judge our sin. And as old preacher say, he'll either judge it in us, or he'll have judged it in Christ than if you haven't come to Christ. He'll judge it in you, if you've come to Christ thing, you've no condemnation because he's judged it in him.

But the dominically sort of God's wrath hangs over our heads. Let's move on the nature of grace, the nature of grace. Verses 4-9 Paul nine moves from pessimism about man to optimism about God. Love this little free is in verse four, but God, I mean the whole thing transitions on that free is so there's a turn of events. We're now moving towards good news. And the good news is the good news, because we have now understand the bad use apart from the grace of God we're dead, dominated and doomed. But God who is rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, has me at us live.

This is the nature of God's grace. I love what Martin Lloyd Jones says, the quarter McGinn about God, he says these two words in and of themselves in a sense, contend the whole gospel. See Paul interjects. Paul puts in here this free but God because it is God who intervenes to remedy man's condition of death, domination and damnation, but God, and let's think about what God has sought to do and what God does do through his grace, in saving people who are dead dominated, and doomed. Three things about God's grace of salvation. Number one, it is caused by God. God's the reason anyone of us received not ourselves, look on at verse 8 it for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of God. If you moved from death to life, if you moved from a life dominated by sin to one that's taking root and holiness, if you move out from under the Damocles sword of God's wrath and look forward to have him with God forever, you need to know you didn't do it.

You had no part in it, but God who is rich in mercy and God's love brings us to the wonderful place. Look at the text that mentions mercy. It mentions kindness, it mentions love, and verses four through seven. It's because of God's great love for us. God's rich mercy on us and God's loving kindness towards us that we're saved. It's because of his great love because that's the cause. That's the reason for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have ever lasting life. This is a gift. This isn't a human work. This is a divine work. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Jonah 2:9, grace is one sided. The coach, CLTS again, who we quoted in our introduction, speaking of God's grace, I love this grace's God's white hot love for you, amazing, and his existence is standing in its expression, absorbing and it's excellency, grace is God loving you so much.

He exalts himself by humbling himself to exalt you even when you were on lovely and a rebellious creature deserving of his wrath. Cats that little kind of play on words, God said, to Exalt himself by humbling himself that we might be exulted. That's Philippians 2:5-11. That's the incarnation. That's the death. That's the barrier. That's the resurrection. That's the Exaltation of Jesus Christ. God humbled himself, Came through his son in incarnated flesh, died on a cross for our sin, broke the back of death and resurrection. Christ has been exalted. His work is to be declared finished and fabulous and full, and because God is humbled himself, he can exalt us by His grace and an exalting us and saving us. He exalts himself because according to verse seven, those who he saved he's going to put on display for ages to come as an expression of the riches of his grace caused by God my friend.

Grace is one sided. Oh, you can do like the man and Jesus story is come to the foot of the cross, beat your breast, thump your chest, acknowledge your sin and say, Oh God, be merciful to me a sinner because it's all one sided. It's all grace. It's all a gift that would remind us by the way that there's none to bad to be saved. Some people think they can never be saved because they've can have sinned grievously. I want to tell you this. I think I stole this from Erwin Lutzer. There is more grace in God's heart than there will ever be sin in your life. Beautiful. We are saved according to the riches of his grace, you're poor living, gets all washed up and washed away in the riches of his grace. There are none too bad that they can't be saved.

I want to remind you, give them what we've said. There are none too good that they must not be saved. Some people struggled but so sole idea of grace and they struggled to embrace it, that guilty struggled to embrace it, and those who think they're good struggled to embrace it. They see salvation as a wage, don't they? According to Romans four, it's a wage. They do something for God and does something for them. You work for your employee. It will give you something on Friday hopefully, but grace is a gift. Salvation is not by wages. It's a gift. It's free, it's undeserved. It's all one sided and that's why there are some who think they're too bad to be it, but on the other end of that, there are some people who think they're too good to be saved they don't need to be saved.

We're going back to what we said. Unless you understand the bad news, you'll never understand the good news, and if you perceive yourself to be better than you are, then you'll not perceive grace to be necessary as it is Jesus warns about that doesn't even talk to about, hey, I didn't come to save the righteous, I come to save the sick. Those who acknowledge they have a problem. Listen, religion puts an end to religion and puts it out of business because you're not saved by works. You're not saved by anything you do for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It's not works lest any man should boast. We are saved of the day because we are his workmanship in Christ Jesus. It's not only caused by God. Number two, it's connected to Christ to have kinda talked about this throughout, but I think it's important to realize that when we talk about the grace of God, I want you to understand fundamentally we're not talking about an attribute in God, we're not talking about a disposition of God's

heart and mind fundamentally, when the New Testament speaks about grace, it's speaking about a person.

That's why Titus 2:11, such a pivotal verse for the grace of God has appeared. Now God is gracious, that is an attribute and a disposition of his nature, but that grace has acted that grace has appeared, in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who according to John 1:14-17, it was full of grace and full of truth. So grace is more than a disposition within God. It's inactive by God. When God wonderfully demonstrated his grace and the mercy of Christ and the Ministry of Christ his incarnation, send his life death on a cross resurrection. That's why a second Corinthians 13:14 says what? It talks about the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you realize the Bible almost ends with that phrase. In revelation 22:21, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a person, so salvation is caused by God's grace, kindness, mercy, and love. It's all one sided and it's connected to what God did in Christ.

Just notice these freezes are too deep for us to expand in any broad manner this morning, but notice the phrase verse five, made alive with Christ. Notice the phrase verse six, raised up and seated in Christ. Notice the phrase verse 10 created in Christ. There is no real life apart from life connected to Christ. That's Paul's point. That's why John says it starkly, he who has the son has life and he who has not the son does not have life, but the wrath of God abides on him. John 3:36. See apart from Jesus Christ, we run the in dead dominated by our sin and doomed to go to hell. That's the result of being an Adam, Adam sinned, the sin entered the world and death there by and all have sinned and the wages of sin is death. We're in trouble because of Adam. That's why we need to be created in Christ.

We need an experience and an encounter with Jesus Christ that will change our destiny, our destiny in is death, but in Christ it's life. Romans five and Romans six. Let me put it like this because we gotta move on everything Jesus did kinds for everyone who is joined to him by faith, those little freezes in Christ with Christ. When you and I connect our life with Christ through faith, upon repentance, everything Jesus did kinds for everyone joined to him. God raised him up. God will raise us up. God brought him from death to life. God will bring us from death to life. God has exalted him, seated him at his right hand. God someday will exalt us and our new destiny will be heaven, the movement of Christ from death to life, from Earth to heaven is the journey of the life lived in union with Jesus.

That's the point of Paul in Ephesians 2:4-9. Now, let me illustrate it this way and move on. I like what Tony Meredith says in his commentary on Ephesians. He says this, we sync our phones with our computers in order to transfer the music on our computer to our phone. Well, we are sync with Christ and what God did for Christ he did at the same time for believers, see the life that synced with Christ, the life that's connected to Christ, the life that's attached to Christ, the life that's lived under Christ is a life synced with Christ and just as God raised him, God will raise us just as God exalted him. God will exalt us because of him. So important that you have the son because the life unconnected to Jesus Christ as a life without life brings us to the final thought under this thought caused by God, connected to Christ, conditioned to by faith.

Here we're speaking about the nature of grace, God's Saving Act in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace has been revealed in Christ, appeared in Christ, but it's to be received by faith. Scroll down to verse 8, how were they made alive, how were they brought to an exalted position in Jesus Christ, word by God throughout the ages to come will display his grace in their lives. Well, they were saved through faith. Verse 8, through fifth, we cannot earn God's grace. We kinda merit God's favor, but we can receive God's grace by faith. Because if I might put it like this, if God's salvation in Christ is a gift, according to verse 8, it is a

gift. Then faith is the hand that receives the gift. Faith is the hand that receives the gift and makes the gift there's. For as many as received him to them giving me the power to become the sons of God.

John 1:12-13. We've got to trust the Lord Jesus if we're going to be saved because when we trust the Lord Jesus, we sink our lives to him. All that God did in him and for him and for us through him becomes ours. So we have got to entrust our lives to Jesus because that's what trust is. Trust is interest. If you trust something, you trust someone you and trust yourself to them. Doesn't Paul say that in his letter to Timothy, I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed or entrusted to him against that day. It's a banking term. You might believe a bank is good, but I won't believe that you believe the bank is good until you entrust your money to it, and that's what trust is. It's interesting and my friend. You've got to trust your life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have to give your life over to him and give the full width of your conviction and your confidence over to him. In fact, this was put on display in the life of John Patton, the missionary to [inaudible 00:43:40]. He was translating God's word for the tribes that were there kind of ballistic by the way, and he didn't have a word for trust or belief or faith. He was sitting on his desk studying. When a tribal leader comes in and starts talking to John Paton and John Paton gets an idea. He gets up off his seat, stands on his feet behind this desk, and then he sits back down on a seat and he can have interests himself to the seat once again, and he said to them on what did I just do? And he used the word in their language that conveyed the idea of leaning your whole wait on something and Patent took that word and said, that's what trust is.

It's a leaning your whole weight on Jesus, putting your whole conviction on your confidence in and what he did by God's grace. The time's gone, but I've got to squeeze a couple of things in. Let me illustrate. Look, this stool behind this piano. Now, there's three elements to biblical faith, There's content, ascent and consent. Content begins with knowledge. You can't give yourself to something you know nothing about, so if you're gonna trust somebody need to know about it, and so we need to know about the gospel. What did God do? Who is Jesus Christ? What's the cross all about, the Gospel is presented at that point. We have content. Our mind has knowledge, but we've got to have a second thing. Then you've got to have ascent. You've got to begin to be convinced by those facts that they are true, and then there has to be consent.

We actually give yourself to them and so it would be like me looking at this stool behind this piano and I have content. It looks pretty sturdy. It's got four legs. I've seen someone sit on it and the recent past, so I've got all that information. That's interesting, but I've got to move on. I start to believe that is the case. This is a strong stool. I have watched people sit on it in and it's held them up, but then I've got to do what I've actually got to sit on the stool and lean my whole weight on it. That's consent. That's the mind, the heart, and in the well giving oneself to that which you entrust yourself to. My friend that salvation and you'll never be saved until you do it. You'll never get to heaven. You'll never know God's grace. You'll never know God's mercy until you have fully entrusted your hope for heaven, your desire for forgiveness, your wish for life.

You'll never have any of that until you entrust yourself to Jesus Christ. The last thought, very short, but we're not gonna skip it. It's what I call the narrative of grace. It's verse 10. Notice how Paul describes their experience of salvation and God's grace. Verse 10, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. The word workmanship and trusting is a Greek term for poem. It's an artist's term. It speaks of a literary work, Paul has said that each life touched by God's grace as a life touched by the artistry of God. We are his poem. He's offering something beautiful in our lives. That's the point I want

to make as we close the narrative of grace. The thing about this poem, the thing about this literary work, and you don't want to miss this, it's a never ending story. It's a never ending story. There's never a final chapter written to this story.

Look at the text it started before time began and it will continue beyond time and throughout eternity. Look at verse 10. God's plan for us started beforehand. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that speaks of our being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Ephesians one, it speaks about our election. It speaks about God's plans and purposes for us before we were born, then God saves us in time, and then we read in verse seven, something very beautiful. Then in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Jesus Christ. Get this before time God plans to save us by his grace. In time, he brings us to the faith in Jesus Christ. By his grace, beyond time, again in the ages to come, he will continue to give us his grace.

In fact, this word show means exhibit. Don't miss this. Why? I had to steal the time to do it. You and I are God's exhibition hall, we're his exhibition hall and he loves to display his grace in us and he's going to do it for ages to come. That's why John 1:16 of his fullness, we have received grace upon grace. My friend God has only started to bless you. We're going to be a display cabinet for God's saving grace for all of eternity, just keeps going and going and going. That's why we have referenced toughened way. The story by Spurgeon of a called Roldan Hill, who was given a princely sum of money for a young minister in a slum area in London, enrolled in hell, was told to distribute this to the young modernity, decided to do it piecemeal rather than give them one whole lump sum.

He didn't think that would be good for him, and so he took this large donation and he split it up and he sent some of it one week in an envelope and he sent some more of it the next week in an envelope and in all the envelopes, he would write these words more to follow, more to follow. Spurgeon speaking of that said, every blessing that comes from God is sent with the same message, more to follow. I forgive you your sins, but there's more to follow. I justify you in the righteousness of Christ. There's more to follow, adopt you into the family, but there's more to follow. I educate you for heaven, but there's more to follow. I give you grace upon grace, but there's more to follow. I have helped you even to all the age, but there's more to follow. I will uphold you in the art of your death and then passing into the world of the spirit.

You'll find that my mercy and my grace has more to follow. It's beautiful. That's what God's going to do. He has saved us that he might show the exceeding riches of his grace for ages to come. Wow. That's why you got to get off the forgiveness portrait and start looking at the gallery of grace. Now it starts with saving grace, but there's more to follow.

Let's pray, let's just go straight to the table and give thanks for these elements that remind us of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Father, we pause to tick in a fresh to remind ourselves and you have the exceeding riches of your grace because although Christ was rich yet for our sake, he became poor. That we through his poverty might be made rich with thank you we are rich and we're getting the first checker too, but there's more to follow.

It's endless. It's going to spawn ages to come and all of it's free. It's all one sided. It's all marvelous. It's all amazing, but as we come to this table, we realized free to us, but not free to you. You had to deliver up your son and all of this has been bought at a price and the blood of Jesus Christ, his broken body. And so as we're amazed by grace, we're amazed by the grace giver, and we tick these emblems and give

thanks today for all of your love and mercy and kindness toward us. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.