

1-22-26

## **“Grace Alone: Not Earned, But Given”**

### **Opening Prayer:**

**Heavenly Father,  
We come before You humbly, knowing that we cannot earn Your love, nor do we deserve Your mercy. We ask now that Your Holy Spirit would open our hearts and minds to Your Word. Strip away confusion, fear, and pride, and help us see clearly the finished work of Jesus Christ. May this message bring freedom, assurance, repentance, and deep gratitude for Your grace. We ask this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.**

### **Introduction: Two Ways to Approach God**

There are only two religious systems in the world:

1. Man reaching up to God through effort, morality, ritual, and works.
2. God reaching down to man through grace, mercy, and sacrifice.

Every false religion is built on earning God's favor.

Christianity alone declares: "It is finished."

John 19:30 (NIV):

**John 19:30 NIV**

**When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

Yet many believers live as if it is not finished, still trying to earn what God has already given.

## **I. The Human Desire to Earn God's Love (Works-Based Religion)**

From the very beginning, humanity has tried to cover sin with effort.

Genesis 3:7 (NIV):

### **Genesis 3:7 NIV**

**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**

Adam and Eve tried to fix sin with human effort. God rejected their covering and provided His own...through sacrifice.

## **Historical Example: The Law of Moses**

The Law was never given to save anyone.

Romans 3:20 (NIV):

### **Romans 3:20 NIV**

**Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.**

The Law functioned as:

- .A mirror to show sin
- .A tutor to lead us to Christ

Galatians 3:24 (NIV):

**Galatians 3:24 NIV**

**So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.**

Religious System of Works:

In Jesus' day, the Pharisees believed:

- .Obedience earned favor
- .Ritual produced righteousness
- .Performance secured salvation

Jesus strongly rebuked this thinking.

Matthew 23:27–28 (NIV):

## **Matthew 23:27-28 NIV**

**"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. [28] In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."**

Works can clean the outside.

Only grace can change the heart.

## **II. Salvation Is a Free Gift of Grace**

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NIV):

## **Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV**

**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast.**

Grace means:

- .You did not earn it
- .You cannot keep it by effort
- .You cannot lose it by failure

Romans 5:8 (NIV):

## **Romans 5:8 NIV**

**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Grace does not wait for improvement.  
Grace arrives in our brokenness.

Once for All Sacrifice:

Hebrews 10:10 (NIV):

**Hebrews 10:10 NIV**

**And by that will, we have been made  
holy through the sacrifice of the body of  
Jesus Christ once for all.**

**Hebrews 10:14 NIV**

**For by one sacrifice he has made perfect  
forever those who are being made holy.**

- .One sacrifice
- .One time
- .For all believers
- .Past, present, and future

There is no more payment required.

### **III. Understanding Hebrews 10:26 – Willful Sin Explained:**

Hebrews 10:26 (NIV):

#### **Hebrews 10:26 NIV**

**If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,**

This verse has frightened many sincere believers...but fear was not the author's intention.

## Historical Context of Hebrews:

The letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish believers who:

- .Had heard the gospel
- .Understood Christ's sacrifice
- .Were tempted to return to temple sacrifices

They were not struggling believers....they were turning away from Christ back to the Law.

Hebrews 10:1 (NIV):

**Hebrews 10:1 NIV**

**The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.**

Lets look again:

***“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves.”***

What “Willful Sin” Means in Context:

“Willful sin” here does **not** mean:

- .A believer struggling with temptation
- .A Christian who repents and fails again
- .A moment of weakness or relapse

It does mean:

- .A conscious rejection of Jesus Christ
- .Returning to works-based atonement
- .Treating Christ’s blood as insufficient

Hebrews 10:29 (NIV):

## **Hebrews 10:29 NIV**

**How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?**

The sin is apostasy, not weakness.

In Christian teaching, the sin is apostasy, not weakness. God understands human weakness...our doubts, fears, and moments of failure...and He responds to them with mercy and grace. Scripture repeatedly shows God restoring those who stumble but continue to seek Him, such as Peter, who denied Jesus yet repented and was forgiven. Apostasy, however, is

different. It is a deliberate and persistent turning away from Christ after knowing the truth, a willful rejection of faith rather than a struggle within it. Weakness cries out for God's help; apostasy refuses it. Therefore, the danger Scripture warns against is not struggling faith, but abandoned faith.

Why "No Sacrifice Is Left":

Because:

- .Jesus is the final sacrifice
- .The temple sacrifices are obsolete
- .There is no alternative way to be saved

Acts 4:12 (NIV):

**Acts 4:12 NIV**

**Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."**

Rejecting Christ leaves no other sacrifice.

#### **IV. Grace Does Not Promote Sin**

Romans 6:1–2 (NIV):

##### **Romans 6:1-2 NIV**

**What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? [2] By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?**

Grace does not excuse sin...it transforms the heart.

Titus 2:11–12 (NIV):

## **Titus 2:11-12 NIV**

**For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. [12] It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,**

We obey:

- .Not to be saved
- .But because we are saved

Works are the fruit, not the root.

James 2:17 (NIV):

## **James 2:17 NIV**

**In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

## V. Practical Comparison: Works vs Grace

### Works-Based Faith Says:

- .“I hope I’ve done enough”
- .“God loves me more when I do better”
- .“I must keep earning forgiveness”

### Grace-Based Faith Says:

- .“Jesus has done enough”
- .“I obey because I’m loved”
- .“I rest in His finished work”

Romans 8:1 (NIV):

**Romans 8:1 NIV**

**Therefore, there is now no  
condemnation for those who are in  
Christ Jesus,**

Condemnation drives fear.  
Grace produces worship.

## VI. Assurance for the True Believer

John 10:28–29 (NIV):

### **John 10:28-29 NIV**

**I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.**

### **Philippians 1:6 NIV**

**being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**

You are not holding onto God.  
God is holding onto you.

## **Conclusion: Rest in Grace**

Religion says: “Do.”

Grace says: “**Done.**”

The cross declares:

- .Your debt is paid
- .Your sin is forgiven
- .Your salvation is secure

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV):

**Hebrews 12:2 NIV fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Stop striving.  
Start trusting.  
Live from grace...not for it.

It is all about JESUS!

## **Closing Prayer:**

**Father God,  
Thank You for Your amazing grace.  
Forgive us for the times we have tried to  
earn what You freely gave. Help us rest  
in the finished work of our Lord, Jesus  
Christ. Guard our hearts from legalism,  
fear, and condemnation. Teach us to  
walk in obedience out of love, not  
obligation. May our lives reflect  
gratitude, humility, and worship. We  
place all our hope in Jesus alone. In  
Jesus name we pray. Amen.**