

BY GRACE ALONE

Ephesians 2:1-9

Romans 6:1-4

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- How do you define and explain grace?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to give grace? What about receiving it? Why?

What is grace? For many of us grace is part of our common vocabulary. We use the term frequently when talking about or sharing our Christian faith. But if we aren't careful, it can be easy to forget the profound nature of this awesome gift. *Sola Gratia* or "salvation by grace alone" is a primary theme of the Protestant Reformation, but this idea didn't originate there. The Apostle Paul preached and taught about the radical concept of "salvation by grace alone" in his letters to the early Church. In fact, it was Paul's letters that inspired and convinced Martin Luther. Studying Paul's writings gives us the opportunity to remember and humbly claim this deep truth of "salvation by grace alone" once again. It also gives us cause to pause and reflect on our lives, evaluate whether or not our words and actions show we've taken "salvation by grace alone" to heart.

Listen: [*By Grace Alone*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Why do you think we are tempted to add our own good works to grace in order to achieve our salvation? As an example, host Scott Hoezee notes the heretical quip "God did his best, you do the rest." Why do you think such thinking persists and what might we need to change to help us recognize and affirm that we believe in salvation by grace alone?
- Read Romans 6:1-4, reflect on it, and then write it down in your own words. If salvation is by grace alone, why do we live morally?
- Where in your life do you see evidence of a life transformed by grace? Where do you still struggle with a desire to sin and need God's continued grace to transform you?
- Read and reflect on this quote from N.T. Wright's reflection on Ephesians 2:8-10 in his commentary *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*: "Often, today, people don't believe there's much wrong with the human race, and with themselves in particular. As a result, they don't see very much need for God's grace. Perhaps, they think, God might help me out in a tight corner here or there, but basically I can get along fine without him. All that God then has to offer, it seems, is a kind of spiritual enhancement of ordinary life, a gentle enrichment of what's already there rather than a radical rescue from imminent disaster" (p22). Where have you encountered evidence of this underlying belief about God and his relationship with humanity?

Related Passages

- **Galatians 2:19-21**
- **John 3:16-17**
- **Galatians 5**

Conclusion

Write a letter to God. Include any emotions, reactions, questions, or thoughts that were stirred in you by the above reflections. Let this letter be part of an ongoing conversation with God. Pull it out every couple of days throughout the week and ask yourself: What is God revealing to you in your conversations? Where do you continue to see and feel the effects of God's gift of salvation by grace in your life?

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/by-grace-alone>

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