

## Introduction

- The grace of God is one of the primary themes of Scripture and has always be recognized as necessary for salvation. It was the nature of this grace (how it is received and to what degree) which came to be greatly debated by the Roman Catholic Church and the reformers.

The reformers rejected the Roman Catholic understanding of God's grace and declared that justification was accomplished by the work of Christ alone, offered to mankind by God's grace alone, to be received by faith alone.

## Understanding *Sola Gratia*

**Sola Gratia is the recognition that God does not owe sinful mankind anything and that His choice to justify the unrighteous by simple faith was solely because it \_\_\_\_\_ Him to do so.**

- This view draws an intentional contrast with the Roman Catholic view which understood grace to be imparted continually throughout the life of a believer rather than received in full upon conversion.

*"If any one saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favour of God; let him be anathema."* - The Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon XI

## **What is meant by *grace*?**

**"grace"—*χάρις* (*charis*)**—Referring to that which affords joy, pleasure, or delight. Theologically, it refers to the good will, loving-kindness, or favor of God extended to mankind in spite of our sin.

**Luke 1:30**—And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

**Rom. 5:15**—But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

## **Theological Basis**

1. **The \_\_\_\_\_ of God:** God in no way constrained by anyone other than Himself and does as He wishes.

**Ps. 115:3**—Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

➔ **In terms of our salvation, this means that God was under no \_\_\_\_\_ to provide a way of salvation for sinners.**

2. **The \_\_\_\_\_ of God:** God always acts in accordance with what is good and right and is Himself the standard by which all things are judged as truly good or righteous.

**Deut. 32:4**—'The Rock,' his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

➔ **In terms of our salvation, this means that God must \_\_\_\_\_ sinners.**

**Isa. 13:11**—Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.

3. **The \_\_\_\_\_ of God:** The Bible states that God "is" love, describing the love between the members of the Godhead. God also, as Creator, God cares for the work of His hands and purposes to redeem it for His glory.

**Ps. 86:15**—But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

**John 3:16**—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

➔ **In terms of our salvation, this means that God freely and \_\_\_\_\_ chose to provide a means by which we could be restored in our relationship to Him.**

## Ephesians 2:1-10

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

### **Important Observations**

- **Our spiritual condition apart from Christ was far worse than we imagined. (2:1-3)**

*We were spiritually \_\_\_\_\_.*

*We were followers of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*We were enslaved to the passions of our \_\_\_\_\_.*

*We were deserving of God's \_\_\_\_\_.*

- **God's work on our behalf was far greater than we deserved. (2:4-10)**

### Two Perspectives on our Salvation

#### 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (2:4-7)

**How are we saved? →** *We are \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ*

1. We are given spiritual life (2:5)

2. We are declared righteous (2:6)

**Why are we saved? →** *For God's eternal glory in the display of His \_\_\_\_\_ (2:7)*

#### 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (2:8-10)

**How are we saved? →** *We respond in \_\_\_\_\_ to God's revelation of Himself.*

1. No aspect of our salvation is initiated by us (2:8)

2. We can take no credit for our salvation (2:9)

**Why are we saved? →** *So that we might evidence our salvation through \_\_\_\_\_ (2:10)*

### Questions for reflection:

Am I prone more towards arrogance or discouragement in seeking to accept God's grace?

How is *sola gratia* related to the "good news" of the Gospel?

How should *sola gratia* affect my interactions with others?