

# The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

A Weekly Publication of the Christians Meeting at  
Westlake church of Christ, 2291 Highway Z, Wentzville, Missouri 63385

Website: [westlakechurchofchrist.org](http://westlakechurchofchrist.org)

Sunday: AM Bible Study – 9:30 a.m., AM Worship – 10:30 a.m., PM Worship – 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday: PM Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

*Dedicated to the Proclamation of the Truth in the Spirit of Love (Ephesians 4:15)*

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Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30

## Saved by Grace

### Part 1

*by Roger Shouse*

What a wonderful expression, “saved by grace.” The songwriter, John Newton, penned, “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound.” Without the grace of God none of us would ever see heaven. But what is grace? What is meant by “saved by grace?”

In the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul explores the theme of salvation by grace. Three times in this chapter the word “grace” is used:

- Verse 5 “*by grace* you have been saved”
- Verse 7 “He might show the surpassing riches of His *grace* in kindness toward us”
- Verse 8 “For *by grace* you have been saved through faith”

### *Just what is grace?*

A common definition of grace is “unmerited favor.” Grace is an act of kindness that is motivated by love. Grace is not forced. Grace is not something that is expected, deserved or earned. Grace is never “owed” to a person. Paul would claim in Ephesians 2:8, “it is the gift of God.” Actually, grace doesn’t make sense. Grace is not fair or just. We understand the statement, “If you do the crime, you do the time.” We are nice to those who are nice to us. We give gifts to those who are our friends. Grace is more than that. In Romans 5:8 Paul wrote, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God did not wait until we got better to send Jesus. Christ came “while we were yet sinners.” At the worst possible time, “while we were yet sinners” Jesus came. Grace is not getting off on good behavior; grace is getting off on the worst behavior.

In Ephesians two, Paul paints a bleak picture of our spiritual condition before God extended his grace to us. The apostle says: “you were dead in your trespasses and sin” (v. 1); you “walked according to the prince of the power of the air” (v. 2); you “lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the

desires of the flesh” (v. 3). God was ready to save us. We were a pitiful people. We were selfish, impure, evil, wrong, and going the opposite way of the Lord. If our spiritual condition was compared to a car, we were junk. If we were compared to a house, it would be condemned. God didn’t save us because we were “good.” We weren’t. No person will ever be able to say, “I am worthy of heaven.” Paul expressed this in Ephesians 2:9; “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” You cannot go to church services enough times to deserve heaven. Preaching the gospel is not a free ticket into heaven. Being good is simply not good enough. In a vivid parable, Jesus reveals to us the hopelessness of sin in Matthew 18:23-27. Here a man owed 10,000 talents. He had no way of paying. His wife and children were locked into prison until he could repay. How much did he owe? A common laborer made a denarii a day. It took 600 denarii to make one talent. In other words, it took two years of work to make one talent. This man owed 10,000 talents, or 20,000 years of work. Figure what you make a year. Multiply that by 20,000. Imagine having to pay that back! That is what sin is. A debt we can never repay. Yet in this wonderful parable, the master felt compassion and forgave him the debt. The master took a major loss. The master received nothing back. The master did not have to do this. This is exactly what God has done to each of us. We are saved by the grace of God.

The Bible supplies us with many wonderful examples of grace. In one of the Lord’s parables, found in Matthew 21:33-40, Jesus tells the story of the owner of a vineyard. Servant after servant is abused by the vine-growers. The owner sends his son, thinking that they will respect him. The vine-growers beat and kill the son. Jesus asks: “Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” This is much more than just a parable. This story was lived out in Christ’s life. God sent his servants, the prophets. They were abused. God sent his son. He was beaten and killed. What did God do? He forgave. His mercy extended grace.

The father’s acceptance of the broken prodigal is another illustration of grace (Luke 15:15-32). With no threats, “I told you so,” lectures, or probation, the prodigal was restored as a son of honor. Grace elevates. Grace never shames. Grace gives a second chance. Did the prodigal do anything to deserve this kindness? No. What the father did just did not make sense. It was not fair or just. This is why the elder brother got so angry. It wasn’t right. Grace isn’t. The father should not have been so kind to the rebellious boy. And that is the whole point about grace. If God treated us according to what is right, fair and just, we would all be lost.

Returning to Ephesians two, Paul said, “God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us” (v. 4).

- Made us alive together with Christ (v. 5)
- Raised us up with him (v. 6)
- Seated us with him in the heavenly places (v. 6b)

*to be continued*

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## **News and Notes:**

**Group 4 will meet at Monte Joplin’s house on Monday, October 28 at 7 p.m.**

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”- James 5:16*