

## Faith, a Free Gift to All

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“By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). By grace are ye saved, because it is the grace that is the favor of God that brings salvation. That favor being given freely and without measure to every one of us, bringing salvation to all, so the salvation of God is free to all men. To every one of us it is given freely, without measure and without reserve.

Through all this be true, the Lord will never compel any man to take it. God has made man free, too, and therefore every man is absolutely free to accept this salvation or to reject it, as he chooses. God does not want and will not have any unwilling service. And therefore it is that “by grace are ye saved *through faith*.” Faith is for us to exercise. Therefore it is written: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Jos. 24:15). “*Whosoever will* let him take the water of life *freely*” (Rev. 22:17). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

And God has given the faith too. For did we not read above that “by grace are ye saved through faith; and *that not of yourselves*; it is *the gift of God*”? And is it not written in another place, “Looking unto Jesus *the author* and the finisher of *our faith*” (Heb. 12:2)? And yet again: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17)? Jesus Christ is the Author of faith; the word of God is the channel through which it comes; and God gave both Jesus and the word, —or rather, in giving Jesus he gave the word, and in giving the word he gave Jesus, —so that in every sense, faith is the gift of God.

And he has given faith to every man. For it is written: “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach” (Rom. 10:6-8). “Think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3). Thus God has put faith into the mouth and into the heart of every man.

Again: the word of God is the means, the channel, of faith; for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” And all, in at least two ways, have heard the word of God: for “that which may be known of God is manifest in [margin, “to”] them; for God hath showed it unto them” (Rom. 1:19). Both text and margin are true; for that which may be known of God is manifest both *to* men and *in* men.

It is manifest *to* men in the things that are made, in the visible creation. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood *by the things that are made*, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without

excuse" (Rom. 1:20). And through these things that are made, men hear the word of God, through the hearing of which comes *faith*. That this may clearly be seen, turn to the tenth chapter of Romans and study carefully verses 12-18. There it is said: "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Then come the questions: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Then comes the statement: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." But did they not all *hear* the gospel? —Assuredly they did, for no one is held responsible for not obeying the gospel who has not heard the gospel. The above questions show that. So, then, they have all heard the gospel, though all have not obeyed it. And so this, too, is written: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:12-18).

Now these last words are quoted from the nineteenth psalm, where it is telling that: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world*" (Ps. 19:1-4). These last words are the very ones that are quoted in Rom. 10:18, and notice that they are quoted there, not only to show that all men have heard the word of God, but to show that they have heard the very gospel itself. Therefore it is plain by the word of God that the speech that the heavens utter day by day is the word of God, and the knowledge which night unto night they show is the knowledge of God. And this is how that which may be known of God is manifest to all men, for God has thus showed it to them. And as it was by *the word of the Lord* that the heavens were made (Ps. 33:6), so through the heavens and all things that are made, this word of God is speaking to men, declaring the creative power and glory of God. Thus all men hear the word of God, and by the hearing of the word comes faith, so that by this means God has given faith to all.

And that which may be known of God is manifest *in* them also, as certainly as it is manifest to them, and this too by the word of God. In Rom. 7:14-24 there is written the experience of every man that comes into the world and to the age of knowledge and accountability, —that experience in which he *knows* better than he *does*. He wants to do good, but does evil instead. He hates the evil, yet does it. He would do good, but evil is present with him and keeps him from doing the good that he would. There is a constant warfare in which he is defeated and taken captive and held in bondage. Now whence comes this experience? What is the cause of this warfare? Ah! The word of God created it.

When man chose Satan for his lord and master, and sinned, he was entirely overwhelmed in the evil, and had not a shadow of desire for good; his mind was fully content with evil and that alone. But God said to Satan: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." This putting enmity between man and Satan has broken up man's contentment with evil, and now he hates it. In the hatred of evil there is also created a desire for the good. And as good is found only in

God, and as Christ is the revelation of God, this desire for good is the desire for Christ. And so the prophecy of the coming of Christ to the world expressed it thus: "The desire of all nations shall come" (Hag. 2:7). This desire for the good that is in the experience of every man is the desire for Christ, and this desire will never be satisfied in any single soul till he finds Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

Thus in creating enmity between man and Satan, God opens to man the door of faith, that he may find Jesus Christ and in him the fullness of the salvation of the eternal God. And so it is written: John "came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that *all men* through him might *believe* . . . . That was the true light, which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world*" (John 1:7, 9). Thus God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. Thus God has put faith into the mouth and into the heart of every man. And every man who will exercise the measure of faith which he has, that faith will "grow exceedingly" (2 Thess. 1:3), and will work in him the fullness of the salvation of God.

And so "unto every *one* of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" and this "grace of God brings salvation to all men;" and this grace, this blessed favor of God, has opened the door of faith to all men, giving them power to choose and ability to receive the fullness of the salvation which the abundance of grace has so freely given. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed" (Rom. 4:16). And therefore again, and finally, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8)

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or *who hath first given to him*, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33).