

## Confident Living

If I were to ask you, “Are you saved?” How would you respond? If you were to die right now, what would happen to you? Do you know? Are you sure? Or are you in doubt because you are not sure you’ve been good enough? That is what this class is all about. We want you to be sure and have a good reason for your assurance.

I John 4:19 states “We love because He first loved us.” This assuring passage defines the true nature of our heavenly Father. This unconditional love for all of His created souls is further demonstrated in Romans 5:8, “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Regardless of how loud these passages ring from the Bible, Christians and those seeking God, often develop the mindset that God is distant and indifferent. Undoubtedly, there are many reasons we fall into this trap. One possible reason is because this belief serves as a defense mechanism to keep God at arm’s length. Another reason is we just don’t believe we can ever be good enough for God. This second reason is what has driven us to seek the true meaning of grace.

Too often we have spoken to lifelong Christians who in their later years have approached their death with doubt about their eternal destination. Many of these have said the same thing, “I just hope I’ve been good enough to go to heaven.” 1 John 5:13 plainly teaches that God wants us to know we have eternal life. He never intended for us to live with the baggage of doubt. We can only unload this baggage through a biblical understanding of how we are truly saved.

The truth of the bible is that Jesus Christ, being obedient to the will of the Father, gave Himself as a propitiation for our sins on the cross and that all who believe shall be saved. This salvation is only possible by the grace of God through the gift of Jesus Christ for those who believe (Ephesians 2:8). This basic truth, that we are saved by grace, is often traded for a different gospel of “saved by good works.” If you believe you are going to heaven because your good deeds outweigh your bad or because you have obeyed good enough since becoming a Christian, then you believe in the gospel of salvation by good works, which is not really a gospel at all. It is not good news. This belief leads to emptiness, endless guilt, and, finally, a paralyzing frustration that leaves us with an unfulfilling relationship with God.

Romans 1:16 teaches us that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. We are saved by God’s power and not ours and that is why it is good news. When we believe salvation is based on our power to do more good deeds than bad, we are defining our own righteousness and telling God we don’t trust that He is able to save us. His righteousness demands we are saved by grace. This grace is not only given to forgive our sin, but to make us more like the Christ who forgives us. Through our acceptance of this gift, God’s power over sin and death is eternally demonstrated.

Our prayer is that each of us understands the true purpose of His grace. Grace is not God's way of overlooking our sin. Instead, God perfectly deals with our sin through the embodiment of grace, Jesus Christ. This is the only source of power that will give us the abundant life God wants for all those who believe. God promises Christians who trust in His power to save them by grace will have a life marked with the fruit of the Spirit.

Again Ephesians 2:8 reads "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God". Our prayer is that together we will continue to grow in faith based on the truth of Jesus Christ. Now we ask the question, what is your faith in?