

By Grace Alone

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[0 : 0 0] We'll begin our prayer meeting singing to God's praise from Psalm 89, Psalm 89 from the beginning. God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all.

For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure, thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish sure. I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously, and to my servant, to my loved, to David sworn have I, that I thy seed establish shall forever to remain, and will to generations all thy throne build and maintain.

The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express, and in the congregation of saints thy faithfulness. For who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare, who is like God among the sons of those that mighty are?

Let us sing these verses. Psalm 89 from the beginning. God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall. God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall.

Thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all.

[1 : 5 9] For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure.

Thy faithfulness he made the hands, the will.

God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my heart I shall.

God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my heart I shall.

And where the kara's or steam will never sing, and with my heart I shall win, and with my own unquote. And with my heart I shall in my hands, of my heart I shall let you in the place. Thisbaj'orgians and with my Lord be appears, which is always tidy, and with mouth I shall behold Well, thank God.

[3 : 4 8] Thank God's mercies I will ever watch, I shall obey, and with my heart I shall see You shall be on the way I shall favorite stage for all your world. of thy wonders the heavens shall express and in the congregation of sins thy faithfulness for who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare who is like God among the sons for those that mighty are going to hear the word of God as we have it in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians in chapter 1

Ephesians chapter 1 we can read the whole chapter Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in him in whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ in whom he also trusted after that he heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation in whom also after that he believed he were sealed with that holy spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession and to the praise of his glory wherefore

I also after I heard of you faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints cease not to give thanks for you making mention of you in my prayer that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come and hath put all things unto his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church which is his body the fullness of him that filleth all in all amen and may the lord art his blessing to a reading of his word and to his name be the praise thanks for this we sing to god's praise psalm 3 psalm 3 the whole psalm oh lord how are my foes increased against me many rise many say of my soul for him in god no sucker lies yet thou my shield and glory art the uplifter of mine head i cried and from his holy hill the lord me answer made i laid me down and slept i waked for god sustained me i will not fear though thousands ten set round against me be arise oh lord save me my god for thou my foes hast broke all on the cheekbone and the teeth of wicked men hast broke salvation doth appertain unto the lord alone thy blessing lord forevermore thy people is upon psalm 3 the whole psalm to god's praise oh lord how are my foes increased against me many rise oh lord how are my foes increased against me many rise many say of my soul for him in god no sucker lies yet thou my strength and glory are the uplifter of mine head i cried and from his holy hill the lord me

answer made i laid me down and slept i waked for god's i i will not fear though thou stand set round against me be arise o lord save me my god for thou my foes hast broke all on the cheap bone and the teeth of wicked men hast broke salvation doth appertain unto the lord alone thy blessing lord forever more thy people is upon on like us to turn to the passage that we were reading together the new testament scripture paul's epistle to the ephesians chapter one and we can read again at verse five having predestinated us and to the adoption of children by jesus christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence and so on according to the riches of his grace last prayer meeting

I was with you we suggested that we would do a short series of five sermons on the five solas of the reformation church five solas of the reformation church faith alone grace alone christ alone scripture alone and the glory of god alone these are not in any particular order and I don't think you will find the same order anywhere but you cannot extricate them from each other you cannot separate them they are all interdependent and for that reason the order is not in any way set in stone in fact if you were to investigate what the five solas are and to find out where that kind of terminology emerged or emanated from you you wouldn't really find the headings as such coming collectively in the teaching of the

[16 : 08] Reformation Church but rather you would be able to glean from what the church taught these five things as being essential and these five things standing out as distinguishing what the Reformation Church believed that the scripture taught as opposed to what the perverse church of the 16th century had come to advocate as teaching that was necessary for Christian faith to exist we will find at some point within the teachings of the Bible emphasis falling upon these elements that you can distinguish that you can identify and the insistence that each one of them in turn must be present wherever the

New Testament doctrines of redemption through Christ Jesus exist when the doctrines of redemption are discussed at length all all of these things will be stated at some point they will not be excluded they will be required and the emphasis will fall upon the teaching that you do not need anything alongside your faith in order to be saved you do not need anyone alongside Jesus Christ in order to be saved you don't need to search any document created by man other than the scripture alone in order to establish your saving faith you do not need to believe that what you do should do anything other than glorify

God his glory ultimately we believe when we talk about our own salvation our ultimate end is glory we believe that we will end up in heaven that we will be with the Lord of glory but the glory of which that speaks is the glory that will be his as a consequence of the redemption of the church that bears his name what we're looking at this evening just very briefly is that salvation is all of grace and salvation is by grace alone I was trying to think of where do you begin to explain what is meant by that we're very fortunate in that we've been under the teaching of the

Westminster confession but in particular growing up the shorter catechism and when you think about what we understand by redemption what do we understand by salvation as it is fulfilled or carried out by the Lord Jesus Christ we we begin to examine that doctrine I think at the beginning we have to begin at the beginning when we have when we're going to build upon it and where the shorter catechism invites us to come is to understand that the scripture teaches plainly that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and redemption is first and foremost the redemption of the sinner that has sinned against

God and any and all who have sinned against God need to experience redemption they need to experience salvation and the shorter catechism as you well know describes how sin entered into the world how it entered into the heart of man and the consequences of it our first parents we are told sinned they disobeyed God and because they disobeyed God not only are there consequences for them as sinners but because of the unique relationship that existed between our first parents Adam in particular he was a covenant head he was obligated to obey

[22 : 09] God not only on his own behalf but on behalf of all who were to be his descendants and we understand from the scripture that's where the truths of the catechism come we understand that his sin was a willful sin and his sin was a willing sin he didn't sin against his will he didn't sin we might imagine that the sin that entered into his heart that was the result of the temptation of Satan that Satan is the one who is to pay the brunt of the blame because of Adam's sin no Adam had the capability and the ability and the understanding that he should not disobey God whatever power

Satan possessed he could not make Adam go against his own will but temptation came his way and he succumbed to it and as a result of him succumbing to the temptation he sinned and his sin was a sin against God he understood as far as he was able to understand the consequences of his sin God had told him the day that you preach my commandment the day that you sin the day that you eat of the forbidden fruit will be the day that you die it's always a puzzle to me anyway I wonder about it the extent of the knowledge that Adam possessed about the consequences of his sin yes he understood that God's word would be fulfilled he would fall he would die but he did not have the experience of death to go on he didn't understand what it was to experience spiritual death because he had always lived in perfect harmony with God he was in fellowship with God he had access to

God the blessing of God was his constant portion in life and even though God told him and with the knowledge that he possessed God created him in his image and yet does that mean I can't say for certain does that mean that the understanding that Adam had of the consequences of his sin was the equivalent of God's understanding I don't think we could ever say that Adam although he was in the image of God had the capacity to fully understand eternal death or to fully understand what it meant to be separated from God for all eternity but maybe that's a question you can answer yourselves or find an answer to he was forewarned about the wrath of

God he was forewarned about the death that was to come his way upon disobey not just for himself but for all his posterity we are told it's not just the divines the divines depend on the scripture in order to understand the implications of that Paul writing to the Romans in chapter 5 he tells us plainly by one man's disobedience many were made sinners so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous moreover the law entered that the offence might abound but where sin abounded grace did much more abound that as sin hath reigned unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ the Lord so there in that statement that is given by the apostle Paul the wide ranging effects of sin are brought home to us the fact that there was separation the fact that there was subjugation the fact that there was eternal sorrow is all brought to our attention in the scripture and how dreadful that circumstance was but put alongside it is the gospel promise that there that if it had all stopped there if Adam's sin simply yielded the just condemnation of God and the eternal damnation that he was worthy of receiving and no more then what misery this world would be under but we know from Paul and we know from the rest of the scripture that the promises immediately came to light promises that showed that God had provision and that there was a redeemer if you go to the catechism 20 it tells us there did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery

God having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some to everlasting life did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer and who is that redeemer is the following question the only redeemer of God select is the Lord Jesus Christ who being the eternal son of God became man and so was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever the question is asked and the question is answered the redeemer that is necessary is provided by God and the emphasis falls on this he is the only redeemer there is no other redeemer but he and the grace that is undergirding this the grace that is behind this is the only way by which that redemption comes to light when you think about

[29 : 23] I don't know which one of the commentators were saying about it that when you think about the redemption of man you must remind yourself of this fact that man was just not just redeemed to recover the position that he occupied as God created him which would be the expected understanding that the work of redemption was simply a matter for of God restoring man to his created position of likeness to himself but it goes beyond that because of the one in whom this has taken place it is a redemption that is fulfilled by Christ and because the again you go back to the relationship that Adam had by way of covenant it was a covenant of works and the works covenant that he failed to fulfill was fulfilled by

Christ he didn't just do what he did by reason of another covenant which we will come to but he also fulfilled the works covenant under which Adam was found so that when you're looking at the penalty borne by Christ on the cross we look to him satisfying the curse for sin but he also fulfills the righteousness that was bound up in the obedience that was required of Adam and when he does that I suppose when you read into the covenant the understanding of the covenant that you will not find well

I haven't found it to my satisfaction anyway you will not find evidence to suggest to you that the time that Adam lived in the garden was probationary which is what is suggested by a great many in other words that if he had continued in a sinless relationship with God then the point would be arrived at predetermined by God or not disclosed where God would say well you've satisfied me now and you will now be established permanently in this relationship that you have with me and you will not fall from it and it is a generally held belief not by everybody by any manner of means that this probationary period that

Adam was in was a period in which he sinned and fell but if he had and it is clearly not the case if he had continued he would be established and the relationship that he was in with God would be fixed and it would be his heaven on earth and whatever else was involved in that for him when we go back to Eden what do we understand about what Eden was like what do we know about all that was going on in the experience of Adam other than what the scripture chooses to reveal to us but the point I'm wanting to make is that once Jesus fulfilled all righteousness that the benefits that accrue to the believer are greater than the benefits that Adam would have enjoyed as he was as created because

Jesus' obedience assures us that there will be no more sin that there will be no more fall that man will continue those in Christ will continue and that's is that not your assurance anyway when it comes to heaven have you have you thought about it do you think that once you go to heaven that there is a danger that sin will intrude into your heaven and that you will succumb to the temptations of whichever mediator will bring sin into heaven and that you will fall by it and that you will be thrown out of heaven that's not possible because what has taken you to heaven is the righteousness of the God man which assures us that he will continue as you will continue him and the fall will never again be in your experience let me quote to you just to emphasize the main point of what we're looking at this evening which is by grace alone and I think it's so important for us to have that truth before our minds not so that we live our lives as if we are free to live our lives carelessly and indifferent to what is going on around us or even by us or in us because we are redeemed by grace and nothing can intrude into that grace but we need to emphasize that nevertheless we are not according to child's heart we are not self-redeemed

[36 : 00] Christ is our redeemer when the word redemption is used of the work of Christ it is always to be understood in its context in its strict sense deliverance by ransom we are redeemed neither by power nor truth but by blood and that is why the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ is all important our redemption is his doing and it is by virtue of what he has done that redemption is possible now when you emphasize that to yourself and to anybody else that you're wanting to direct to Christ this is what must be highlighted it is by grace alone in other words it is not my doing it is not a reversion to works righteousness on my part in order to ensure I'm saved or to make sure that

I'm more saved in my own thinking than I believe myself possibly to be the outcome of what Christ has done is entirely down to what Christ has done does that make sense what Christ has done and something else something that you can do or somebody else can do is an error it is wrong it is completely off the beam because salvation is God's doing by way of his son redemption is accomplished by him applied by his Holy Spirit to us and nothing that you can do can alter that if you have put your trust in Christ

I'm sure you have heard that before salvation is all of grace it's a simple truth we use the word grace so freely which would expect but we use it too often without fully appreciating that grace implies the source that tells us something about who is responsible for it one of many commentators when he tried to explain to us the meaning of grace what does it mean what does it really mean well you cannot separate it from what God is doing and what God has done and what God has done without any input on our part we haven't persuaded God to love us we haven't persuaded

God to save us we haven't persuaded God to redeem us in any way shape or form everything that he supplies to us he does so freely and the reason for it is found in God and not in you that includes spiritual and temporal blessings that includes common and saving grace God is its source and it is not because we are better than others it's not because we are more diligent than others it's not because we have done something that would make God smile upon us and frown upon our neighbor it is all of grace listen to what Martin Luther says I think he wants to come back to this because he had come in his own life from a life of crawling on his knees and climbing countless steps in order to accrue merit for himself trying to appease

God trying to satisfy a God he knew to be holy by something that he did and for devil penance he was wanting to do in order to achieve that but he had to come to this place where he understood that salvation was God's doing and God's doing alone no man he says can be thoroughly humbled until he knows that his salvation is certainly beyond his own powers devices endeavours will and works and depends entirely on the choice will and works of another namely of God alone that way interestingly he does that not on his own power will and works but depending entirely on the power will and works of another namely

[41 : 35] God and it does mean all don't be ashamed to think all means all because it does and I think you know we struggle with this to be honest we do struggle with it when we speak of our own coming to faith the journey that God takes us on we can hardly resist putting our own hand as it were to the cross and say well I carried the cross or I prayed more earnestly or I listened more diligently and what are you doing when you are doing that what are your thoughts it's as if you're saying well I'm putting myself just a little bit alongside what Christ was doing and we have to resist that thought we have to rebut it we have to deny it because my salvation is all of grace which means that it is

God's doing in Christ Jesus and it takes us right back to the beginning you know Jesus says about himself the father loves the son and he shows the love for the son by giving to him all things giving all things into his hands what does he mean by that word all again he says everything possible necessary to ensure that you are saved God has given to the son and the the the persons of the holy trinity are active in the salvation of sinners no doubt let me quote a modern comit he's written many books Max Lucado and suppose he's got a quaint way of dealing with the truth but he says this anyway for about 14 pages which in my bible is the distance between the sermon of

Peter in Acts 2 and the meeting of the church in Acts 15 in the first grace was present in the second grace was questioned it was not that they did not believe in grace at all they believed in grace at all they just did not believe in grace alone they wanted to add to the work of Christ now that's the early church that's the early new testament church how quickly the thoughts intrude into a proper understanding of the finished work of Christ meaning the finished work of Christ as far as your salvation is concerned I suppose in a way there's a comfort for us to identify such feelings in the church and in the people of

God but we began by thinking about redemption in the light of a broken covenant and Adam was the covenant head and Adam was accountable to God for all that God required of him which was a simple obedience to his revealed will his obedience would have been ours his disobedience we understand from our own circumstances equally so we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression go back to the shorter Catholicism again now there's God's divine Thomas Boston who has done who did a lot of work on the covenant on the covenants and he takes us right back to the beginning and in fact he takes us beyond the beginning you can understand it he takes us right back to before the world was and he takes us into the councils of eternity and he takes us into the dialogue you can call it dialogue the inter trinitarian communication father son and holy spirit and we read from the scriptures what that meant that the father chose his church the father elected from all eternity those who were going to believe he gave them to the sin and the son died for them on the cross those that were to be redeemed the son purchased the ever they fell in

Adam and his redemption means that he brought back what was once his own and the holy ghost is then instrumental in applying the finished work of Christ the alone saviour of sinners grace alone whichever way you look at it that's how we are to understand it.

[47 : 36] Are we anything but the recipients of God's grace? If we think we are, then we're thinking amiss.

Our thoughts are quite wrong because we find ourselves so often falling into this temptation of saying, well, I can do something.

That will in some way make my salvation more secure. And I suppose that's where we often find ourselves falling prey to the temptation to justify ourselves before God.

You know, if you believe that your salvation is all of grace and that God has accomplished in Christ everything necessary to ensure that you're safe, that no more sin can destroy your peace and no more action on your part can intrude in between yourself and your God.

You are in his hands. That's what Christ says. You're in his hands. No one can plug you out of the Father's hands. That's your security. But if you think that you can do something, then you've obviously either misunderstood the power that your son possesses that the Son of God could not deal with in the cross.

[49 : 14] But we do, I suppose, need to remind ourselves that grace means grace. And it is all God's doing.

But he reminds us that we are obligated to him as recipients of his grace. We read in Titus chapter 2, just for example, and we'll finish with this.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. It doesn't just stop there. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, sellers of good works, and so on.

Now what that means is this. It doesn't in any way nullify the certainty you have that your redemption has been secured.

But it does bring to your attention that just as surely as your redemption has been secured, that there is the onus on you as the redeemed to live your life in the light of it with dependence upon his grace.

[50 : 52] Our relationship to Christ has to change, but so too our relationship to his word where we allow that word and we'll come to that when we see the centrality of it in God's dealings with his people.

He shapes our life in our new lives in Christ as those who follow Christ and we live not only for ourselves but for him and we live not only for the present but for the future glory that is promised.

So, writing these words, Paul includes all of that. He emphasizes your redemption. it's certain, it's secure, it's definite.

But as a consequence of being a beneficiary of his grace, the life you live in the light of that is a life that embraces the truth that God has set before you in order to live that kind of life.

Not in order to save yourself but because you are saved. Because you are his. because you wish to serve him and follow him and show your love to him as one who would do that.

[52 : 19] If you look for yourself at the way the scripture describes to us the the operations if you like of the of the grace of God in the lives of his people.

Most of these words you will understand. There is effectual calling means by which you came to know God justifications adoption and sanctification.

all of these things are by grace but they are operations of God's grace in your life and you are able to distinguish them identify them and be encouraged as you discover them in all their various facets.

But may God encourage us through these words to remember that what we have in Christ is in Christ alone and that it is all we would need in him.

Let us pray. Lord oh God we give thanks for the wisdom of your word which is the wisdom that you possess because your word is the word of God and we pray that you would through your word remind us of the wonderful provision that you have made that is sufficient to meet all our needs even as a consequence of our sins.

[53 : 56] Grant Meshi in Jesus name. Amen. Of concluding Psalm we'll sing in Galax Psalm 103 and the last two verses of the Psalm Psalm 103 the last two verses verse verse Kyle Je the Vikings guys

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