



## ***Did My Generation Neglect the Grace of God?***

I cannot understand how so many of the younger generation of preachers (sometimes encouraged by a few older ones) can talk about how woefully the generation before them neglected to tell people about the grace of God. They boldly speak about it as though it was a settled fact of history and that their generation is going to correct the matter by speaking more about grace and less about commandment keeping. As a qualified member of the preceding generation, as one man once said, “I deny the allegation and renounce the alligator.” They have apparently not read the writings nor listened to the sermons of their predecessors.



All of my generation and those of the generation before me that I know said lots about various aspects of God’s amazing grace. While they may not have specifically mentioned the word “grace” repeatedly in every lesson, they repeatedly preached in a way to convey the idea of grace. When they talked about God’s sending his son as the savior of mankind, they were talking about the grace of God. When they talked about Christ dying and shedding his blood for us, they were talking about the grace of God. When they talked about God’s eternal plan in saving all men (Jew and Gentile alike) in one body (the church), they were talking about the grace of God. When they talked

about the gospel plan of salvation, they were talking about the grace of God. When they talked about how Christians are to live soberly, righteously, and godly, they were talking about that which the grace of God teaches. When they talked about God's marvelously revealing his will for man through his chosen vessels, they were talking about the grace of God. When they even talked about keeping all the commandments of God, they were talking about the grace of God, because God has given all his commands for their good. (Cf. Deut. 10:13 – "and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" (Italics mine -EB).

Surely, these critics of the earlier generation do not think that those before them thought or implied that any of the above blessings came from themselves. Or, that God did them for man because he had earned or deserved them. I never heard anyone say or imply it. Surely, they do not think that when one responds to these actions of God by obeying him, they were claiming to be the author and finisher of their own salvation and were seeking to glorify themselves. My generation taught that it is essential that man respond to God's acts of grace by believing and obeying his commands – that he is the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. In fact, were it not for the grace of God we would have nothing to obey – no commandments to keep – no salvation to work out with fear and trembling.

Admittedly my generation may not have mentioned the word "grace" in nearly every breath (though it was mentioned far more that we have been given credit for by these folks), but that does not mean that we did not teach or even emphasize that we are saved by grace. We did it by teaching the various things that God has done to give us salvation from sin and to give us hope of eternal salvation in the world to come. The hearers understood that none of these



things come by man's own efforts but by the grace or mercy of God.

By the way, when one sees believers "turning to the Lord" he sees the grace of God (cf. Acts 11:21, 23). Yet believers are the ones who do the turning (1 Thess. 1:9). The Thessalonians had been active and not passive in the turning. The text says, "you turned" not "you were turned." When one sees people turn to God, by their obedience, they see both the grace of God and the faith of man at work (cf. James 2:18)

Yes, my generation did emphasize obedience and commandment keeping in our preaching. We may have even mentioned it more often than we did grace. Why? Because we knew our hearers already understood that they could not be saved without God's grace. While we reminded them of this fact, they generally already believed it. It was obedience that many did not get and needed the detailed teaching about.

We suspect had these young critics had followed more closely what my generation did say about God's grace they might not have become so fascinated with the brand of grace most of them think they have discovered by reading the writings and studying at the feet of theologians – especially Calvinists.

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

### ***"Further Thoughts on the Matter"***

Salvation has its divine and human side. Verses 12-13 of Philippians 2 refer to man working and God working. Many religionists condemn men working in salvation. They term it "salvation by works". Such people have a hard time dealing with Acts 10:35; 2:40; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 5:8-9; and James 2:27 to mention a few verses. Man is encouraged in his work by God's cooperation. "God worketh in you to will and do of his pleasure." We must not ignore our part in accepting God's grace.

**Bobby Thompson**



## GLAD TIDINGS

*Sermon Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Speaker:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Topic:* \_\_\_\_\_

### Order of Worship December 12, 2021

Song Leader—AM	Steve Frazier
Song Leader—PM	Matthew Frazier
Lord's Table	Derek Steen
Sermon—AM—Devin Barber	Sermon—PM—Devin Barber

Continue prayers for those on our list, and for the free course of the gospel.

*1 John 5:14*

Editor: Steve Frazier

### **Marietta church of Christ**

**8150 Driggers St.**

**Jacksonville, FL 32220**

Meeting times of the church

Sunday 09:00 am Bible Classes 10:00 am Worship 05:00 pm Evening Worship

Wednesday 7:00 pm Bible classes

Evangelist: Devin Barber

Phone: 904-210-5036

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**Hebrews 10:24-25**