

Accessing God's Grace

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I marvel at the volume and variety of information available on the Internet. Some of it is absolute trash which we ought to avoid like the plague. Even most of the legitimate material is of no use to me. But when I need a certain statistic, poem, or news item, I can generally find it within a few moments. Properly used, the Internet is a phenomenal tool!

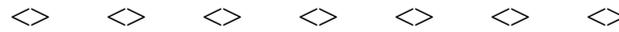
For those not Internet-savvy, here's the point: If you don't use the necessary program on a computer, smart phone, or other device, the Internet is utterly useless to you. Even if you know the information is there, and you really want it, you can't access it simply by wishing. You must use the right equipment.

God's grace is another amazing thing that must be accessed properly. Even the vilest sinner can be saved and live with God in Heaven forever, not by merit but by grace. No informed Bible believer can harbor the notion that he will earn His own way to Heaven. However, just as you must use the right equipment to access Internet data, so you must access God's grace in the way He has ordained. *"Through whom (i.e. through Christ) also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand"* (Romans 5:2).

Note two crucial truths: First, access to God's grace is through Christ. Second, that access to God's grace through Christ is "by [the] faith." What does this tell us? First, it reaffirms that there is no salvation outside of Christ (Acts 4:12). Some well-intentioned brethren say God will make an exception for those who have never heard of Jesus (as though God's grace will be extended to them some other way). All such attempts are misguided and erroneous.

Second, it specifies that God's grace through Christ is accessed by means of [the] faith. The definite article [the] is important. Paul isn't talking about one's personal trust in Jesus. "The" faith refers to the gospel. If you would access God's grace, you must do so through Jesus in the manner taught in the gospel. Again, sentimental brethren may imagine that those who have never heard the pure gospel will receive God's grace some other way because they were "doing the best they knew how" or they "sincerely tried." More recently, some have even rejected the New Testament teaching regarding what one must do to be saved, opting instead to embrace all who says they love Jesus, regardless of whether their faith and practice square with the New Testament.

We who insist on book, chapter, and verse, are dubbed "legalists" and accused of denying God's grace. Remember: salvation **is** by grace; but we access God's grace through Jesus Christ by means of the faith. According to God's word, there is no other way!



Whoever You Are

WHOEVER YOU ARE, there is some younger person who thinks you are perfect.

WHOEVER YOU ARE, there is some work that won't get done unless you do it.

WHOEVER YOU ARE, there is someone who would miss you if you were gone.

WHOEVER YOU ARE, there is a reason to become better than you are.

WHOEVER YOU ARE, there is a place to be filled that you alone can fill.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16)

via Jacksonville, AL

SHAMELESS BEGGING

"Son of David, have mercy on me!...I want to regain my sight!" (Mark 11:47, 51).

When a blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by he cried out for mercy to receive his sight. *"Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"* (Mark 11:48).

He wasn't concerned with what his peers thought.

A synagogue official named Jairus, came seeking Jesus. *"My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay your hands on her, so that she may get well and live"* (Mark 5:23).

He wasn't concerned with what his peers thought.

Over and over throughout the gospel you have accounts of individuals who came shamelessly to Jesus for help and deliverance. Too many people are letting their "so called friends" and peers keep them from Christ. Confusion and misery love company. I would rather have people upset with me than the good Lord. I know who gives me the air I breathe, the water I drink, and the other provisions of life that sustain me.

Blinded by a confused world, we need to plead, *"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from your law"* (Psalm 119:18). This happens to be the very first scripture I memorized when I was seeking out the Lord. It still motivates me in prayer and meditation.

True wisdom to me is seeing things as they really are. Seeing things as God sees them will help us to separate the significant from the superficial. It is extracting *"the precious from the worthless"* (Jeremiah 15:19).

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