

WHAT IS GOD'S GIFT?

Eph .2:8-9
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Eph. .2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Robertson's NT Word Pictures:

For by grace (têi gar chariti). Explanatory reason. "By the grace" already mentioned in verse Eph 2:5 and so with the article. Through faith (dia pisteôs). This phrase he adds in repeating what he said in verse Eph 2:5 to make it plainer. "Grace" is God's part, "faith" ours. And that (kai touto). Neuter, not feminine tautê, and so refers not to pistis (feminine) or to charis (feminine also), but to the act of being saved by grace conditioned on faith on our part. Paul shows that salvation does not have its source (ex humôn, out of you) in men, but from God. Besides, it is God's gift (dôron) and not the result of our work.

Eph. 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Robertson's NT Word Pictures:

That no man should glory (hina mê tis kauchêsêtai). Negative final clause (hina mê) with first aorist middle subjunctive of kauchaomai. It is all of God's grace.

From the above, it seems that Robertson comes to the conclusion that God supplies the grace, we supply the faith, and the end result is our salvation! He also seems to be saying that the gift referred to above is salvation.

While I firmly agree that we are saved solely by the grace of God without any works or merit on our part, I do not believe that salvation is the gift being referred to above.

As Robertson points out, Paul appears to be expanding what he said in

Eph. 2:5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

In other words God, when we were dead in sins, made us alive in Christ. To put it another way, He resurrected us from the dead! From this I conclude that salvation means "resurrection." This leads to the conclusion that as members of the Body of Christ, we are currently saved (resurrected) spiritually and at the rapture, we will be saved (resurrected) physically.

Looking back at verse 8 in this light, let's assume that Robertson is correct in saying that God supplies the grace and we must supply the faith. What faith does a dead man have? How can a dead man have faith in anything? Paul addresses this very point in

Ro. 8:6-7 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

While man is commanded by God to have faith in Christ, he has no ability to do so. How then could man possibly supply the faith necessary to salvation as suggested by Robertson? **He cannot!**

The solution to this dilemma is found in the following.

Eph. 2: 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

How marvelous! God, who is so rich in mercy and has so great a love for us, not only knows we must have faith in order to be saved, He also knew that we were dead and thus could not have faith. So He did it all Himself. **He gave us the faith we had to have!**

Remember that salvation is much much more than forgiveness of sins.

Ro. 8: 29-30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

2 Cor. 5: 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Can we possibly be vain enough to imagine that sinful man can supply faith good enough to cause us to be conformed to the image of Christ, to be justified, to be glorified, and to be made the righteousness of God?

The faith necessary for our salvation is clearly described in the following:

Ro. 4:23-5:1 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Verse 4:25 says that we are justified by Jesus' resurrection. Verse 5:1 calls the resurrection faith. Thus we are justified by the faithfulness of God in resurrecting Jesus from the dead. Remembering that justification is a part of salvation, **only the faithfulness of God in exercising His resurrection power can bring salvation!**

I agree with Martin Luther that we must apply sound logic when we study scripture.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

So let's look at the verse again and reason it out.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

So – what is the gift of God?

Is it grace? *Most assuredly God saves us by His grace!*

Eph 2:4-5 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even

when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).

God does not give us grace – He acts in grace for we are certainly not deserving of anything but condemnation and eternal punishment.

Ro 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Ro 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Logically then, it must be concluded that grace is not the gift because we could not supply our own grace and the verses state “and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Is it salvation? Certainly, God saves us because He loves us – not because we deserve it! Neither can we save ourselves because the penalty for sin is death, (eternal separation from God.) Either Jesus paid the penalty for us or we will pay it. There is no other way!

Ac 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jon 2:9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay [that] that I have vowed. Salvation [is] of the LORD.

While salvation is definitely a gift from God, it cannot be the gift referred to in these verses because we cannot save ourselves. There would be no reason for Paul to tell us “that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Is it faith? It is evident from scripture that faith is necessary for salvation.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Ro 10:8-10 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; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Ro 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Ac 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

We see then that not only is faith required for salvation, but we are commanded to put our faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Now Paul’s statement makes sense! “and that (faith) not of yourselves: it (faith) is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

From the above, I can only conclude that the gift of God, in Eph. 2:8-9 is faith. I understand the verses to read as follows:

You are saved by the grace of God through the agency of faith and that faith is not your

own faith. It is the very faithfulness of God, Himself, which He imputes to you by His grace, totally separate from any of your works or personal merit.

This conclusion agrees precisely with

2Co 5:17-21 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **And all things are of God**, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (emphasis added)