

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 6 – Crossroads of Grace – Bible Study Helps

Title: The Crossroads of Grace: Understanding God's Amazing Gift of Salvation

Sermon Summary: This evangelistic sermon focuses on leading people to salvation by helping them understand their need for grace. The sermon walks through the essential elements of a gospel witness, emphasizing that grace begins where human efforts end. Using Romans 5 as the foundation, the message explains that Christ died for the ungodly—not the righteous or religious—and that salvation comes through faith alone, not works. The sermon stresses that while grace is free to us, it was purchased at the great price of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Through the "great exchange," Jesus took our sin, condemnation, and punishment while we receive His righteousness, acceptance, and eternal life. The message concludes with a call for believers to actively share this good news, recognizing that leading souls to Christ is the primary work God has left us on earth to accomplish.

Key Points:

- Grace begins where human efforts come to an end; we cannot save ourselves through good works or religious activity
- Christ died for the ungodly, not for those who think they are righteous or good enough on their own
- Salvation requires coming to the end of ourselves and recognizing we are spiritually drowning and need a Savior
- Grace was purchased at a great price through Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on the cross
- The "great exchange" means Jesus took our sin and punishment while we receive His righteousness and acceptance
- Grace demands a response—we must personally trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by faith
- Salvation is by faith alone, not by baptism, church membership, good works, or religious affiliation
- Every believer has a responsibility to share the gospel and lead others to Christ
- We must help people understand they have sinned against God before they can appreciate the grace offered through Jesus
- The thief on the cross demonstrates that salvation comes through faith alone, apart from works or religious rituals

Scripture Reference:

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- Romans 5:6-21 (primary passage)
- Romans 4:5, 16
- Romans 10:9
- Romans 11:6
- Hebrews 9:27
- Hebrews 4:10
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Luke 23:39-43 (thief on the cross)
- Luke 18:9-14 (Pharisee and publican)
- Acts 16:20-34 (Philippian jailer)
- John 6:29

Stories:

- The illustration of a man standing before a judge, guilty and sentenced to death, when someone (or the judge himself) offers to take his punishment—representing Christ's substitutionary sacrifice
- The thief on the cross who railed against Jesus but then came to his senses, recognized Christ's innocence, and asked to be remembered, receiving immediate salvation without baptism or good works
- Barabbas, the condemned criminal who walked free while Jesus took his place and endured crucifixion, illustrating how every Christian is like Barabbas—guilty but set free because Jesus took our punishment
- The Philippian jailer who went from being a hardened prison keeper to trembling and asking "What must I do to be saved?" after witnessing Paul and Silas praising God in prison and experiencing the earthquake
- The parable of the Pharisee and the publican, where the self-righteous Pharisee trusted in his own goodness while the publican simply cried out for mercy and went home justified

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- The testimony of a pastor visiting a couple who had attended church their whole lives but had never personally trusted Christ as Lord and Savior until that conversation
- The illustration of a drowning man who cannot save himself by swimming harder but must stop trusting himself and trust the rescuer
- The chair illustration—you may believe a chair can hold you, but faith is demonstrated when you actually sit in it

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Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that Christ died for the ungodly rather than the righteous change your perspective on who deserves salvation and who God seeks to save?

What does it mean practically for you to come to the end of your own efforts and stop trusting in your own goodness before you can receive grace?

The thief on the cross received paradise without baptism, church membership, or good works. How does this challenge common religious assumptions about what is required for salvation?

When you reflect on the great exchange where Jesus took our sin and we received His righteousness, how should this reality affect the way you live each day?

Why do you think it is so difficult for people to accept that salvation cannot be earned through their own efforts or good behavior?

The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized the same hour they believed. What does this immediate obedience reveal about the sincerity of their faith, and how does it compare to modern responses to salvation?

In what ways might we be keeping the gospel to ourselves out of selfishness rather than sharing the best news with those around us who are spiritually drowning?

How can we effectively help someone understand they are a sinner in need of grace without coming across as judgmental or condemning?

What is the difference between admiring Jesus as a good teacher or prophet versus truly trusting Him as Lord and personal Savior?

If you were to evaluate your own life honestly, are you living as a missionary who intentionally creates opportunities to share the gospel, or have you settled into a comfortable religious routine?

Small Group Guide: The Crossroads of Grace

Based on Mission Rescue Souls - Romans 5

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when someone showed you unexpected mercy or grace. How did it make you feel?

Key Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

Read together: **Romans 5:6-8, 20**

Sermon Summary

This week's message focused on sharing the gospel effectively by helping people understand grace. The sermon walked through the "road to the cross" - helping sinners understand:

- Their inability to save themselves
- The great price Jesus paid for our salvation
- The necessary response of faith in Christ alone

The central truth: **Grace begins where human efforts end.**

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Understanding Grace (15 minutes)

1. The sermon said, "Grace begins where human efforts come to an end." What does this mean practically when sharing the gospel with someone?
2. Read Romans 5:6 together. Why is it significant that Christ died for the "ungodly" rather than the "righteous" or "religious"?

3. **Share your own salvation story. When did you come to the end of yourself and realize you couldn't save yourself?**

Part 2: The Great Exchange (15 minutes)

4. **The sermon described the "great exchange" - Jesus took our sin, we received His righteousness. How does understanding this exchange deepen your appreciation for what Christ did?**
5. **Discuss the story of Barabbas (Matthew 27:15-26). In what ways are we all like Barabbas?**
6. **The sermon included a powerful description of "the ungodly." Did that description make you uncomfortable? Why or why not? How does it help us understand grace?**

Part 3: Grace Demands a Response (15 minutes)

7. **Read Acts 16:25-34 (the Philippian jailer). What impresses you most about his response to the gospel? What can we learn from his immediate obedience?**
8. **The sermon mentioned people who "admire Jesus" but have never "trusted Him as Lord and Savior." What's the difference? Why is this distinction crucial?**
9. **Read Luke 18:9-14 (Pharisee and publican). What was the key difference in their prayers? What does this teach us about coming to God?**

Personal Reflection Questions (10 minutes)

Have members reflect silently, then share if comfortable:

- **When you think about your own salvation, do you still marvel at God's grace? Or has it become routine?**
- **The sermon asked: "Why are we here on planet Earth if we're not leading people to Jesus?" How does that question challenge you personally?**
- **Are you currently at a "crossroads of grace" with someone in your life who needs to hear the gospel?**

Key Takeaways

✓ **Grace is free to us but cost God everything** - Jesus paid the full price on the cross

✓ **We cannot earn salvation** - All human effort falls short; we must cease from our own works and trust Christ alone

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✓ **Grace demands a response** - Believing on Jesus Christ means trusting Him personally, not just knowing facts about Him

✓ **The gospel is urgent** - Everyone has an appointment with death and judgment (Hebrews 9:27)

✓ **We are witnesses** - If we've experienced God's grace, we have a responsibility to share it with others

Practical Applications

This Week's Action Steps:

1. PRAY DAILY

- Make a list of 3-5 lost people in your life
- Pray for them by name every day this week
- Ask God for boldness and open doors

2. CARRY GOSPEL TRACTS

- Get gospel tracts and keep them with you everywhere
- Ask your pastor or group leader if you need some

3. START ONE SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

- Use questions like:
 - "Can I ask you a spiritual question?"
 - "If you died tonight, are you 100% sure you'd be in heaven?"
 - "Do you mind if I share something that changed my life?"

4. REVIEW THE GOSPEL PRESENTATION

- Practice explaining the "road to the cross":
 - Death is certain (Hebrews 9:27)
 - Judgment is coming
 - God's standard is perfection
 - We have all sinned (Romans 3:23)
 - Hell is the consequence
 - Jesus paid our penalty
 - We must trust Him by faith

5. LIVE INTENTIONALLY

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- See yourself as a missionary in your everyday life
 - Look for opportunities in normal activities (gas station, grocery store, work, etc.)
 - Let the love of Christ constrain you
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Memory Verse for the Week

Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Accountability & Prayer (15 minutes)

Pair up and share:

- One specific person you want to share the gospel with this week
- One fear or obstacle you face in evangelism
- Pray for each other for boldness and opportunities

Group Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for His amazing grace in our lives
 - Pray for the lost people mentioned by group members
 - Ask for boldness to speak as we ought to speak
 - Pray for open doors this week to share the gospel
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Closing Challenge

The sermon said: **"If we're not speaking to people about eternal things, we're not doing the one thing we're left here to do."**

This week, determine in your heart that you will not let another week go by without sharing the gospel with at least one person. Remember:

- You have the best news ever
- People are spiritually drowning
- Grace throws out the lifeline
- We get to point people to Jesus

"What are we doing? How selfish are we if we're not actually leading anybody to Jesus Christ?"

For Next Week

Come prepared to share:

- One gospel conversation you had (or attempted)
 - What you learned from the experience
 - How the group can pray for follow-up
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"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see."

5-Day Devotional: The Crossroads of Grace

Day 1: The Reality of Our Condition

Reading: Romans 5:6-8

Devotional: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." This verse confronts us with a humbling truth: we were helpless. Before salvation, we possessed no spiritual strength to save ourselves. Like a drowning person who has stopped struggling, we had to cease our own efforts and accept rescue. Today, reflect on your own spiritual journey. Can you remember that moment when you stopped trying to earn God's favor and simply received His grace? The beauty of the gospel is that Christ didn't wait for us to become worthy—He died for us while we were still ungodly. Let this truth humble you and move you to gratitude, knowing that your salvation depends entirely on what Christ has done, not on your own merit or strength.

Day 2: The Great Exchange

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:21

Devotional: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Consider the magnitude of this exchange: Jesus took our guilt, shame, punishment, and wrath upon Himself, while we receive His righteousness, acceptance, and life. This wasn't a fair trade—it was divine mercy. Like Barabbas, the criminal who walked free while Jesus took his place on the cross, we are undeserving recipients of grace. Today, meditate on what Christ endured for you personally. He received everything you deserved so you could receive everything He deserves. How does this truth affect your daily walk? Let it overflow into gratitude, worship, and a burning desire to tell others about this amazing grace.

Day 3: Grace Begins Where Efforts End

Reading: Ephesians 2:8-9

Devotional: "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." Salvation cannot be earned, improved upon, or maintained by human effort. Grace begins precisely where our attempts end. Many people say, "I'm trying my best" or "I need to do better," but these responses reveal a misunderstanding of grace. We cannot do better—we need a Savior. The thief on the cross couldn't be baptized, join a church, or perform good works, yet Jesus promised him paradise that very day. Today, examine your heart: Are you still trying to add to what Christ has already completed? Release your white-knuckle grip on self-righteousness and rest entirely in His finished work. True freedom comes when you cease from your own works and trust completely in His.

Day 4: The Call to Respond

Reading: Acts 16:25-34

Devotional: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The Philippian jailer's question represents the moment every person must face at the crossroads of grace. After witnessing Paul and Silas praising God in prison and experiencing the earthquake, this hardened jailer came trembling, asking how to be saved. The answer was beautifully simple: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Notice what happened next—immediate, radical obedience. That very hour, he and his household were baptized. Grace demands a response. It's not enough to admire Jesus or respect Him; we must trust Him as Lord and personal Savior. Today, ask yourself: Have I truly trusted Christ, or have I merely acknowledged facts about Him? If you've been saved, are you living in radical obedience to Him?

Day 5: Living as Ambassadors of Grace

Reading: Luke 18:9-14

Devotional: The publican "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." This man went home justified because he came to God with nothing but his need. Now consider: you were once that publican, crying out for mercy. You received the most amazing grace imaginable. What are you doing with it? The love of Christ should constrain us to share this gospel with everyone we meet. We are left on earth for one primary purpose—to be witnesses of His saving grace. Today, pray for boldness to start spiritual conversations. Carry gospel tracts. See yourself as a missionary in your workplace, neighborhood, and family. Don't keep this good news to yourself. Someone needs to hear about the crossroads of grace where you met Jesus, so they too can experience His saving power.