

## Foundations / Week 5

### *Getting to Heaven – Saved by Grace*

#### Day 1 – What can I do to get saved?

What must I do to obtain eternal life?

Salvation!! Heaven!! Eternal life in Paradise!! Wow!!

How fantastic is that! Living with God the Father, being with Jesus, having a home in a perfect place with a street of gold, running around with angels...

Wow! It doesn't matter what it takes, you'd be crazy not to want that!

**What do you think?:** So how much is it? What do I have to do? Name it so I can get busy doing whatever it takes to get there!

You can't do anything. Nothing!! There is nothing you can *do* to get to Heaven. The only way to Heaven is by accepting God's gift.

**What do you think?:** But don't we have to do *something*? You can never get something without having to *do* something first, right?

If you want to get into a good college, you better get good grades. Before a Boy Scout can become an Eagle Scout, he has to earn 21 merit badges. To be inducted into the National Honor Society, you have to have performed at least 10 hours of community service.

**Connection:** When we work long enough and hard enough to get something – especially something important and expensive – we have the right to feel proud of ourselves. We did it. We really accomplished something. Yet, God does not want us to be able to boast about our salvation. It's not about us. It's about Him.

He doesn't want us to work for our salvation. All He wants is for us to be grateful. Very grateful!

Scripture:

- Salvation is a gift so no one can boast.  
‡ Ephesians 2:8-9

## Day 2 – How can I earn the Gift of Salvation?

Everything costs something. What's salvation cost?

Ever heard the saying, "There is no free lunch!"? "You never get something for nothing!"? "You get what you pay for!"?

**What do you think?:** Since everything has its price, what's the "price" of salvation? What's it cost to get this Gift?

The answer is – it's free! Salvation is a gift of *grace*. God offers us His free gift of eternal life – by His grace.

He didn't have to do it. Nothing made Him do it. We haven't done anything to deserve it. He provides us a way to be forgiven and get to Heaven – just because He decided He wanted to. He saves us by His grace.

And are we ever blessed, too!! If He ever wanted to put a price on it, no one could afford salvation. The price for salvation would be perfection. No sin - never. Not even just a little – none as in absolutely no sin at all.

**Connection:** If God had decided to charge us, we would be in real trouble! So He offers us His gift of salvation as a gift of grace. We have the opportunity to be saved not because we're worthy of it. Not because we ought to have it. Not because we earn it. We have not been offered the free Gift of Salvation because we're someone or something special – but because He is.

Scripture:

- Saved by grace  
‡ Acts 15:11
- Justified by grace  
‡ Romans 3:21-24

### Day 3 – How much do I have to want it?

Salvation cannot be for just anybody, can it? Does God look to see who wants it bad enough?

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again...” How many times have we heard that? Or maybe you’ve been told, “You can do anything you set your mind to, if you want it bad enough.”

There’s a Country Western song that asks:

“How bad do you want it?  
How bad do you need it?  
Cause if you want it all  
You’ve got to lay it all out on the line (that’s right)

There’s always a price you pay no matter what you do  
If you’re gonna climb that mountain to the top  
It always comes down to

How bad do you want it?  
How bad do you need it?”

**What do you think?:** Is that how it is with Heaven? Does salvation only come to those who want it bad enough? Can we make God save us by wanting Him to bad enough?

If we cannot earn it, work for it, or buy it, then can we *want* our way into Heaven?

**Connection:** No matter how we look at it, it’s not because of us. Yes, salvation’s *for* us because we’re the ones being saved. Yet, it’s all because of Him. We are saved by His mercy. We are saved by His grace. All we can do is accept it – and say “Thank You!!!”

Scripture:

- It only depends on God’s mercy.  
‡ Romans 9:15-16

### Day 4 – Don't I have to follow God's Commandments to be saved?

Is obeying God's Laws a requirement to being saved?

We're always being told to obey. There's a scripture that tells us that if we're real Christians, we'll obey. We're taught that obedience is a tell-tale sign that we're in a relationship with Jesus. It's drilled into us that all we're ultimately required to do is obey. We even sing "Trust and obey – there's no other way"...

**What do you think?:** So I have to obey God's Laws to get into Heaven, right? In order to gain eternal life, do I not have to follow His rules?

If that were so, we'd all be doomed! Yes, we're called to obey. Yet, we obey not because we *have* to get into Heaven, but because *after* we enter into a relationship with Jesus we really, really want to!

Obedience to the Father's Will and His instructions is a result of being saved – not the grounds by which we're saved. The Father has called us to be holy and blameless (Ephesians 1:4). He calls us to obey. He gave us His Laws and expects us to follow them. Yet He knows that it's impossible for us to be totally sinless.

We sin. We screw up. Everything around us seems to be bent on causing or leading us to stray. If it's not a friend, it's TV. If it's not TV, it's a movie. If it's not a movie, it's just our own goofy imaginations. It's always something. We do not want to, it just seems to happen.

**Connection:** So if God required that we followed His Law perfectly to get into Heaven, no one would ever make it! So, like a true friend, like a real loving Father, He's willing to forgive our sins just because we love and trust Him. Because He and I are in a real relationship together and He loves me, He is willing to forgive my mistakes, missteps and sins. He has forgiven and saved me – because I love Him and put my faith and trust in Him.

Scripture:

- Justified by faith apart from the law  
‡ Romans 3:28
- If by grace, then it is no longer by works  
‡ Romans 11:6



## *Relational Discipleship Studies*

- God counted Abraham's faith as righteousness
  - † Genesis 15:6

## Day 5 – Then what is the Law for?

If growing a relationship with the Lord is too hard, can I just follow the Law as best I can?

What's the purpose of a good law? Why do parents or teachers who really care for us make rules? Is it just to keep us from having fun?

When we were little and mom told us we should not touch the hot stove, was she being mean – or caring? When we were told not to run into the street, was it to make her life easier – or for our protection? Someone in authority over us who loves and cares for us does not make rules to ruin our good times; they do it to keep us safe. God loves you more than anyone else ever could. And His laws were established for the same reason – to keep us healthy and safe.

**What do you think?:** Why does God tell us not to bear false witness? It's because lying about someone hurts them. Why does God tell us not to steal? It's because stealing hurts someone. Why does God tell us to only have one wife or husband and to never get divorced? It's because divorce hurts everyone – both spouses, the kids, the dog – everyone.

The Law was given to protect and help us. It was never meant to be a way to obtain salvation because no one could ever follow the Law perfectly. Salvation comes by having a personal relationship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus. (John 17:3)

When we attempt to use the Law as a means for Salvation, when we try to be righteous by accurately obeying the rules, then we are condemning ourselves. No one could follow every rule, and the intent behind each rule, without fail. And that's what it would take – nothing less than perfection.

**Connection:** So why not use the Law for what it was intended – our protection, safety, health and happiness. Quit trying to work your way into Eternity. Instead, why not rely on the Father to forgive and save you, by grace through faith, because you entered into a personal relationship with Him.

Scripture:

- Those who rely on the law are under a curse.  
‡ Galatians 3:10