

# SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

## Teacher's Notes

### I. Saved by Grace

#### A. "For by grace you have been saved..." (Eph 2:8)

"In Him we have redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of His grace that He lavished upon us." (Eph 1:7-8a)

"But God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ..." (Eph 2:4)

#### B. Definition of 'grace'

"Grace is *favour*, the *free and undeserved help* that God gives us to respond to His call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life."  
(CCC 1996, cf. Jn 1:12-18, 17:3, Rom 8:14-17, 2 Pet 1:3-4)

#### C. "[S]alvation comes from God alone." (CCC 169)

"...and this is not from you, it is the gift of God;" (Eph 2:8)

#### D. We are not saved by our own works: We can't earn salvation

"...it is not from works, so that none may boast." (Eph 2:9)

- We are not capable of a single meritorious act without God's grace.

#### E. Yet we cannot be saved apart from our works.

"For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." (James 2:26)

### II. Saved "through Faith" (Eph 2:8)

#### A. "[W]ithout faith it is impossible to please God..." (Heb 11: 6)

"Whoever believes in him may not die, but may have eternal life." (Jn 3: 16)

"He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life." (Jn 5:24)

"[B]ut to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." (Jn 1:12)

"If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom 10:9)

#### B. Faith is a gift.

1. "Faith is an entirely free gift God makes to man" (CCC 162)

2. "...Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him. 'Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God..." (CCC 153)

3. "The proclamation of the Word of God has *Christian conversion* as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel through faith." (RM # 46)

4. Faith is born of preaching, by God's design: "Faith comes through hearing..." (Rom 10:17)

### C. Definitions of Faith

1. "By faith man completely submits his intellect and will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer." (CCC 143)
2. "Faith therefore, as 'a gift of God' and as 'a supernatural virtue infused by him,' involves a **dual adherence: to God who reveals and to the truth which he reveals**, out of the trust which one has in him who speaks. Thus, 'we believe in no one but God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'" (Dominus Jesus #7)
  - Faith "in a Person" *fides qua* Faith as relationship (subjective)
  - Faith "that" *fides quam* Accept the truths revealed by God (objective)
  - Faithful *fides ob-audire* Adherence/Obedience of faith (live it)

### D. Abraham: Our father in faith (Eucharistic Prayer I)

- 1) A radical abandonment in trust to a person: "How do you spell faith? R-I-S-K." - John Wimber  
"Faith is leaning in to God to such a degree that we would fall if He were not there!"  
- paraphrase of Fr. Francis Martin
- 2) "in hope he believed against hope..." (Rom 4:18)
- 3) "No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised." (Rom 4:20)

## III. Saved from Hell

### A. Hell Exists

"The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, 'eternal fire.'" (CCC 1035)

- We deserve punishment for our sins: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 3)
- We are utterly helpless and lost without God's intervention to save us.

### B. Definition of Hell

"Eternal damnation consists precisely in definitive separation from God, freely chosen by the human person and confirmed with death that seals his choice forever. God's judgment ratifies that state... eternal damnation remains a real possibility."

(John Paul II, *General Audience*, L'Osservatore Romano, August 4, 1999)

- No one goes to Hell on a 'technicality'. We freely choose hell by rejecting the grace of God.
- "Freedom is a beautiful and terrible thing. With it we choose our eternal destiny." - Ratzinger

### C. God is Merciful - Evangelization extends His Mercy

- God isn't looking for ways to send people to Hell.  
God is doing everything possible to save us from Hell.

"God... who desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim 2:4)

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mk 16: 15)

## IV. Saved for Heaven

- A. “Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God forever, for they ‘see him as he is,’ face to face... Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.” (CCC 1023-1024)
- We are made by Him and for Him.
  - We are incarnate ‘spiritual hungers’ that nothing material can satisfy.
  - We are made for infinite joy, happiness without alloy.
  - “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You” - St. Augustine
  - Heaven is the fulfillment for which we yearn, perhaps even implicitly, without realizing it.
- B. Heaven is... “eternal life” (Mt 25:46) “glory beyond compare” (2 Cor 4:17) “city of the living God” (Heb 12:22) “We will put on an imperishable, incorruptible nature.” (1 Cor 15:53)
- C. C.S. Lewis: *The Weight of Glory*

“Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised by the Gospels, it would seem that the Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink, sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us...we are far too easily pleased...in the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised...”

### Heaven is the Wedding Feast of the Lamb - The Church is the Bride (Optional point)

“Time & human history is moving towards the final revelation of the sons and daughters of God. Moving towards a marriage. So the human race can be brought as a bride to the marriage feast.

What does a bride look like on her Wedding day? Bored, indifferent? No, radiant, and anticipating. Bride is veiled. Brought forward by her father, who lifts the veil. She looks at her husband.

Some think it is just a Big Bang and then a bunch of chemical reactions going nowhere.

Human history has an end, has a purpose. This is why nuns are here, this is why priests are here. They are constantly reminding us that all the goods of the earth (good as they are) are nothing compared to the fulfillment of it all in heaven. They have dedicated their lives to this. The world thinks they are nuts, that they have a psychological problem, this is how blind the world is. These ladies are at the heart of reality. They get it. They remind us of what is coming.

The question is - “Who wants in?” Don’t tell me you want to be invested in something else. It is time to get ready for the marriage. It is the only thing that ultimately lasts forever. If you don’t want it then you are deciding for your own hell. We have the privilege of tasting this every Sunday in Communion.”

(Peter Herbeck, *The Great Commission*, Renewal Ministries School of Evangelization, 2002)

## V. Saved through the Cross

“Has not God made the wisdom of the world foolish?

For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith.

For Jews demand signs, and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.” (1 Cor 1:20b-25)

### A. God chose to save us through faith/trust in Him, His work upon the Cross. Not by earning it through wisdom or power.

Greeks: “You’ll be close to God if you’re wise enough!”

Jews: “If you can pull off miracles like the prophets, that’s proof you’re close to God!”

God turns all of that on its head and chooses another way, a way that looks foolish to our human way of thinking:

It is faith that pleases God: a faith of *relationship*, of *trust*, of *adherence* to Him, of *acceptance* of His love revealed in His work upon the Cross.

### B. Trust is required because the Kerygma does appear foolish to a worldly way of thinking:

A dead man hanging on a cross is the epitome (ultimate) in *weakness*, not power!

It is an *absurdity*, not wisdom! And yet, Jesus on the Cross is the source of our life and salvation.

### C. Christ Crucified is God’s Wisdom

This is the wisdom of God hidden from the ages: His plan to save us through the Cross. The apparent “foolishness” of Christ crucified is infinitely wiser than human wisdom.

### D. Christ Crucified is God’s Power

When we proclaim the crucified Jesus, God backs our proclamation with His power:

- His power *anoints the proclamation* giving listeners spiritual understanding
- His power *transforms souls*, uniting them to Himself, allowing them to become children of God.
- His power *confirms the proclamation through signs and wonders*.

The apparent “weakness” of Christ crucified is infinitely stronger than human strength.

## VI. Conclusion

- 1) We are saved *by* grace
- 2) We are saved *through* faith
- 3) We are saved *from* the indescribable tragedy of Hell.
- 4) We are saved *for* the indescribable glory of Heaven.
- 5) The *means* God has chosen to bring all this about is Christ Crucified.

This is what we proclaim: “Christ Crucified - the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.”