

THE WAYS OF GOD

Our Part

I. It is God's way to work with us by grace through faith

A. "Grace alone" paints a false reality about God and about His ways b/c God operates by grace through faith

1. *Eph2:8-10-For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus*
2. *Grace alone* implies that grace is the only thing involved in us being saved and that faith is not part of the equation
 - a. It suggests that God saved us by His grace alone, independent of and without our faith – This is inaccurate
 - b. It suggests that God operates independent of us, by His grace, based on what He wants to do – This inaccurate
 - c. It's a teaching that devalues the importance of our faith

B. God works with us by grace THROUGH faith

1. *Eph2:8-For by grace are you saved through faith (because of, by reason of, by means of, on account of, from)*
2. *Through* means the reason by which something is or is not done – Faith or lack thereof is the reason why salvation is or is not done
3. *Through* also notes passage as, to pass through a gate or avenue – Faith is the avenue, it's the gate, it's the channel through which grace gains passage from God into your life
 - a. If there is no faith grace can gain no entry, has no channel, has no way in, has no access
 - b. Wherever faith is lacking grace will be limited in what it can do
4. This is important b/c we're not just talking about salvation – God does everything by grace through faith

C. In scripture God places a high level of importance on our faith when it comes to Him moving in our lives

1. *Rm4:16-AC-Inheriting the promise is the outcome of faith and depends [entirely] on faith, in order that it might be given as an act of grace-*
 - a. Is that true? Inheriting the promise is the outcome of faith and depends entirely on faith?
 - b. If that's true then the promises you inherit in this life is in direct proportion to the level of faith you walk in
 - c. If that is true then what you experience in your life is not all up to God, but it's according to your faith
 - d. The promise that was given by grace will not be experienced without faith-How much does faith matter?
2. We actually see in scripture Jesus crediting people's faith when He could have credited His grace and He did that to point us to the reality that our faith is vitally important in determining what He can do in our lives
 - a. *Mk5:34-Daughter, thy faith has made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague; Lk7:50-Thy faith has saved you; go in peace; Lk17:19-Arise, go your way: your faith has made thee whole; Mk10:51-Jesus said unto him, Go your way; your faith has made you whole (To the blind man); Mt8:29-According (agreeing, harmonizing, in accordance with) to your faith be it unto you*

D. The reality is God works with us, according to our faith, based on what He has access to do – By grace through faith

1. It's not just God and His sovereign plan deciding what He wants to do and just doing it by grace, but rather it's God looking for faith and finding faith to work with-2Ch16:9,Rev3:20

II. B/C God works by grace through faith our lack of faith can keep God from doing what He wants to do in our lives

A. *Mk6:5-A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country; He could there do no mighty works; Mt13:58-Because of their unbelief*

1. Their lack of honor and lack of faith kept God from doing what He wanted to do

B. *Heb3:19-So we see they could not enter in because of their unbelief; Nm13:2-The land of Canaan, which I give unto the Children of Israel*

1. Their unbelief, their lack of faith kept them from experiencing what God gave them by grace

C. *Mt14:24-When Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?* – His little faith, his lack of faith cut him off from the grace he was operating in to walk on the water

1. He failed and Jesus put his finger right on the problem lack of faith (Not His sovereignty or mysterious will and plan)

D. *Heb4:2-For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith*

1. It's working for some, but not others b/c the mixture wasn't right – GRACE - Just add faith and it will change your life

- E. *Ps81:10-I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts lust: and they walked in their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened unto me and Israel and walked in my ways. I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned my hand against their adversaries. He should have fed them with also the finest of the wheat: with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied you*
1. They won't trust, they won't listen, they won't follow – Does this lack of faith affect what God can do?
 2. Is every Christian trusting, listening, following? Should we be shocked then if God isn't able to do what He wants to do in their lives? Let's not pretend every Christian is living like this and blame God when things don't work
 3. There are degrees of this and the degree you do this affect the degree of access God has in your life?
- F. When God doesn't move the way people want Him to move they have tendency to blame the will of God, the sovereignty of God, the mysterious plan of God and even get mad at God yet you don't find God pointing Himself when things didn't go well in scriptures, but rather he pointed us to people's lack of faith causing the hindrance
1. When there is problems on the faith end it affects the grace flow

III. Here's a truth that many don't like, don't want to hear and some utterly reject: There are things we can do that can keep God from doing what He wants to do in our lives and actually put Him in a position where He can't do what He wants to do

- A. People don't like the thought of them doing something that could limit what God wants to do in their lives, but is it true? Can it happen? Can you limit God because of things you do and believe? Can believer's limit God?
1. *Ps78:41-They turned back and tempted God and limited the Holy One; TP-Again and again they limited God, preventing Him from blessing them; 10-They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; 17-They sinned yet more against him; 19-Yeah they spoke against God; 22-Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation*
 - a. Is any of this happening with Christians? This limited God for them, but does this still limit God today?
 - b. They wouldn't yield to God because they didn't trust Him
- B. What you believe, what you say, what you do, whether or not you'll yield matters in what God can do in your life
1. If what we did didn't matter miracles would be done in Nazareth, Peter wouldn't have fell in the water, The COI would have possessed the land and everybody would be saved, healed and delivered
- C. There's two sides to God's working in people's lives – There's His side and our side – This so often is the answer to why this or that didn't happen; God's working people and there was hindrance on our end and that's why He couldn't do what He wanted to do – That's not what people want to hear
1. People will get flat mad with teaching like this and say things like, "Are you saying my faith wasn't good enough?" and they are appalled by the idea that there was a hindrance on their end and yet they are completely fine with us crediting some evil thing to our good Father