

Week 21
141/224

Transforming Daily
“... by grace ...”
Romans 11:6

Romans 11:6 is a clear explanation of the relationship between grace and works. No one can read this verse and miss the distinction between grace and works that they are at two opposite ends of the pole. This distinction is very important as it relates to salvation. In context, Paul is informing Gentile believers that God has a special relationship with Israel. Paul wants the Gentile believers to understand that God has not given up on Israel by offering salvation to the Gentiles, but it is a part of His plan to have the Jews return to Him. Salvation for the Jew or the Gentile has always been by grace. The only works that have ever mattered regarding salvation is the work of Christ on Calvary's cross. The believer's works do not matter for salvation, they matter after salvation. The believer is saved by grace to serve by works.

The misunderstanding or misapplication of the doctrine of grace has led many people down the wrong path. The misleading notion that works has anything to do with God's salvation has forged many false belief systems that, to this day, hold the followers of those systems in bondage by the concept that an individual's works will get them into heaven. Statements like, “I hope I'll make it to heaven,” “I think I'll make it to heaven,” “I'm not perfect, but I'm not as bad as so and so,” “I think I've lived a pretty good life,” “We'll just have to wait and see how it all tallies up in the end,” etc., reveals a gross misunderstanding of both grace and works as they relate to salvation.

Paul states very clearly here in this passage that grace is grace and works are works. Both grace and works are important in their proper relationship to God's plan of redemption, but it is God's grace through Christ's works that salvation is extended as a free gift of eternal life. The believer's works associated with God's grace have their place in service and ministry after the believer has trusted Christ as their personal Savior. So you can see that for a proud, “self-made” individual, or control freak independent of the need or the want of anyone else's help or support would have a hard time accepting God's free gift of eternal life.

How about you, do you have a hard time distinguishing between grace and works? Do you hold that your works and God's help is the formula for salvation, or that salvation comes through the life and works of Christ alone? Does pride keep you from confessing your sins and relying with total dependence upon Christ's work alone for salvation? As a believer, do your works measure up with your confession? Are you aggressively, proactively, deliberately living your life for the exaltation of the Savior, edification of the saints, and evangelization of the sinner? Very simply put, the believer's relationship with God is through faith by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).