



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Ephesians 2: 8-10

Fall 2023

"Amazing Grace"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Mark, and good morning; and it is good to see all of you here. This morning we're going to look to Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8, 9, and 10, one of the great texts of Scripture. We're in a great book of Scripture, (but of course, they're all great, I know that), but the Book of Ephesians has great theology for us and we reach kind of a high point here in these texts that we'll look at—which, to borrow Paul's words from 2 Corinthians 2, is "an aroma from death to death to some, but an aroma from life to life to others." (vs16). And that certainly is true for me. these are glorious verses. Ephesians 2, verse 8,

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Ephesians 2: 8-10

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time together as we pray for Christ's blessing upon us. Let's pray.

Father, what a blessing it is to be with Your people on this Sunday morning, it's always a privilege and a blessing. This is how we're fed. We're fed as we read Your Word, we're fed as we study it, we're fed as we sit and contemplate together as a church the revelation that You've given us—and so LORD, we pray for Your blessing upon us because these are things that we cannot understand or accept in and of ourselves. We need the grace of God, which we study this morning, to open our eyes and to illuminate our minds and to give us understanding of the fundamental things of life. And so we pray You'd bless us with that, that You would teach us, that You'd build us up in the faith and strengthen us.

And we pray LORD, that You'd bless us materially, as well. As I said a moment ago, I look out over the congregation and I see various individuals, and know the issues they're dealing with—and all of us deal with something. We're glad for Your goodness and Your grace, and Your healing mercy that sometimes is protracted, (it doesn't take place immediately, it takes time). But we're thankful that we can come before You in prayer and know You hear us, and in Your time and in Your way You bring healing and mercy. Give us faith and patience for that. Whether it's a spouse that's dealing with physical issues and struggles; or personally what we may be going through, we pray that You would strengthen us and give us encouragement and bless.

Bless Your people LORD, and strengthen their faith and use our time together for that end. We pray that You'd build us up in the faith as we consider Your great mercy and grace that You have showed to Your people at great cost to Yourself—but what is free to us. We thank You for it, thank You for Christ. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.

*(Message)* Some of you will remember an advertisement for the investment firm, Smith Barney, from the late 1970s. It featured the distinguished older actor, John Houseman. He was dressed in a severe, three piece suit and bow tie looking serious. He would say, 'At Smith Barney they are busy as bees. They make money the old fashioned way. They earn it.'

It was an effective ad, for that's what we admire and trust—hard work. It's biblical; it's the Proverbs; 'The one who gathers increases it, the sluggard gets nothing.' Hard work is a virtue. It's what the German sociologist Max Weber called "The Protestant work ethic"; and "The Calvinist work ethic", 'Christians ought to be honest, and earnest, and diligent in all of their labors. That's how we earn our bread, by the sweat of our face.'

Maybe the only place that does not apply, and where man always applies it, (to his great loss), is salvation. Human religion is based on the notion of, 'working hard and earning it.' But the Bible is clear—we are all sinners; we're fallen and we're in need of saving. But we are only saved by grace through faith; it's all a gift of God.

Sometimes in business, hardworking firms don't succeed, (Smith Barney is gone). But in religion, men never succeed when they try to 'earn it'. Paul makes that very clear in our text, Ephesians 2, verses 8, 9, and 10. In fact, we might say, 'We get salvation the old fashioned way...we receive it.'

Salvation by grace alone is not a New Testament innovation; it's in the earliest chapters of the Bible. When God found Adam and Eve naked and guilty in the garden, He had mercy on them—He gave them the promise of a coming Savior; then He made garments of skin, clothing them. He slew animals to do that, (and what a picture that is, of the very thing He promised them.)

He called Abraham out of paganism and gave him a promise; and when Abraham believed it, 'he was reckoned righteous'. (Gen 15:6). It's righteousness by faith. It's all of grace, from beginning to end, from the beginning of the Bible to the end of it.

And it must be, because as Paul wrote at the top of this chapter, "You were dead in your trespasses and sins." 'You Ephesians! You people at Believers Chapel!' "...dead in your trespasses and sins". —And "dead" means *dead*! Not, 'almost dead' or, 'mostly dead', but **dead—lifeless!** As the physically dead don't see and don't respond to light, the spiritually dead don't respond to truth—to the Gospel. Our condition was hopeless.

"But God," Paul wrote in verses 4 and 5, "being rich in mercy even when we were dead, made us alive together with Christ."

Again, that's not some New Testament novelty. It's the New Testament equivalent of Ezekiel's Old Testament vision of 'the valley of dry bones' in chapter 37 of his prophecy. It's a vision and prophecy of Israel's future conversion and restoration, which shows it will not happen by the works of the Law, but by God's mighty power and grace alone.

The prophet saw a valley full of bones; and he said, "...they were very dry.", (Eze 37:2); undeniably, dead bones and dead for a long time. Then he was told to "prophecy" to them; "O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." (Eze 37:4). When he did, the bones began to rattle, then join together and were clothed in flesh. Then God breathed on them and, "...they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army." (Eze 37:10). God called it, 'the whole house of Israel.' —And that will happen.

But they are also a picture of every believer in every age—every believer today. We all were as lifeless as dry dusty bones until God's Spirit breathed the breath of God and the breath of life into us—and we came to life and we stood up. That's grace. 'God's power', Paul wrote in chapter 1, verse 19: "...the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe."

Now if that doesn't make you want to praise God, maybe you're still 'dry as old bones.' It made Paul praise the LORD from the depths of his heart. So he magnified God's grace in chapter 2, and gloriously here in verses eight through ten, which gives us a summary of the Gospel, a summary of the Good News of salvation: We can't earn it; "Salvation is of the LORD." That's Jonah chapter 2, the last verse, (it's how he concluded his prayer).

"Salvation is of the LORD." —It's all of grace. That's verse 8, "For by grace you have been saved..." That is the second time in this chapter that Paul said that; earlier, in verse 5, he interrupted his thought to say, "By grace you have been saved." So obviously, Paul

can hardly contain his enthusiasm for grace—and he wants us to have that as well, for he repeated it.

Princeton professor, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, (one of my very favorites), wrote that, "The whole Gospel turns, as upon its hinge, on this fact that, 'salvation is of pure grace.' " He wrote that there are three ideas communicated in the word *grace*. "First, the idea of *power*: It does not instruct," he said, "it energizes; it gives life. But grace is not bare power; it's also *love*. It's *power* directed by *love*. That is the fundamental meaning of the word *grace*: *Favor, love, yearning desire*. "

"The third idea", he said, "is *gratuitousness; gift*. Grace is free because it is love. Free for sinners." So he defined grace as, "love to the ill-deserving."

Grace is unmerited favor. It is *power*, it is *love*, it is *free*. "Not...of works" Paul said. (vs9). We do nothing to merit or deserve salvation—to win forgiveness of sin or to get deliverance from eternal death and slavery to sin. Salvation is a gift of God that we can only *receive* by faith alone. And *faith*, very simply, is *trust*.

A fuller definition of faith is given in three words. Dr. Johnson, many of you will remember, would recite them in Latin: "*notitia, ascensus, fiducia*." Now, the last time I had Latin was when, literally, John Houseman was saying, "They earn it"; so my Latin has gone the way of Smith Barney.—But the English is: *knowledge, assent, trust*.

First, it involves knowledge. That's rather obvious, isn't it? A person must understand what is believed. We can't believe what we don't understand; we must have a *knowledge* of the propositions of the doctrines of the Bible and the meaning of the Gospel.

That's not enough, of course—it's not enough to believe 'in God'. Pagans believe 'in god'. They believe in 'the gods'. Jews and Muslims believe 'in god'; but the God of the Bible is not the god that they believe in. The God of the Bible is a Trinity. He is the Father: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Not three gods, but one God in three Persons—the Triune God who work together perfectly in the Godhead to bring about salvation.

God sent the Son to be the Savior by becoming a man. The eternal Son of God took upon Himself a human nature and a human body. Jesus, without sin, the perfect offering who offered Himself up as a sacrifice for sinners and taking our place in judgment so that we would escape that judgment; bearing our sins, bearing our guilt, and absorbing all the wrath of God against all of that—so that we would not experience it.

But it's not enough to *know* the 'propositions' or 'formal statements' of the Gospel—a person must also give *ascent* to them. There must be agreement; there must be an acknowledgment that, 'Yes, they are true. I understand it; I know it; I believe that it's true.'

But then, having recognized it as true: That Christ is both God and man, the second Person of the Trinity, who has come to be one of us; joined in this unique union of His human nature and His divine nature, that He alone is Savior and only He could save—a person must also *trust* in that alone, trust in Him alone and rest in that truth.

The story often cited to illustrate this faith is the story of Charles Blondin, a French acrobat, famous for crossing Niagara falls on a tight rope—160 feet above the water. On one occasion, he took a stove onto the tightrope and cooked an omelet above the falls. On another occasion, he took a wheel barrow across the tightrope—blindfolded.

And once he carried a man across on his back. In fact, if you look this up, you'll see pictures of him with a man on his shoulders, walking over the falls. And after bringing the passenger over safely, he asked a man in the crowd, "Do you believe I could do that with you?" And the man said, "Of course." But when Charles said, "Well, hop on.", the man refused. And the point of that is, he didn't really have faith.

Real faith involves *trust*, a 'movement of the will'. Now, I wouldn't have 'hopped on' either—but I'm a man of faith. I also believe in wind—and I know that a gust of wind

could have knocked him and me over into the falls. The acrobat was good—but he's not perfect, not immutable, and not omnipotent...so it's really not the best example.

The only example is the best example, and that is Christ. He cannot fail because He is God. And knowing that to be true, we trust in Him. Without faith, (without *knowledge, ascent, and trust*), there is no salvation.

In a moment of utter despair, when the man had come to the end of himself and was about to fall on his sword and end his life, Paul and Silas cried out to the Philippian jailer, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." (Acts 16:28). "Sirs" he then asked, "what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved..." (vs31). Simple, isn't it? Very uncomplicated: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved at that moment.'

Then they explained the Gospel to him and all who were in his house...and they were baptized. Not to be saved—but because they were saved. The Gospel is simple: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus.'

Spurgeon told the story of an old unbeliever who was dying when a Scottish preacher named Mr. Innis came to visit; and he asked the man about his faith. The man answered, "Mr. Innis, I am relying solely on the mercy of God; God is merciful, and He will never condemn a man forever." Well, that's a little bit like the poet, Heinrich Heine, on his deathbed where he famously said, "God will forgive me; that is His business."

Well, when things got worse, and the old man was near death, Mr. Innis went to him again. This time the man said, "Oh! Mr. Innis, my hope is gone; for I have been thinking if God is merciful, God is just also; and what if, instead of being merciful, He should show me justice? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God; tell me how to be saved!"

And so the minister told him, 'Christ', and how He came to save sinners. He did this by going to the cross to die in their place. And Jesus promised that all whom the Father had given to Him would never be lost. The dying man responded, "Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that; I can rest on that; I have found I cannot rest on anything else."

And that's what we do in saving faith—we rest on Christ. We believe the Word of God, and we rest in the promises that are there. We rest in the truth of the Gospel, confident that it is true. And it's true because it's God's Word. It cannot be false; it's Light, and we receive it. That's our necessary response to the Good News of salvation because that's not a response that we can take credit for, because Paul quickly adds, "...and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;" (vs8b).

But what is "the gift of God"? What does the pronoun, '*that*', "...that not of yourselves", refer to? Well, it would seem to refer to *faith*, since "faith" is the word closest to the pronoun. And generally, a pronoun like '*this*', or '*that*,' or '*it*' refers to the nearest word that precedes it. And that fits Paul's purpose here very well: His point is to show the free nature of salvation—that there is absolutely nothing about it of which we may boast. And the most effective way to show that, (that we are not only saved through faith apart from works), but that even our faith itself is the gift of God. How else could you show more clearly that, 'It is not of us in any way', for we cannot even take credit for the faith that we exercise?

Now the problem with this interpretation is *grammatical*. It's what we might call 'a gender gap'. What I mean is, the two words, '*faith*' and '*that*', differ from one another in gender. In the Greek language, words have gender; they're either masculine, feminine, or neuter. '*Faith*' is feminine, but the word '*that*', (this pronoun), and, "...that not of yourselves", is neuter—and usually pronouns agree in gender with the words that they refer to.

Now that's not always so, but generally it is; there is agreement between words in their gender. And so many others, Calvin for example, understood '*that*' as referring not just to '*faith*', but to the whole preceding sentence: "By grace you have been saved through faith..." (vs8a). The whole event is "not of ourselves"; and that would account for the neuter pronoun. Our sentence refers to the feminine words, *grace* and *faith*, but also to the masculine participle, "*have been saved*".



How then, do you refer to two feminine words and one masculine word when you're referring to both of them? Well, you use the neuter pronoun for that. And that probably, grammatically, is the safest explanation. —But either way, we come out at the same place with faith being a gift—which is clear from the teaching of Scripture elsewhere.

Philippians chapter 1, verse 29, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Now that's a kind of surprising statement in one way. —We get, "to suffer for Him"; 'That's a gift', is what he's saying. We don't think of it that way, but it is also making the point: 'We have believed because it "has been granted" to us.' *Granted* means *given*; 'It's been given to us to believe.'

When Peter told the church in Jerusalem that Cornelius and his household, (a Roman centurion and those of his family and the friends also, the Gentile friends that had gathered), had received the Holy Spirit, the people in Jerusalem, (the Jewish people, the Jewish believers), praised God. And they said, "God has *granted* to the Gentiles, repentance." Acts 11, verse 18. Repentance is a gift: *Granted—Given*.

Maybe the best example of this is Acts chapter 16, and the conversion of Lydia. Paul and his companions had come to Philippi; and on the first Sabbath they went to the riverside where a small group met. Luke wrote that as Paul was preaching, "Lydia was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul." (vs14). "The Lord opened her heart." —That's the Spirit's work; and as a result she understood his message, and she responded to it. She believed because the Holy Spirit *gave* her faith. And it gave her faith in this sense: He gave her life; He opened her heart. And with life, with regenerating life, she naturally responded in faith. She had 'eyes to see', as it were, and 'ears to hear.'

Imagine the disciples in John chapter 9, talking to this blind man. You know that they asked the Lord, 'Why is this man blind from birth? Is it his parents' sin, or his?' The Lord disabused them of that, 'Neither; this is to show the glory of God.' (vs2-3).

But now imagine that they engaged in a conversation with him, and they said, 'I just want you to know what a beautiful world it is out here. I know you can't see it, but

I'll describe it to you so you can appreciate it. There's color everywhere, all kinds of color. The grass is green, the sky is blue.' And he would respond, 'What's color?' He's never seen any of that; and how do you explain color? You can't explain it.

But then he goes down to the pool of Siloam; he washes the mud out of his eyes; and he looks up at the sky and says, 'That's blue!' Color has a direct, immediate effect upon us. J. I. Packer put it this way, "It forces itself on our senses. We don't reason it, we just know it; 'That's blue.' 'This is light.' 'Those are red.' "

I couldn't explain the colors of those flowers to someone who was born without sight. But this is the way the new birth is: We're born again, and suddenly we have 'eyes to see' —and we see it! We know it instantly, immediately! The truth of God's Word impresses itself upon us, forces itself upon our mind, and we know it's true, and we believe it, and we rest in that. And that's true of everyone who has believed in Jesus Christ.

Our faith is not of ourselves—it is the work of the Lord God. All of salvation is a work of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is the gift of God. John Stott warned against thinking that, 'Salvation is a kind of transaction between us and God in which He contributes grace, and we contribute faith.' "For," he wrote, "we were dead." Now that disabuses us of that whole idea.

It's all of God. And for the dead to have faith, it must be *granted*, it must be *given* of God. The transaction that did occur was between God the Father and God the Son, when Christ paid all of our debts on the cross. And the proof that God accepted that payment for us, the 'receipt' as it were, is the resurrection. Faith does not save—Christ's death saves. "Faith", as Lloyd Jones put it, "is merely the channel, the means of receiving what Christ has already accomplished and has obtained for us." And '*it*', again, is a *gift*, and nothing for which we can boast or take any credit for.

And to make that certain, to make certain that there's no question about that, Paul added verse 9; "...not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." It's 'not of works' of any kind: Whether they are 'good deeds' or whether they are 'acts of morality

or charity', or 'religious ceremonies' like *baptism*, or *taking the mass*, or *teaching Sunday School*. Salvation is free; and Paul made a point of that so that, 'we would not boast.'

But that is one reason the Gospel is such an offense—an "aroma from death to death" to so many. (2Cor 2:16). People and religions of the world want to boast. They want to be able to say, 'I earned it.' And so salvation as a free gift goes completely contrary to man's natural way of thinking about salvation.

All of the religions of the world are based on works, on human effort of one way or another, one kind or another—something that man supplies to it. Among the pagan religions we see that. The whole basis of that is a kind of *quid pro quo*, 'a favor for a favor.' The ancient Mayans believed that you have to take care of the gods if you want them to take care of you. And so they made sacrifices. Daily, constantly, those sacrifices were being made, (and many of them were human sacrifices). It was a religion driven by fear.

That's *natural religion*: Whether it's keeping the Law of Moses or it's following the rules of Islam, and praying five times a day toward Mecca, following a diet, (like, not eating pork). In every case, while the details may differ, the principle is the same: It's all a matter of *what a person does* to gain and to maintain the approval of god or the gods. It's uncertain, it's exhausting—and it's utterly futile. Salvation is not of works. It is only for those who can understand that we *receive* it; that it's a free *gift*.

The Lord gave an illustration of that in one of His parables, that of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18. Both men went to the temple to pray. When the Pharisee prayed he drew attention to the evils of others, (which he had avoided), and to the good works that he practiced—and thanked God that he was 'good' and not like that tax collector behind him.

But the tax collector behind him had no good works to boast about—nothing to recommend him to God. He was a sinner, and he knew it—and it grieved him. All he could do was beat his breast and cast himself on the LORD and pray, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!", (not 'a sinner', "**the** sinner"). He didn't lessen his load of guilt; he

confessed it. Then Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." (vs14a). Salvation is all of grace, the free gift of God, ("...not as a result of works so that no one may boast." (verse 9).)

Now, does that mean we can ignore good works, that they have no place in the Christian life? Of course not. They're necessary. They are, in fact, inevitable. —The person who has life will exhibit life. And Paul makes that very point next in verse 10 where he wrote that, 'We were created for good works'. They're not the basis of our salvation—they are the purpose of our salvation. We are created for good works; holiness is not an option.

Back in chapter 1, verse 4, Paul wrote that God chose us from all eternity to, "be holy and blameless before Him in love." In Titus chapter 2, verse 14 Paul wrote that Christ died for us that He might, "redeem us from every lawless deed and purify,..." so that we would be, as he says, "...zealous for good deeds."

"Zealous for good deeds". —They are not an option. There's no such thing as 'casual Christianity'. Christians are saved to be "zealous for good deeds". We are to be earnest for honesty and purity, diligence, and labor, and generosity. It's what we are as Christians—it's our new nature. Luther and the Reformers put it well: "Justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone." A living faith is an active faith—and good works are the evidence of God's work of grace in our lives.

In fact, good works are the product of God's grace. Paul doesn't let us for a moment, get away from sovereign grace. He calls us God's "workmanship". We are what He has made us to be. We are not self-made. Ultimately, all of the credit goes to the LORD. He is like a great artist, or a great sculptor, who has fashioned us into the image that we have. And He's patterned that image after the image of His Son. In fact, the Scriptures compare the LORD to, 'a potter who has formed us out of a lump of clay.' (Rom 9:21).

And here Paul says, "We are His workmanship." (vs10a). In the original text, the word "*His*", is the first word in the sentence to lay stress on it, emphasizing the fact that God alone has done the work—and is presently doing the work. He is not done forming us. We're being sanctified, transformed, at every moment of our life.

But what a work it is! When we were dead, He made us alive. He has transformed us from people who were indulging in "the desires of the flesh", (as Paul said in verse 3), into people, "zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:14). That is, again, "the greatness of His power toward us who believe", stated in chapter 1, verse 19. It's God's grace—sovereign grace.

Now Paul wrote two final truths that should encourage us as well as stimulate a positive response—one of obedience. He wrote that we are God's work, born again, we were "created in Christ Jesus for good works." (vs10b), and that God "prepared", (those 'good works' for us), " ...beforehand so that we would walk in them." (vs10c).

So because we have been put "in Christ", we have His life 'in us'. Just as a branch in a vine has the life of that vine in it, it makes the branch fruitful. And Christ's life in us enables us to act—and to do good.

We think differently from the way we did when we were following the course of this world. When we had a different direction following, 'the prince of this world', as Paul put it. (vs2). Now we want to live for the LORD, not for the other things. We want to please Him and glorify Him. And His life in us enables us to do that.

But in addition, Paul adds that the "good works" we were created for, were "prepared beforehand", by God, "so that we would walk in them." Now that's a surprising statement I know, but this word, *prepared beforehand*, is used in Romans chapter 9, verse 23, of God, 'preparing us beforehand for glory.'

And it's used in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 9, of glory being prepared for us; heaven is, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and *which* have not

entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." He has gone before us to prepare a place for us in heaven. (God prepares things ahead of time.)

God the Father, who chose us for faith and eternal life from all eternity, has put us "in Christ" so that we have 'powerful life' in us. And He has even prepared for us 'good works that we're to walk in'. —We can't even take credit for the good things we do.

Salvation, from beginning to end, is of the LORD—which is humbling. But it's not a pretext for laziness; or thinking, 'Well, it doesn't matter how I live, God's prepared good things for me to do. I'll do what He has prepared, and ...' That's not the thinking of a born-again mind and heart. No, that is evil reasoning; it's just the opposite.

God has graciously given us good works—an abundance of them. We're rich in good works—so we must get on with it and live in them, and do them! He has given us the power to do that. That's Godliness; it's the purpose of God's great gift.

And it is all of grace—and that should lead to thanksgiving, praise, and action in the abundant life that God has called us to—the 'abundant life' that Jesus spoke of in John chapter 10, verse 10. We have that...and we're to live it!

So, 'Are we doing that?' Are we walking in the good works that have been given to us—or walking in what Psalm 1 calls "the counsel of the wicked"? (vs1).

A moment ago I said there's no such thing as 'casual Christianity'. But Christians do fall into that, and they drift—they become worldly. We're all prone to wander; and the influence of the world and the flesh and the devil are strong. Stronger than we are, in and of ourselves.

We need to encourage one another in our walk of faith. Scripture teaches that. "Bear one another's burdens", Paul told the Galatians in chapter 6, verse 2. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 12, "Strengthen the hands that are weak, and the knees that are feeble." But I think nothing will keep us steadfast like an understanding of God's

sovereign grace and His powerful love—His unconditional love. As we understand all that He has done for us, as we understand that—to the degree that we understand that we will want to live for Him. It is the greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Have you believed? Or are you still in unbelief, walking according to the course of this world. That's a walk to destruction—and if I could become all the more biblical in stating it: 'That is a walk toward the lake of fire, which burns forever and ever.'

Only God can change that course. Look to Him. Ask Him for mercy; He will give it. He will open your heart, like He did Lydia long ago, to believe the Gospel and receive the Lord Jesus Christ. May God help you to do that.

And may God help all of us who have, to rejoice in this amazing grace that's ours. Let's pray.

*(Closing prayer)* Father, what a blessing to know that we can be called, 'Ransomed sinners', bought by the precious blood of Christ. And because we were bought by Him, by Your grace, we can speak of You no longer as our judge, but as our Father, and use that most intimate of terms, "Abba! Father!" We give You thanks and praise for that. Bless us, LORD, now as we go.

The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

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