**2nd Timothy 1:6-11**

:1 Paul,

 an apostle of Christ Jesus

 by the will of God,

 according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,

:2 to Timothy,

 my beloved son:

 Grace, mercy and peace

 from God the Father

 and Christ Jesus our Lord.:3 I thank God,

 whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did,

 as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,

:4 longing to see you,

 even as I recall your tears,

 so that I may be filled with joy.

:5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you,

 which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois,

 and your mother Eunice,

 and I am sure that it is in you as well.

:6 And

 for this reason

 I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God

 which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

:7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity,

 but of power and love and discipline.

:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,

 or of me His prisoner;

 but join with me in suffering for the gospel

 according to the power of **God,**

**:9 who has saved us,**

 **and called us**

**The nature of God’s gracious work**

 **with a holy calling,**

 **not according to our works,**

 **but according to His own purpose and grace**

**The source of God’s gracious work**

 **which was granted us**

 **in Christ Jesus**

 **from all eternity,**

:10 **but now has been revealed**

 **by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,**

**The triumphs of God’s gracious work**

 **who abolished death,**

 **and brought life and immortality to light**

 **through the gospel**,

:11 for which I was appointed

 a preacher

 and an apostle

 and a teacher.

**Intro / Context**

We find ourselves – this morning – exactly at the halfway point in our study of the Solas of the Reformation. Thus far, we have considered only two of the five **Solas**. The first, **Sola Scriptura**, Scripture *alone,* opens the door to the other four. After more than a thousand years of being hidden within the translation of the Latin Vulgate, translations into vernacular languages liberated the Scriptures from bondage. And at the rediscovery of the richness and clarity of the Scriptures, the commitment of *Scripture alone* naturally emerged as a lively principle.

Last Lord’s day, we looked at the second of the five – **Solus Christus**, Christ alone – that in Jesus Christ God has provided everything for salvation. As we were reminded last Sunday, Jesus believed in Solus Christus, and He declared it most clearly in John 14:6 …

**“I am**

 **the way,**

 **and the truth,**

 **and the life;**

**no one comes to the Father but through Me.**

Jesus – and no other – is **the way, the truth, and the life**. There is no other means of access to the heavenly Father – only through Christ. Jesus Christ is the One source of Redemption and forgiveness of sin.

And so, this week, at our halfway point, we take up the consideration of the third **Sola – Sola Gratia,** Grace alone. As we have seen, **the Solas of the Reformation** were not a series of tenets declared and recited *during* the Reformation. As far as we have been able to determine, there is no historical document that sets for the five Solas until 1996 – in what was called ***The Cambridge Declaration***. That document looks back into the mindsets and to the operating principles of the Reformation and observes these five key beliefs …

***Sola Scriptura* – Scripture alone** – the one source of Divine Revelation

***Solus Christus –* Christ alone** – the One source of Redemption and forgiveness of sin

***Sola Gratia* – Grace alone** – the one means of spiritual restoration

***Sola Fide –* Faith alone** – the one means of possessing Christ’s righteousness, being *justified* before a Holy God

***Soli Deo Gloria –* God’s glory alone** – the one great aim of every true child of God – that God would receive all Glory and Honor

Thus far, we have found these principles to be biblically oriented – even if not outwardly declared tenets. We have found these principles to be not only biblical, but actively at work in the lives and passionate efforts of the Reformers. And we trust that we will find the same with regard to the remaining principles.

As we have seen – with regard to both *Scripture* and *the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ*, over a thousand years of mischief without accountability to God’s Word, the Catholic Church had invented and instituted many grave heresies. And the Church’s exclusive stewardship of the Scriptures, availed only to scholars and priests, was a convenient cloak. The Gospel as well had not only been tainted but had been so misconstrued that in its current form was no Good News at all. Instead of the liberating truth of *Justification by Faith –* faith alone in Christ alone for Salvation, Christianity had become a system of merit and reward – a never ending pursuit of so-called grace that never provided sinners biblical assurance of salvation. We saw the devastating effects that a thousand years of spiritual darkness had on the biblical doctrines of Scripture and Christ the Savior. The Gospel too had become horribly disfigured.

To begin to grasp the magnitude of the disturbing and damaging effects upon the Gospel, we have to first remind ourselves about the biblical doctrine of Grace. The word, translated as ***grace***, is the beautiful Greek word, ***χαρις***. It is used about 130x in the NT. And in its most basic sense, it means *favor, kindness, graciousness*.

As we begin to back away to formulate a *doctrine* of Grace, a general summary of the nature of Grace, we come upon some familiar attempts to define it. Perhaps the most well-known attempt to define grace is ***undeserved favor****.* And that does capture several important features – *favor* is kindness, positive good. And *undeserved* captures an important aspect of Grace – it cannot be earned. But Grace goes even beyond that – whereas we *deserved* the very opposite, judgment and wrath, God in His mercy bestows upon us positive good. *That’s* grace.

Yet another popular description of God’s Grace is presented in the acrostic …

G-R-A-C-E – **G**od’s **R**esources **A**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense.

This presents several additional features of biblical idea of ***grace*** – 1) this positive good is from the overflow of *God’s resources,* and 2) these resources are secured for the Christian by Christ’s Sacrifice. And that also points to the fact that there is – with biblical *grace –* a distinct element related to our Salvation.

It is also important to note that Grace clearly has the sense of free, that is, undeserved, favor. Whereas we deserved God’s severest punishment – He instead bestows His richest favor. And this Grace can never be earned, nor can it ever be repaid. God’s Grace, is, as theologian Charles Hodge described it, ‘the overflowing abundance of unmerited love.’ Overflowing, yes – and even when it is overflowing for the Christian, it is inexhaustible. Love, yes. Deserved, not at all. The blessing of divine grace is absolutely unmerited, unearned. It cannot be bought with material wealth. It cannot be earned through any work of benevolence. It is Grace, God’s Grace, given solely out of the sovereign goodness and providence of God. Think of God’s grace in view of our own. If we were to show an abundance of grace, the well would soon run dry – especially if the recipient is less than deserving. But God’s Grace is different in that no one, even the most ungodly sinner, can ever exhaust God’s resources of Grace, once He purposes to bestow them.

But the Roman Catholic Church has a very different perspective of God’s grace, and a profoundly different means of its distribution. They would agree that grace is necessary for salvation – that it is in measure *divine enablement*, but the Church sits as the dispenser of that *grace*. And the obligatory pursuit of saving grace is constant. One must maintain a steady intake of God’s grace if they are to be saved in the end.

Here is an illustration of how I would characterize the Roman Catholic system of dispensing grace. Perhaps you remember Grimm’s fairy tale about *Hansel and Gretel*. These two, brother and sister, venture into the forest, dropping breadcrumbs on the trail so that they can find their way back out of the woods. Well, I would liken Roman Catholic distribution of grace to those proverbial breadcrumbs dropped along a footpath. Except that, the illustration in my mind is of a hungry bird – popping along the trail eating those bits of bread. The crumbs don’t amount to a meal. So, the bird is never fully satisfied. She gets barely enough nourishment to sustain the energy she is expending following the breadcrumb trail. If she stops, she dies. She must keep hopping along, gobbling up each morsel of bread.

Such is the Roman Catholic system of *grace*. The Church had mastered instruction of her people’s need to seek grace from the Church and its system. From the time a child is old enough to know of their need for grace, to the final desperate moment of the person’s life, they are caught up in a moment-by-moment dependance upon the meager tidbits of dispensed grace. The faithful must continue to eagerly seek these morsels.

The Roman Catholic system of dispensing grace includes – first of all – *Seven Sacraments.* These so-called *sacraments* developed over the centuries as the means of grace, things that aid in a person’s salvation. It wasn’t until the Council of Florence in A.D. 1439 that the Church even agreed that there were *seven* of these *sacraments.* Here they are for your consideration …

* **Baptism** – the individual must be baptized *as a Catholic*
* **Confirmation** – in this rite the Holy Spirit is conferred
* **Mass / Eucharist** – the reception of the body and blood of Christ during communion
* **Penance** – not the same thing as *our* repentance. Penance is the payment of a penalty doled out by a priest to secure forgiveness for confessed sins.
* **Extreme Unction** – prayer by the priest for the dying, Last Rites

These five *sacraments* are indispensable to salvation, according to the Catholic Church. A Catholic cannot be saved without them. Several of them – baptism and confirmation – can be done, checked off, so to speak. But Communion and Penance are – again, as mere breadcrumbs along the path. They must be constantly sought or performed throughout the person’s life.

I said that there were seven sacraments. There are two others …

* **Marriage** – optional
* **Orders** – entrance into the ministry – optional

These are optional. They are not mandatory, but they can *add* grace to those who submit to them.

These are the means by which grace is conferred. Just so many breadcrumbs along the path. But there are other tidbits along the way – other sources of grace to be dispensed – Confession, Purgatory, and Indulgences.

* **Confession** – this one is directly tied to the *sacrament of Penance* mentioned above. In order to receive one’s penance, one’s punishment for sin, a person must go to the priest in confession of sin for his forgiveness. A good Catholic is obligated to do this once per year! May I tell those of you without Catholic backgrounds what this is like? The individual enters a small room called a confessional – think closet. In that room, there is a small, closeable window – which only the priest can open and close. When the priest opens the window, you begin this established dialogue, ‘Bless me father for I have sinned.’ And then you utter your particular confession to the priest. In turn, he issues the penitent individual a series of punishments – Hail Mary’s, Our Fathers.
* **Purgatory** we’ve spoken about previously. It is that theological invention of the Catholic Church that was first introduced in **A.D. 593**. The doctrine maintains that for any who die in an imperfect state, they go to a place called purgatory to continue paying for their sin, where they can be *helped by the intercessions of the faithful* – kind of a ’time-out’ for adults, a strange *‘waystation’* where you wait until you are perfected for heaven. The problem is, no one knows exactly where one stands with God and the Church, and so the pure Gospel of Christ – justification by faith – is effectively nullified.
* And verry closely related to purgatory are **Indulgences**. This is means that others – friends and relatives – have of participating in the process of perfecting of loved ones in purgatory. It is accomplished by prayer and ultimately the sale of the forgiveness of sin for money. This practice, as I pointed out earlier, was introduced in **A.D. 1190** and was found to be especially despicable to the reformers, because Jesus Christ purchased sinners’ pardon with His own blood!

With all of these means and many others, grace was dangled before the members of the Church like the proverbial donkey’s carrot. The people were always in pursuit, but never able to fully lay hold of saving grace.

But there was another theological inaccuracy that made all of this possible. The Roman Catholic Church believed, and taught her people to believe, that gathering up enough of God’s grace was *possible*, that measuring up to God’s standard was *possible*. All that a person had to do, was be baptized and confirmed into the Church, go to Mass and take communion – without fail, go to Confession, do penance, and be so fortunate as to have a priest at your bedside at death. Human effort was possible and necessary for salvation. Grace must be constantly pursued.

The Reformers came along and saw humanity in a different light, according to God’s Word. They saw that grace, while absolutely necessary, was not attainable by sinners. Salvation could not be earned because we did not have the ability to gather enough grace. It’s not just that sinners *needed* grace. But that they needed grace *alone.* Human effort was not possible. What made the process of a sinner securing his or her salvation was the dreadful effect upon us from the Fall of Adam and Eve. Ephesians 2 paints the picture accurately. It says **you were dead in your trespasses and sins**. This is that *spiritual death* that we talked about several weeks ago – one of the four effects of the Fall – that humanity walked out of that garden *inherently sinful* (we now had a sin-nature), *temporally vexed* (cursed here on earth – **sweat of the brow, pain in childbirth**), *physically dying* (mortality was suddenly a reality), but of all the effects, the fourth was the worst by far – *spiritually dead* – our communion with God and our ability to relate to Him was destroyed. We were left with a complete inability to do anything to rescue or restore our standing with this Holy God. We were too dead to do anything meriting or chasing divine grace. Grace was *not* something that could be gathered and accumulated over time for salvation. Grace in its entirety must be bestowed by God upon the helpless sinner. And so all of salvation was believed to be all of grace. And this is precisely Paul’s point as Ephesians 2 transitions to good news – **you were dead in your trespasses and sins … But God** – verse :4 – **being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).** When it says there that he **made us alive**, Paul is pointing there to the great doctrine of *regeneration,* in which God in His grace brings the dead sinner back to life. Those who are saved by God are, by this special, instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit, *regenerated*, *reborn* from a state of deadness in sin to a state of newness of life (1 Pe. 1:3-5; John 3). And this *regeneration* is wholly a work of the Holy Spirit in the sinner’s life. But once spiritually enlivened, upon hearing the truth of the Gospel the individual will certainly come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. In your salvation, … God … moved … first. Grace alone – ***Sola Gratia.***

Well, needless to say, that when these so many would-be reformers began to consider these Catholic ideas in light of Scripture, they were greatly appalled. You see, there is yet another feature of grace that I think we should capture from Scripture. We could rightly think of Grace as **divine enablement**. We see this in Scripture both *generally* and *specifically* with regard to Salvation. Divine enablement. Let me show you what I mean by a *general* divine enablement. By this, I mean the equipping, or the spiritual energy, provided by God that *enables* a servant or servants to do or accomplish some task. Luke captures this in the earliest days of the Church. He presents the apostles as faithfully proclaiming the Gospel Acts 4:33 – just listen …

And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **abundant grace was upon them all**. Divine enablement!

In other words, they were divinely enabled. Several chapters later, Luke captures the same thing in Stephen’s life – Acts 6:8 …

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, **full of grace and power**, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Stephen was divinely enabled to serve God in a fantastic way. Grace = Divine enablement.

Paul was always quick to acknowledge that divine enablement was the only way that he was able to do what he did … In Romans 12:3, Paul couches his admonitions to the Church **through the grace given to me.** In 15:15 of that same epistle, he acknowledges that his **boldness** is due to **the grace that was given me from God**. He tells the Corinthians, 1st Corinthians 3:10, that he labored **like a wise master builder …** **According to the grace of God which was given to me.** And famously he declares in 15:10 of that letter, **by the grace of God I am what I am.** He operated, **not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God** – 2nd Corinthians 1:12. He speaks of **God’s grace** as a stewardship **given to *him***, Ephesians 3:2, by which ***he* was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace,** verse :7. The very next verse, verse 3:8, To me, the very least of all saints, this **grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ**. Well, I think you get the point – God’s enabling grace was *everything* to the great Apostle.

And Paul was not only *constantly* acknowledging God’s grace in his own life, he was ever urging that believers draw upon the endless supply of God’s sustaining grace! There are literally dozens of times that Paul directs or commends God’s people to His sustaining grace.

But Grace – divine enablement – is also a significant element of salvation. In many of the key passages speaking about the various aspects of salvation, God’s grace is prominent. Let me lead you through a highlight of the New Testament passages that present elements of salvation as gifts of God’s grace. Listen – first – to Titus, chapter 2. There, Paul tells us that **the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men** – obviously not literally *every* person ever born, but all kinds of men – rich or poor, black or white, tall or short, blue eyes or brown eyes – **God’s grace has *brought* salvation to all men.**

God’s grace comes bearing the gift of salvation. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he says **by grace you have been saved through faith.** So, generally, salvation is a product of God’s grace. And different elements pertaining to our salvation are also declared to be products of God’s grace.

In Romans 3, Paul tells us that **we are justified as a gift by *God’s* grace.** Romans 5 goes on to tell us that we receive **Christ’s righteousness** as a blessing of God’s Grace. In Ephesians 1, Paul says that our **redemption** is the result of God’s grace.

And for our purposes this morning, I would like us to turn to 2nd Timothy, chapter 1.

**Read 2nd Timothy 1:3-11 🡪**

Now, there is a lot there, and we cannot possibly tackle it all. But allow me to briefly walk through this passage. This epistle, 2nd Timothy, as many of you likely know, is Paul’s final letter. He was released from his initial Roman imprisonment and had a brief, additional season of ministry. But now he has been arrested again, in what is a much more brutal imprisonment. Paul knows that his martyrdom is not far off. So, he knows well that these are some of his last written words. And how appropriate that this letter is written to Timothy, the young believer whose giftedness he recognized during his ministry in Lystra, who became Paul’s near constant companion and fellow worker in the Gospel, and whom he refers to in his initial letter as ***his* true child in the faith** … and later as his ***spiritual* son**. Here in the opening greeting of his second letter to Timothy, he refers to him as ***his* beloved son.** In essence, this is Paul’s *Last Will and Testament* and will go on to urge Timothy to **guard … the treasure** that is the Gospel. Paul warns of a great falling away from the faith. Well, this entire passage, as we will find, testifies to Grace alone – ***Sola Gratia*** – the divine enablement men need for salvation.

We don’t know exactly what was going on with young and delicate Timothy. But in these opening verses, Paul goes out of his way to encourage his young child in the faith – reminding him of his **prayers** for him in verse :3, his desire to see him in verse :4, his *confidence* in the genuineness of Timothy’s conversion in verse :5, and his direct admonition in verse :6 **to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in *him***.

What we have in verses :8 and following is an application of that admonition – introduced by that word, **Therefore**. Paul continues on his theme of encouragement to persevere when he opens in verse :8 with, **do not be ashamed** – either **of the testimony of our Lord or of me his prisoner.** Timothy has no just cause for second guessing or doubting based on what appears to be bleak circumstances. Timothy must press on in the faith – and he must do so, as Paul urges, by ***joining* with *Paul* in suffering for the Gospel** – that God’s power for doing so is more than sufficient. And in these verses, verses :9-11, Paul gives Timothy … and us three glorious features of God’s Work of Grace.

We know that Paul has transitioned to speaking about God’s work of salvation based on what he says in verse :9. Would you glance there. Here, he speaks of **God, who has saved us, and called us**. It ought not surprise or distress us to hear God spoken of as our **Savior**. This doesn’t take anything away from Jesus Christ as our Savior. **God** is referred to as **Savior** many times in Scripture – 1st Timothy 1:1, 2:3, Titus 1:3, 2:10, 3:4 – **God our Savior**. God is the author of Salvation and so He can justly be called **our Savior.**

These two wonderful words – ***saving*** and ***calling*** are not two separate things. They refer to one and the same blessing in two articulations – the one, ***salvation,*** referring to the ultimate state; and the second, ***calling***, pointing to the divine process. All of it, Paul says at the end of verse :8, is **according to the power of God**. This pictures God’s grace as actively at work in the lives of believers.

This ***salvation*** of which Paul speaks is no other than God’s great purpose in His plan of redemption – the salvation of sinners from the penalty of sin. Not surprisingly, this word, **saved**, is used over a hundred times in the New Testament. And unequivocally, Paul declares that **salvation** is exclusively a work of God’s Grace. This is the consistent declaration of Scripture – Grace *alone.* Remember when the question of the Gentiles salvation came to the Apostles attention, it was Peter that stood and acknowledged, **we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way that they** **are.** Grace alone. In his deep theological letter to the Ephesians, Paul pointed out that **In Him**, that is, in Christ, **we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace** – Grace alone.

And what Paul elaborates on by this second feature – that **God *has* called us**– is the secret spiritual process of His work of ***salvation.*** First of all, the ***calling*** of a sinner to salvation is always attributed to God the Father in the New Testament. Paul says it so clearly in 1st Corinthians 1:9 – **God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.** In addition to the outward general call to salvation, which is made to every person who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to God’s elect a special inward call that inevitably brings the sinner to salvation. It is essentially the same thing as *regeneration* which we saw a moment ago – a spiritual enlivening. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ.

We see this often in Scripture, take Acts 18:27 as an example …

:27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped **those who had believed through grace**,

God's grace, therefore, is invincible, it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

So, this ***calling*** of which Paul speaks here, how is a sinner **called**? Paul tells us in Galatians 1:6 that we are **called … by the grace of Christ**. This is God’s doing. God’s grace, again, is divine enablement. In 2 Thessalonians 2:14 Paul says at ***God* called *us* through *the* gospel**. It is nothing other than the Good News of Christ’s redemption by His death on the Cross by which we are **called** and **saved.**

But get this – consider what all we are **called** to in this **calling.** Scripture tells us that we are **called** …

* to **hope** – Ephesians 1:18
* to **eternal life –** 1st Timothy 6:12
* **out of darkness into His marvelous light –** 1st Peter 2:9
* to ***God’s* own kingdom and glory** – 1st Thessalonians 2:12
* **into fellowship with *God’s* Son, Jesus** – 1st Corinthians 1:9

So, basically, Paul begins here by declaring that our salvation is by *Grace alone –* ***Sola Gratia.***

As I mentioned a moment ago, Paul gives us three glorious features of God’s work of grace. Let’s consider each of these features. First, Paul tells us of **The nature of God’s Gracious Work**. For this, would you please just glance again as we gather up some of Paul’s intermediate thoughts there in verse :9. Here, he wants to elaborate on this idea of ***calling*** – what he means by ***calling***.

The first thing that Paul uses to describe God’s work is the phrase, **a holy calling**. This isn’t a suggestion necessarily that the One making the **call** is Holy – although that is true. Nor is it describing the call itself – as if the invitation in itself is Holy. No, what Paul is saying here is that this divine **call** by God is a **call** to ***holiness. Holiness*** or practical **righteousness** is the very thing that keeps sinners from fellowship with God. Only God’s grace can eclipse that gulf by a life-changing **call** to a life of ***holiness***.

But please note the second thing that Paul says about God’s ***calling*** – he says that it is **not according to our works**. How is it that religion – man’s ideas about reaching up to God – are all built on a system of works? And yet, Paul makes clear forever here that salvation is not, never has been, never could be by man’s works, man’s efforts, man’s deeds. What moved God to save us? Great question. It wasn’t our works. Paul said the same thing to Titus, carrying out his own ministry on the island of Crete – Titus 3:5 - He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy. Salvation is never a result of our efforts. It is only by His grace.

The third thing that Paul tells us about God’s **calling** in the middle of verse :9 is that it is **according to His own purpose and grace**. This just echoes and drives home the point of the previous two statements. God is not bound or obligated by anything that any person ever does. **Salvation** is by and because of His own free grace alone. God was not prompted to move by anything outside of Himself. As Paul says in Ephesians 1, it was only **according to the kind intention of His will.** It is nothing other than the sovereign goodness and grace of God.

So, Paul tells us first about **The nature of God’s Gracious Work**. And secondly, Paul tells us here about **the source of God’s Gracious Work**. We find his thoughts there near the end of verse :9, carrying over into verse :10. Would you glance down there at Paul’s characterization of grace. He says, first, that it is that **which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.** God’s plan of redemption has its orientation in eternity past. Christ coming to earth, taking on flesh, paying our redemption on the Cross was not plan B. This was all completely in line with the divine plan from the beginning. And, as the believer’s election to salvation is also rooted in God’s eternal plan, **Christ Jesus** was as good as ours as soon as God conceived of this plan.

But Paul’s second statement – there in the beginning of verse :10 – makes it clear that what God ordained in eternity past has now become reality – our great Savior, Jesus Christ, has been revealed. This is God’s **eternal purpose** (Eph 3:11). Look at the way Paul says it – this **grace, which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity … has now been revealed.** God’s plan of salvation is no longer a **mystery** – as Paul calls it in 1st Corinthians 2:7, no longer just a future promise. It is a sure actuality, because it has **been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus.** And this **appearing** by Jesus is talking about Christ’s *first,* not His *second* coming, and not merely his incarnation, but His manifestation to the world. It points to God’s provision of a Savior in Jesus Christ. This too, is nothing other than divine enablement – Grace alone, ***Sola Gratia.***

Paul has shown the **The nature of God’s Gracious Work,** and **the source of God’s Gracious Work – His Son, Jesus Christ**. And thirdly, Paul tells us of **The triumphs of God’s Gracious Work** here in verse :10. In verse :10, Paul has spoken of our Savior, **Christ Jesus**. And as he concludes this verse, he tells of the grand victories accomplished through the Savior. Look first, he says that **our Savior Christ Jesus … abolished death.** When Paul says that Jesus **abolished death,** he means that he rendered it null and void, inoperative. This is Paul’s same line of reasoning in Romans 5 – whereas Adam introduced death into humanity’s realm, Christ brought eternal life. For the Christian, **death** is no longer to be feared. **Death** is no longer our great enemy. **Death** no longer has any control over us as believers. What we – in our greatest hopes – could not eliminate, God, in His marvelous grace, did.

The second grand victory that Jesus accomplished is that ***He* brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.** This is the positive equivalent of ***abolishing* death.** By God’s Grace alone, He has granted **life** – eternal **life**, life everlasting – what he calls here, **immortality**. We are made ***immortal***. Our souls live eternally. But eternal existence did not have the positive appeal that it does with forgiveness and eternal joy in Christ. **Through the Gospel**, as Paul says it here, we come to know of Christ’s redemption – paid in full by His sacrifice for us on His Cross. No wonder that amid Paul’s great testimony to the Ephesian Elders, Acts 20, Paul referred to the Good News of Christ as **the Gospel of the Grace of God.**

“… no man can be thoroughly humbled until he knows that salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, devices, endeavors, will, and works, and depends entirely on the choice, will, and work of another, namely, of God alone … then he has come close to grace, and can be saved. Luther q to close?