

# IF IT'S BY GRACE, IT IS SURE

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Greetings! It is such a blessing for me to come to you today! I am here in Pirenopolis in Brazil. It is such a beautiful place! I've come to preach the Grace of God here. It is such an awesome experience to preach here. I am here with Bishop Florie who is an influential man who has a lot of influence on people in this area. He had a wonderful big conference here and invited me to come and speak and preach radically to all these people... leaders who are representing thousands of people, that we could speak to, minister to. I am excited to be here. I am excited to bring you this message today. I trust that this broadcast works well. I am sitting in my hotel room and I am streaming to Facebook and then from my iPad I am streaming to YouTube. I hope everything works.

Let's pray together and then I am going to be preaching on, "It is by grace so that you can be sure." I'm going to talk about it from Romans chapter 4.

Father, I want to thank You so much for Your Grace and Your mercy. I want to thank You for the love that You have for us. Thank You that it is by grace and not by our works, so that the promise can be sure so that what You've dreamt for us can definitely manifest in our lives so we don't have to doubt about it but that we can be sure about it. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for just speaking powerfully through me today. Amen

Let us go to Romans chapter 4. First, I want to say that I'm not really going to go in depth into this. I have not made notes about this. I have just been preaching this whole week sharing with people all the time. I realized that I'm not preaching this morning but only in this evening so it gives me a bit of time to now share with you guys. So, this is, basically, preaching unprepared.

**Romans 4:1 *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found?***

He is asking the question. He is saying, "Listen, do you think that Abraham attained what he attained by the flesh, or by his own power, by obeying the Law?" What Paul has in mind here is circumcision and following after the Ten Commandments and doing all those kinds of things.

**2 *For if Abraham were justified by works, he has something to glory about; but not before God.***

**3 *For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***

That is what he is saying. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

So, he's saying, "Listen, can Abraham boast a little bit about what he got right and what he attained by his own in his life?" He says that if he wants to boast, he can boast to some friends and tell them, "Look how good I am and what I've attained. Look at my money and look at all my camels and what I got right and my hundreds of soldiers I have." But he will not be able to boast before God because the Scripture says that he believed God. God promised him these things and then God gave him those things. You know, if someone promised you something and then he fulfills his promise, you cannot go to that person and boast about what you have done because you and him both know that it was not by what you have done. It is by what he has done and what he has given you.

It's like if somebody gives me a house. Then I take the man to the house and show him and tell him, "Listen man, look how hard I have worked. Look how I've saved up money. Look how I followed certain principles and now I've got this house! What do you think about this?" I mean, the guy would look at me as if I am on drugs or something because, hey, wake up! I gave you this house! It was by my ability that you now have a house. It is by my ability that you are a homeowner. It is by my ability that you are not renting. It's by my ability that you are not on the street. It's by my ability that you are sure that you will have a place to stay tomorrow. It's all by me and now you want to boast before me by what you have done?"

That is basically what Paul has in mind here when he talks about Abraham. He says in verse **3** ***For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.***

And now a very powerful verse: **4** ***Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.***

That's where I want to stand still a little bit today. It says, "Those that work, the reward is not reckoned of grace but of works." So when you work for something, the thing you receive is not coming by promise. It is by your own ability. We need to understand that. Then Paul comes and he reckons that bringing forth a promise or the fulfillment of a promise as grace. Let us read it again:

**3** ***For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.***

**4** ***Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.***

What does that mean? If you read between the lines, you can see what grace actually is. When God makes you a promise, the reason He promises you something is so that He can, by His ability, bring it forth in you so that it can be definite. It's like if I tell my son that I will take him to the hockey match. The reason why I promised him that is because I know that by his own ability he will not make it. He doesn't have a vehicle. He must walk. It is fifty miles away. So, what do I do? I look at his own ability. I know that he hasn't got transportation there. It is not within his ability. He cannot reach it. Then I promise him. Why do I make him the promise that I will take him? It is so that I can know that he will surely reach the hockey match and that he will be a partaker in that match. That is what it is all about.

God looked at man and, in this case, He looked at Abraham and He saw that Abraham cannot have children. He saw that Abraham, in his body, is already dead as pertaining to being fruitful and having kids. And He looked at Sarah's womb and He knew that she was barren. She could not bear children. They had already tried for many years and they couldn't have any children. God wanted Abraham to have children and to be the father of many nations. Therefore, He made him a promise so that He, God Himself, was obligated to keep the promise so that Abraham would definitely have children. I hope you can see what I am talking about here. The only way, and the only surety, that we can have that some good will come into our lives is if God promises that He will do it. That's the only way because we, in ourselves, don't have the ability to produce that good as what God has in mind.

Now, let's read it again: **Romans 4:1 *What shall we say then that Abraham attain to everything attained by his own works?***

It says, "No!" The scripture says that Abraham believed God. That made God the one that was "pulling his wagon". That made God the one who was bringing it forth in his life. Then it says that the way God works is that He makes it by promise so that the reward can be by grace. Let's go back to my son again and the hockey match. He cannot reach that hockey match by his own ability. So, now I come and make him a promise so that, as he believes me, that he will not engage his own ability which is just going to get him halfway there or not even close to halfway, but then it can be by my ability. My ability to take him from point A to point B is basically what the word, grace, is. It is my influence and my power to make what I promised, come true.

It says here that God promises us so that it can be by His ability. That is what it is all about. It is by promise so that it can be by His ability and not our ability. When we look at what the promise of God is, we can know that whatsoever God has promised we don't have to try and bring that forth. We can simply believe upon Him so that the very thing that He has promised can manifest by His power and not our power. That is so beautiful!

Let's go on...

**:4 Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**

So, my definition of grace is God's ability to bring forth what God has promised. Grace is not, "God's not being angry!" Grace is God's ability to bring forth what God has promised. Isn't that absolutely beautiful! I wanted to be by grace. I want it to be by the goodness and the kindness and the love of God because then it will be sure for, He is a keeper of His promise.

What has God promised? What must we believe? Now he brings it closer to home.

**5 But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

So what must we believe?

You must believe God justifies the ungodly. What is God's promise? God's promise is that those who cannot do it by their ability, those who come short, those who cannot live holy, those who cannot solve their marital problems, those who say, "I don't know how to raise my kids!", those that say, "I don't have any wisdom on how to have eternal life... If you want to use the old language we have always used... those who don't know what to do to get to heaven, that don't have enough good works, those that don't know how to perform a righteous life, who always feel, "I fall short". He came to them and He promised them His life. He said, "I promise you eternal life. I promise you that I will conquer sin in your flesh. I promise you that I will bring forth love and kindness and goodness in your life. I promise you that I will take you inside your mortal human being and I will give you eternal life. I will solve all the shortcomings in your flesh and I will glorify you that you can bear and have My very glory!" That is what He was saying. That makes me so happy! The Creator of the heaven and the earth has said, "You can never attain a holy life. Therefore, I promise you that. Just believe Me so that it can be sure because the moment we must take our ability, our faithfulness to pray enough, our faithfulness to go to church enough, our faithfulness to love our neighbor enough, our faithfulness to read the Bible enough, and all those kinds of things.

We are NEVER going to know what it feels like to love our neighbor. We are never going to know what it feels like not to fear when it comes to money. We're never going to know what it feels like to be truly generous. We're never going to know what it feels like to love others more than just our own selves and have all the self-interest. We are never going to know what it feels like to see others and ourselves as truly valuable and the God kind. We are never going to know what it feels like to share in the life of God. That is why God came and said, "I do all of this by promise. I promise you this!" Then, he who believes God, the ability of God to fulfill His promise, is called grace. So, we are preaching the Gospel of Grace.

What is the Gospel of Grace? The Gospel of Grace, is the ability of God. It is the message, the Good news, that attaining to the life of God is by the power of God and we can just believe.

Paul takes this a bit further by quoting David: ***Romans 4:6 Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works,***

Righteousness without works means the following: You qualify to have the perfect holy life, the life of God, by God keeping His promise. That's what it means. God keeps His promise and as God keeps His promise, you will have that life.

Yesterday I was speaking to Bishop Florian. We were talking about grace. We were talking about how certain people understand grace. Their definition of grace is, "God is not going to punish me." The moment you have that shallow definition of grace of God is not going to punish me or God is not angry anymore, you are sitting with a message which basically says that Jesus, His death and resurrection, solved the anger in God's heart and He was actually gracious towards God. God's graced Himself not to be angry any more. That is not the true Gospel! The true Gospel is not the message that God is not angry. I've got good news for you: God is not a friendly God. He is not ticked off at things!

When His own children, when God warned them and said, “Don’t put your finger in the wall socket, called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for it will “electrocute you! it will kill you!” And when man did it, God didn’t, all of a sudden, have an anger problem, a wrath problem, that He had to deal with in His heart. No, the problem that God had was the moment man put their finger into that socket and they are busy dying, His “problem” was, “How am I going to switch the electricity off? How am I going to switch death off?” That was what God had in mind. He wanted to switch death off, my friend.

I remember when there was a time when I was shocked. I don’t want to say electrocuted because you would die. There was an electric extension cord that I made up and I used it for a long time but I made a mistake on how I assembled it and the screw that goes through the plug, I accidentally screwed it through the live wire. In South Africa we have 220 volts, double of what is in the United States. You can easily die of that. I remember that I was working outside one day and I plugged in a grinder. As I plugged it in, it started to shock me and my hand closed around it. I fell over and the wire fell with me. I was lying on the ground and as much as my brain said, “Leave that thing which is killing you!”, I couldn’t. I didn’t have the power to leave it and I started to make funny noises.

My wife was in the house and she heard that something was wrong outside. She ran and saw me on the ground being electrocuted and she ran to the main power and switched it off and saved my life. I don’t know how long I was on the power and then even the extension cord started to melt on how much power was going through me. The breaker didn’t flip. It was just a very old house. It was the house I lived in where the grass was growing through the walls. It was supposed to have been condemned but it wasn’t and I lived there.

While I was under the electricity, I didn’t have the power to end my own death. I didn’t. But it was within the power of my wife to end my death and she went and switched the electricity off.

God knows that inside man is nothing that can produce eternal life or holy works, or what is good. Therefore, He said, “I promise you so that it can be sure.” It would be like my wife saying, “I’m standing here and should it happen,(Please don’t get shocked with electricity) but should it happen, I want to tell you that I am here to switch off the electricity” so that I can be sure that you will not die but that you will live.” I think that is basically what God had in His mind when He promises man eternal life and blessing and holiness by Him. When we believe this truth, Church, the expectation that we have is the fruit of the Spirit... a brand new life by Him. Let’s read on:

**Romans 4:**

**6 Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works,**

**7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven...**

So, what is grace? Grace is God’s ability to forgive us of our iniquities. Now, what is iniquity? Iniquity is the ability to harm. Iniquity is the inability inside man to produce eternal life or holiness by himself.

He says here, "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven". The word, forgiven, means to separate or to divorce or to move away or to remove from its origin. What he is saying is, "Blessed is the man whom God comes and overcomes that man's weakness." How does God overcome our weakness? God comes and overcomes our weakness by saying to us, "Whatever you try to attain by your own works I promise you that so that can be sure because I know how to perform it and you don't." That is what he is saying.

***Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*** What does David have in mind here? The covering of sin was a sacrifice was given and then blood was sprinkled. The sprinkling of that blood was basically saying that the life of that animal is now sprinkled on you and on everything. It now cleanses you because the life of the lamb is now on you. That is what he is saying. Blessed is the man to whom a new life is given to and we know that Jesus is the Lamb of God and our sins are covered. This is Old Testament language so please don't write us saying that our sins are covered, our sins are removed. I understand that whole thing. But what I am trying to say is what David had in mind and what Paul had in mind is, "Happy is the man who does not have to try, by his dying life, to have something, but to whom God gives life. God promises us life. He says, ***8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.***

What is the imputation of sin? It says, "Blessed is the man whom God says, 'I am not going to make sin your problem but I make your sin My problem and I will solve the problem for you!'"

The word, sin, means not to have a sharing: not to have what is allotted to you, or to have your destiny. God had a destiny for us. What was our destiny? Our destiny is what Jesus' destiny was in His resurrection and where He is seated at the right hand of God. When God formed man from the dust of the earth, He said, "I have a destiny for these people. The destiny that I have for them is Me!" God is our Destiny! He destined us to be flooded with the fulness of the Godhead body. That is our destiny.

Sin means not to have your destiny. "Blessed is the man to whom God does not impute sin." When we are not having our destiny, God says, "I am not making that your problem. I am making the problem of seeing you receiving your destiny, which is the fulness of Me. I am making that problem mine. Therefore, you will surely and definitely share in what I have for you." God made it by promise so that it can be by grace. It is not, "I am not looking at your sin." Grace is the divine influence of God to bring forth what He has promised. So how are we going to be partakers of this divine nature? Peter says, "It is by God promising, that through these promises, we might be partakers of the divine nature." Why is it by promise? It is by promise so that it can be by God's power.

Let me put it this way: Why is it by promise? It is by promise so that it is by the Promiser, the One who has promised that it can be by His ability.

***8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.***

***16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;***

Why is it by faith? It is by faith so that it can be by grace, which is God's ability. Why? So that we can be sure that we will have eternal life! Alleluia!

Church, I want to tell you that the grace message is not a message where we can now have to be happy with a life where we just strive by our own power over and over again. No! We are a new creation!

I think this is an interesting thought to end with. When we look at the first creation story, Adam and Eve, Adam came and messed up and death entered and so forth. Then God came and He brought forth a man, Jesus, and Jesus is called the last Adam. So, as we behold Adam's creation story, we can quickly identify with Adam: Well that is what happened. That is how the Fall took place and all those things. And then we behold the first Adam and we behold the first creation story and we identify with the first creation story. But I've got news for you! There's another creation story! The earth was without form and void. Darkness was upon the face of the deep. I also believe that talks about the time of Jesus where there was a temple, and people, and darkness on the face of the deep. And the Bible says that a great light shone in the darkness and we find that the creation story is now basically retold. We see the creation story basically happening again but now in the terms of Jesus and the temple and that time, and we find God bringing forth an Adam. That Adam is Jesus!

And do you know that the first creation story came to an end in the death of Christ and when Jesus was raised, the last Adam we are beholding now is our creation story! When I look back into my history, I find a successful creation story with an Adam who has not sinned. When I look at my creation story, it does not start in the first Adam. My creation story starts with the second, the last Adam, the second man who did not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, who didn't have sin and death in the world. My creation story starts with Jesus and I don't have an Adam in my history that fell. My Adam, the Adam that represents me, made it! Therefore, I have passed from death to life! When I think back into my life, I have a life story, a success story, and He is the Adam that has dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and even over me! And He is fruitful. He is multiplying in me and I am sharing in His life! Glory to God!

I want to say to you that it is by grace so it is not by our works so that the promise can be sure to all of us. Glory to God!

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