

Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)

Key Issue / Question

Why did God choose to save me?

Is it because of some inherent good in me? ...or some good that I did?

In other words, did I do something to merit God's favour? ...to merit salvation?

Point of Contention

Teaching of Rome	Teaching of the Reformation
Grace + [My] Merit => Salvation	Grace Alone => Salvation Sola Gratia

Comment:

'Merit salvation' means you did something that is good, worthy of praise, worthy of God's favour, so that God **owes** it to you to **reward** you with salvation; you **earned** it.

Grace is the **UNMERITED** favour of God.

You cannot have 'grace' and 'merit' together. It is either one or the other, but not both.

Rom 11:6 "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Scripture teaches that Salvation is **A GIFT**. Even **your Faith** is **A GIFT**.

***Eph 2:8-10** For by grace are ye 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 unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Sola Gratia is an important context for the right understanding of Sola Fide.

Two people can say they believe in Sola Fide: justified by faith alone. One says that his faith is a gift from God. But the other says that his faith is something that originated in him, that he did himself. Who is correct?

If faith is something you did yourself, then your faith **BECOMES A WORK**. And if it is a work, then it is **NO MORE OF GRACE**.

But Scripture teaches that even **your faith IS A GIFT**. Faith is a **GOD-GIVEN MEANS** whereby **we receive the GOD-GIVEN JUSTIFICATION**.

Everything, including faith, is **GRACIOUSLY GIVEN BY GOD**. Hence **Sola Gratia**. And hence God's covenant with his elect in Christ, is aptly called **the Covenant of GRACE**.

Westminster Standards

- **WSC 20:** Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?
A: God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into **a covenant of grace**, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.
- **WCF 3.5:** Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, **out of his mere FREE GRACE and love, ['ALONE':] WITHOUT any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.**

- [Faith is a gift] **WSC 30:** How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?
A: The **Spirit** applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by **working faith in us**, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.
- **WCF 10.2:** This effectual call is of **God's free and special GRACE ALONE**, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby **enabled** to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.
- **WSC 33:** What is Justification?
A: Justification is an act of **God's free grace...**
- **WSC 34:** What is Adoption?
A: Adoption is an act of **God's free grace...**
- **WSC 35:** What is Sanctification?
A: Sanctification is a work of **God's free grace...**
- **WSC 86:** What is faith in Jesus Christ?
A: Faith in Jesus Christ is **a saving grace...**
- **WSC 87:** What is repentance unto life?
A: Repentance unto life is **a saving grace...**

Scriptural Proofs

- **[2 Thess 3:1-2]** Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: **for all men have not faith.** [*Faith is not natural in sinful men*]
- **[Eph 2:8-10]** For **by grace are ye 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 unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- **[Rom 9:13-18]** As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.** For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Other Quotations

- *Spurgeon:*
 “If any man be saved, he is saved by Divine grace, and **by Divine grace alone**; and **the reason of his salvation is not to be found in him, but in God.** We are not saved as the result of anything that we do or that we will; but we will and do as the result of God's good pleasure, and the work of his grace in our hearts.”
- *Martin Luther, commentary on Titus 3:4-8*
 “Yes, dear friend, you must first possess heaven and salvation before you can do good works. Works never merit heaven; heaven is conferred purely of grace.”
- *Arthur Pink, The Grace of God*
 “Divine grace is the sovereign and saving favour of God exercised in the bestowment of blessings upon those who have no merit in them and for which no compensation is demanded from them. Nay, more; it is the favour of God shown to those who not only have no positive deserts of their own, but who are thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving. It is completely unmerited and unsought, and is altogether unattracted by anything in or from or by the objects upon which it is bestowed. Grace can neither be bought, earned, nor won by the creature. If it could be, it would cease to be grace. When a thing is said to be of ‘grace,’ we mean that the recipient has no claim upon it, that it was in nowise due him. It comes to him as pure charity, and, at first, unasked and undesired.”