

11-2-1952

Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: What I Learned About the Grace of God

James Willeford

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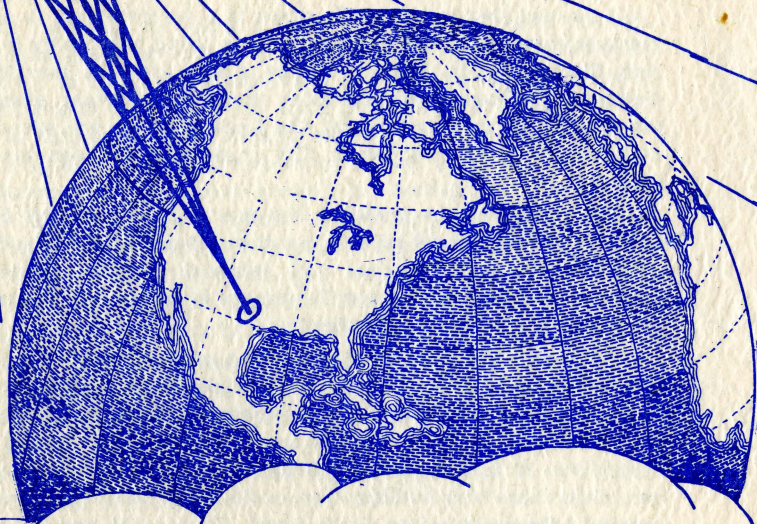
Willeford, James, "Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: What I Learned About the Grace of God" (1952). *Herald of Truth Audio*. 193.
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ABILENE, TEXAS

Churches of Christ Salute You with a

Sermon



*What I Learned About
The Grace Of God*

November 2, 1952

Herald of Truth

What I Learned About The Grace Of God

November 2, 1952

A few years ago a Bible teacher said to a group of students in one of America's foremost Universities, "I believe we are saved by grace plus faith plus nothing." That statement startled me, and I resolved to make a special study of the New Testament to learn just what the Lord says about salvation by grace. In the next few moments I shall tell you what I learned about this important subject.

I learned that salvation by grace is a doctrine that is given great prominence in the Scriptures. It is found repeatedly in the New Testament. In Paul's writings alone, grace is mentioned eighty-eight times. Grace occupies such an important place in the scheme of redemption that the Lord says we are saved by it. Paul said to the Ephesians, "By grace have ye been saved," Eph. 2:5.

I learned that the grace of God means the unmerited favor and love of God toward man. It manifests itself in God's dealings with man in both physical and spiritual matters. However, primary emphasis in the New Testament is placed on "the grace of God which bringeth salvation."

I learned why men need the grace of God. They alienated themselves from God by their own wickedness. As Isaiah expressed it, "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear," Isa. 59:2. After men had alienated themselves by their own sins, there was nothing they could do to humanly merit or reinstate themselves into God's favor. They could not devise a plan of redemption, but God loved men to the extent that He provided a way for the salvation of all. All of his plans in behalf of men, all of His love and mercies extended to them, all of His gifts offered, are comprehended in the word grace. God's grace was His Son! Christ is the center of our affection, the object of our faith, the anchor of our hopes. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16.

I learned from the word of God that He is impartial in bestowing His grace upon men. Paul said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," Titus 2:11. The Lord nowhere promised to bless one class or color to the

exclusion of others. God's grace is extended universally for the benefit of all men.

I learned, however, that all men will not be saved because the working of God's grace is dependent upon men. This dependence is set forth in Eph. 2:8 where Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith." Faith is stated as a condition and just as surely as men are saved by grace, they are saved by grace through faith. All men are not saved by God's grace because all do not believe. Faith on the human side is the channel through which God's grace reaches man, and saves him. That is why Paul could say "Therefore it is by faith, that it might be by grace." Rom. 4:16. Without faith on our part the grace of God is extended to us in vain.

As I studied the Bible I learned the kind of faith through which the grace of God saves us. There are two kinds of faith spoken of in the Bible: a dead faith and a living faith. The grace of God works through living faith only. The Lord says in the book of James that faith without works is dead, being alone. He says faith only is as dead as a body without a spirit. James says Abraham's faith was made perfect in obedience to God's command. If Abraham, the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, had to do what God said to be justified by faith, I know that we must obey the Lord. And when we do God's will our faith is made perfect in obedience. This is the only kind of faith through which the grace of God saves us.

From my study of the Bible I learned that the best way to see how grace works is to observe some examples of it at work. It is by the grace of God that we have the many temporal blessings of life. Paul said, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work," II Cor. 9:8. If we can learn how these blessings come by grace we can better understand how salvation is by the grace of God. Jesus tells us to ask our heavenly Father to give us our daily bread. (Matt. 6:11). And yet He instructed Paul to tell the early Christians that they must work if they would eat. ((II Thes. 3:10.) How can bread be a gift of God if we have to work for it? The answer is simply this: There are factors that enter into the making of bread that God alone can furnish. He provides the sunshine, rain, air, and soil. Man cannot furnish these things, and yet without them food could not be produced. Since God provides the means of producing food, our daily bread is a gift from Him, even though we do something for it. Most religious people pause before eating and thank God for their food. They know it is a gift from God because He made it possible.

YOU MAY HEAR THE HERALD OF TRUTH OVER THESE STATIONS

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|------|------------|
| Alabama, Anniston | WHMA | 1450 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Auburn | WAUD | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Birmingham | WSGN | 610 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Florence | WJOI | 1340 | 9:30 a.m. |
| Gadsden | WGAD | 1350 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Huntsville | WHBS | 1490 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Marion | WJAM | 1310 | 9:30 a.m. |
| Mobile | WABB | 1480 | 6:30 a.m. |
| Montgomery | WAPX | 1600 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Selma | WGWC | 1340 | 1:30 p.m. |
| Tuscaloosa | WJRD | 1150 | 9:00 p.m. |
| Arizona, Clifton | KCLF | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Phoenix | KOY | 550 | 7:00 a.m. |
| Tucson | KCNA | 580 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Arkansas, Eldorado | KDMS | 1290 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Ft. Smith | KFSA | 950 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Hot Springs | KTHS | 1090 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Little Rock | KGHI | 1250 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Springdale | KBRS | 1340 | 6:00 p.m. |
| Calif., Bakersfield | KPMC | 1560 | 10:00 a.m. |
| Blythe | KYOR | 1450 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Brawley | KROP | 1300 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Eureka | KIEM | 1480 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Fresno | KARM | 1430 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Indio | KREO | 1400 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Los Angeles | KECA | 790 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Moderato | KTRB | 860 | 3:00 p.m. |
| San Francisco | KGO | 810 | 3:30 p.m. |
| San Luis Obispo | KATY | 1340 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Colorado, Craig | KRAI | 1230 | 5:30 p.m. |
| Denver | KVOD | 630 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Conn., Bridgeport | WNAB | 1450 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Hartford | WTHT | 1230 | 2:30 p.m. |
| Delaware, Wilmington | WILM | 1450 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Florida, Gainesville | WGGG | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Jacksonville | WPDQ | 600 | 8:30 a.m. |
| Miami | WQAM | 560 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Panama City | WPCF | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Pensacola | WEAR | 1230 | 11:00 p.m. |
| Tallahassee | WTNT | 1450 | 5:00 p.m. |
| Tampa, St. Pete | WSUN | 620 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Georgia, Atlanta | WGST | 920 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Augusta | WGAC | 580 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Brunswick | WGIG | 1440 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Cairo | WGRA | 1300 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Columbus | WGBA | 1460 | 7:30 a.m. |
| Macon | WNEX | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Rome | WLAQ | 670 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Savannah | WDAR | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Valdosta | WGAJ | 910 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Idaho, Boise | KGEM | 1140 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Pocatello | KEIO | 1440 | 9:30 a.m. |
| Illinois, Chicago | WENR-WLS | 890 | 2:30 p.m. |
| Quincy | WGEM | 1440 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Indiana, Anderson | WHBU | 1240 | 1:30 p.m. |
| Bloomington | WTTS | 1370 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Evansville | WJPS | 1330 | 1:30 p.m. |
| Ft. Wayne | WGL | 1250 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Iowa, Cedar Rapids | WMT | 600 | 7:30 a.m. |
| Des Moines | KSO | 1460 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Sioux City | KSCJ | 1360 | 10:30 p.m. |
| Waterloo | KXEL | 1540 | 5:30 p.m. |
| Kansas, Coffeyville | KGGF | 690 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Topeka | WREN | 1250 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Wichita | KWBB | 1410 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Ken., Bowling Green | WKCT | 930 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Harlan | WHLN | 1230 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Louisville | WKLO | 1080 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Mayfield | WKTM | 1050 | 4:15 p.m. |
| Newport | WNOP | 740 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Louisiana, Baton Rouge | WLCS | 910 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Monroe | KMLB | 1440 | 2:00 p.m. |
| New Orleans | WDSU | 1280 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Shreveport | KRMD | 1340 | 1:00 p.m. |

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|------------------------|------|------|------------|
| Maine, Bangor | WABI | 910 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Portland | WPOR | 1450 | 9:00 a.m. |
| Maryland, Baltimore | WFBR | 1300 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Cumberland | WDYK | 1230 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Mass., Gardner | WHOB | 1490 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Lawrence | WLAW | 680 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Springfield | WSPR | 1270 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Worcester | WAAB | 1440 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Michigan, Battle Creek | WELL | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Bay City | WBCM | 1440 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Detroit | WXYZ | 1270 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Flint | WFDF | 910 | 10:00 p.m. |
| Lansing | WLS | 1320 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Ludington | WKLA | 1450 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Muskegon | WKBZ | 850 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Minn., Minn.-St. Paul | WTCN | 1280 | 7:30 a.m. |
| Mankato | KTOE | 1420 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Miss., Centerville | WGCL | 1580 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Aberdeen | WMFA | 1240 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Columbus | WCBI | 1340 | 6:00 p.m. |
| Greenwood | WABG | 960 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Jackson | WSLI | 930 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Kosciusko | WKOZ | 1340 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Laurel | WLAU | 1490 | 1:00 p.m. |
| McComb | WSKB | 1250 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Missouri, Kansas City | KCMO | 810 | 12:30 p.m. |
| Rolla | KTRR | 1490 | 8:45 a.m. |
| St. Louis | KXOK | 630 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Springfield | KWTO | 560 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Montana, Butte | KOPR | 580 | 9:15 a.m. |
| Great Falls | KMON | 560 | 7:30 a.m. |
| Nebraska, Lincoln | KFOR | 1240 | 10:30 a.m. |
| Omaha | KOIL | 1290 | 5:30 p.m. |
| Sidney | KSID | 1540 | 9:30 a.m. |
| N. Hamp., Claremont | WTSV | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Lebanon | WTSL | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Manchester | WMUR | 610 | 3:00 p.m. |
| N. Mexico, Albuquerque | KOAT | 1450 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Carlsbad | KPBM | 740 | check sta. |
| Clovis | KLVB | 1240 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Los Alamos | KRSN | 1490 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Santa Fe | KTRC | 1400 | 3:00 p.m. |
| New York, Albany | WXXW | 850 | 2:00 p.m. |
| New York | WJZ | 770 | 12:30 p.m. |
| Olean | WHDL | 1450 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Rochester | WARC | 950 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Saranac Lake | WEAV | 960 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Syracuse | WAGE | 620 | 12:00 n. |
| N. Carolina, Asheville | WLOS | 1350 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Charlotte | WAYS | 610 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Durham | WTIK | 1310 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Elizabeth City | WGAI | 560 | 12:00 n. |
| Fayetteville (Sat.) | WFLB | 1490 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Salisbury | WSAT | 1280 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Wilmington | WGNI | 1340 | 8:30 a.m. |
| Winston-Salem | WAIK | 1340 | 1:00 p.m. |
| N. Dakota, Fargo | KFGO | 790 | 1:00 p.m. |
| S. Dakota, Huron | KIJV | 630 | 9:00 a.m. |
| Ohio, Cleveland | WJW | 850 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Columbus | WHKC | 610 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Lima | WIMA | 1150 | 9:00 a.m. |
| Youngstown | WBBW | 1240 | 8:30 a.m. |
| Oklahoma, Ada | KADA | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Enid | KCRC | 1390 | 1:00 p.m. |
| McAlester | KTMC | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Muskogee | KBIX | 1490 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Oklahoma City | KTOK | 1000 | 9:30 a.m. |
| Tulsa | KRMG | 740 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Oregon, Eugene | KASH | 1600 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Klamath Falls | KFLW | 1450 | 4:30 p.m. |
| Medford | KMED | 1440 | 7:30 a.m. |
| Portland | KEX | 1190 | 3:30 p.m. |
| The Dalles | KODL | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |

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|---------------------------|------|------|------------|
| Penn., Johnstown | WCRO | 1230 | 7:00 p.m. |
| Philadelphia | WFIL | 560 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Pittsburg | WCAE | 1250 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Wilkes-Barre | WILK | 980 | 5:00 p.m. |
| R. Island, Providence | WPJB | 1420 | 1:00 p.m. |
| S. Carolina, Florence | WJMX | 970 | 10:30 a.m. |
| S. Dakota, Aberdeen | KSDN | 930 | 10:30 a.m. |
| Tenn., Chattanooga | WDEF | 1370 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Jackson | WTJS | 1390 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Johnson City | WJHL | 910 | 10:30 p.m. |
| Knoxville | WBIR | 1240 | 1:30 p.m. |
| Memphis | WMPB | 650 | 9:30 p.m. |
| Morristown | WCRK | 1450 | check sta. |
| Nashville | WSIX | 980 | 4:00 p.m. |
| Texas, Abilene | KRBC | 1470 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Amarillo | KFDA | 1440 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Austin | KNOW | 1490 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Beaumont | KFDM | 560 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Big Spring | KBST | 1490 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Brownfield | KTFY | 1300 | 4:30 p.m. |
| Brownsville | KVAL | 1490 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Brownwood | KBWD | 1380 | 6:30 p.m. |
| Corpus Christi | KEYS | 1440 | 9:00 a.m. |
| El Paso | KEPO | 690 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Ft. Worth | WBAP | 570 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Graham | KSWA | 1330 | 4:30 p.m. |
| Houston | KXYZ | 1320 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Longview | KPRO | 1370 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Lubbock | KFYD | 1340 | 4:00 p.m. |
| Midland | KCRS | 550 | 1:30 p.m. |
| New Braunfels | KGNB | 1420 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Paris | KPLT | 1490 | 9:00 p.m. |
| San Angelo | KGKL | 960 | 1:00 p.m. |
| San Antonio | KMAC | 630 | 9:00 p.m. |
| Texarkana | KCMC | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Wichita Falls | KFDX | 990 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Utah, Provo | KCSU | 1490 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Salt Lake City | KUTA | 570 | 7:30 a.m. |
| Vermont, Brattleboro | WWSA | 1450 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Burlington | WJOY | 1230 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Montpelier-Barre | WSKI | 1240 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Virginia, Charlottesville | WINA | 1280 | 9:15 a.m. |
| Fredericksburg | WVFA | 1230 | check sta. |
| Marion | WMEV | 1010 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Norfolk | WGH | 1310 | 6:30 p.m. |
| Richmond | WRNL | 910 | 1:30 p.m. |
| Washington, Aberdeen | KBKW | 1450 | 9:00 p.m. |
| Omak | KOMW | 650 | 9:15 a.m. |
| Pasco | KPKW | 1340 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Seattle | KJR | 950 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Spokane | KGA | 1510 | 3:30 p.m. |
| Washington, D. C. | WMAL | 630 | 1:00 p.m. |
| W. Virginia, Beckley | WVNR | 620 | 1:30 p.m. |
| Huntington | WHTN | 800 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Parkersburg, Sat. | WCOM | 1230 | 5:30 p.m. |
| Wheeling | WKWK | 1400 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Wisconsin, Green Bay | WDUZ | 1400 | 5:30 p.m. |
| LaCrosse | WKTY | 580 | 4:00 p.m. |
| Madison | WIBA | 1320 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Milwaukee | WCAN | 1250 | 2:00 p.m. |
| Neenah | WNAM | 1280 | 8:00 a.m. |
| Wyoming, Casper | KSPR | 1470 | 9:15 p.m. |
| Cheyenne | KFBC | 710 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Cody | KODI | 1400 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Laramie | KOWB | 1340 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Rawlins | KRAL | 1240 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Riverton | KWRL | 1450 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Torrington | KGOS | 1490 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Worland | KWOR | 1490 | 12:00 p.m. |
| Alaska, Juneau (Sat.) | KJNO | 630 | 1:00 p.m. |
| Canada, Trail, B.C. | CJAT | 610 | 9:30 a.m. |
| Toronto, Ont. | CKEY | 580 | 9:15 a.m. |

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.

Now we all know there would be no food and clothing if man should refuse to do the part God has left for him to do, such as planting the seed, cultivating the crops, and gathering and using the products. In giving us food and clothing God provides that which we could not furnish, and He leaves the remainder to us. This is the way God's grace works in material things, and no one seems to have any trouble understanding it. We all understand the words of Paul when he said, "We are laborers together with God." The unknown poet well expressed this mutual dependence in these words:

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour;
And back of the flour the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat the shower
And the sun, and the father's will."

Another example of God's grace at work is recorded in Exodus 14. The children of Israel were being pursued by the Egyptians when they came to the Red Sea. The mountains towered high on their right and left. The Red Sea stretched out in front of them. The Egyptians were fast approaching from the rear. The Israelites were helpless and they cried out to God. The Lord said, "Fear not, stand still, and see salvation of the Lord, which he will show unto you today." The Lord then made a path through the Sea and the children of Israel were told to march across on dry ground. Now let us notice the grace of God and how it worked. The Israelites could not help themselves. They did not know what to do, and they had no human means of saving themselves. So the Lord told them to stand still while He provided a way of safety. God's grace then opened the Sea. After this it was up to the Israelites to take the way of escape. When they were safe on the distant shore they gave glory to God. Not one ever thought that he had saved himself because he marched through the Red Sea, and still every single person knew he would have perished had he not taken the avenue of safety.

As I studied the Bible further I learned how the grace of God saved the soul of man. Man had separated himself from God by his sins, and he needed salvation, but there was no way he could save himself. So the grace of God stepped in to do for man what he could not do for himself. By the grace of God an atoning sacrifice was made. The inspired writer of Hebrews said, "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels by the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God should taste death for every man," Heb. 2:9. Here we learn that the grace of God was expressed in the death of Christ and that for all men. Thus was salvation provided for the whole race so far as God's part was concerned.

But man did not fully realize his sinfulness with its accompanying doom. Neither did he know how to appropriate the benefits of the death of Christ. And again the grace of God did for man what he could not do for himself. This time it came in its teaching capacity. Paul said the grace of God hath appeared to all men teaching us. The grace of God did two things for men; it provided the way of salvation, and it instructed him that he might get into that way. It gave him that instruction through the gospel "which is the power of God unto salvation," Rom. 1:16. Paul said to the Ephesians "By grace have ye been saved." The apostle further said they believed after they heard the gospel. (Eph. 1:13.) After they believed in Christ and repented of their sins Paul baptized them. (Acts 19:5.) When these people obeyed the gospel of God's Son they were saved by grace.

After we have done all the Lord asks of us we have not earned our salvation. We are still unprofitable servants. After we obey the gospel of Christ and continue in faithful obedience to the Lord we can still ascribe all praise to Him who saved us by His amazing grace.

Salvation by grace may be illustrated by a man in a deep well. Being unable to save himself he is lost unless a saviour appears. Someone hears the man's cries and comes to save him. A rope is dropped to him and he is told to take hold of it. He does so, and is pulled to safety. Could the man claim that he was his own savior? Surely not. If he could have climbed out he would have saved himself, but this was not possible. The man who dropped the rope and pulled him to safety was his saviour. And it is the Lord who saves us even though we must take hold of the rope by obeying the gospel of Christ.

I learned in studying about salvation by grace that the Bible teacher who said "We are saved by grace plus faith plus nothing" stopped short of what the Lord teaches. From the passages and Bible examples we have studied together, it is evident that we are saved by grace through obedient faith. Such faith includes all that the Lord asks us to do. Whatever our Master requires of us is a part of faith, for faith comes through hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

Several years ago I read of a young boy who was driving down the highway, and immediately behind him in another car rode a local judge. As they started across a dangerous bridge the boy lost control of his car, and it broke through the railing and fell into the water below. The quick thinking judge stopped plunged into the icy water and pulled the boy to safety. Several years later, after this boy had reached manhood, he was guilty of a serious offence. When he came before the court the first

person he noticed was the presiding judge; it was the man who had saved his life. When given a chance to speak he began to plead with the judge saying, "Judge, you are the man who saved my life. You plunged into a dangerous stream and risked your life just to save me. Now, after all you have done for me you just can't send me to prison." The kindly judge replied, "I was your saviour then, I am your judge now."

Sinner friend, Christ offers to be your saviour now, for the day is coming when he will be your judge. The Bible states that "God judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John 5:22. He longs to have you for His own possession that He may take you unto Himself in the final day when all men will stand before Him. Through his grace He has provided the way. Will you enter that way as did the Ephesians that you may be saved by grace? Will you continue therein through life? We beseech you to obey your Lord today. Will you?