



**By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;  
My soul, believe and doubt it not. Why stagger  
at this word of promise? Hath Scripture ever  
falsehood taught? Nay; then this word must**

**true remain: By grace thou, too, shalt heaven obtain.**

The first verse of TLH 373 "By Grace I'm Saved" goes right to the point; we are saved by God's grace! The hymn, based on Ephesians 2:5, gives great comfort to the soul troubled by past and present sins. Why is God's grace such a precious gift? **Verse 5** tells us, **"...Even when we were dead in our trespasses, (God) made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved."** The Scripture reveals what we cannot see ourselves to be. In the spiritual, all human beings are dead even though we might imagine we are alive; we cannot determine the dire nature of our spiritual condition. "Now, a person who is physically dead cannot from his own power prepare or make himself come back to life again. Thus, the person who is spiritually dead in sins cannot by his own strength make or apply to himself to acquire spiritual and heavenly righteousness and life." (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II 11). Dead people cannot bring themselves to life again.

Romans 6 emphasizes the miraculous transition from spiritual death to life by Baptism "into Christ Jesus." Unable to free ourselves, God's Grace in Christ brings us sinners who were dead back to life. God in His mercy "...made us alive in Christ our Savior (Colossians 2:13) having forgiven us all our trespasses..." This is God's grace in Christ, grace which gives us faith which clings to Christ and His cross. **"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast"** Ephesians 2:9-9. We hear the word "grace" and often fail to really grasp the reality of the generous mercy of God. We explain God's Grace as an acronym, "God's Riches At Christ's Expense", yet perhaps fail to grasp the impossible nature of being spiritually dead and separated from God by original sin (*the inherited nature of sin from our parents all the way back to Adam & Eve*). In other words, there is no work done by us to give ourselves faith, to believe in God or to make Jesus our Savior. Jesus makes Himself our Savior by going to the cross for us in our place. God's grace is a gift to us giving us the gift of faith. It is the benefit of the cross given to us freely which faith (*faith is a gift Eph.2:8-9*) then clings to Christ.

Therefore, faith is not a work done by us, but a gift of the cross of Christ from His work of salvation/redemption done on the cross then given as a precious treasure for us in His Word. We are rescued from the power of the world, the devil and our sinful flesh. God in His mercy delivers us from the Day of Judgment through Christ our Savior.

God's grace is His generous mercy through Christ which not only bestows salvation but is the foundation of our salvation in Christ. Our sinful human nature cannot understand the abundance of God's grace that He has lavished on us through Christ. Faith is not simply knowing Christ as Savior; it is to believe the promise of God through Christ that our sins are forgiven, and we are justified before God. God declares us righteous before Him through Christ. "God declares sinners righteous for Christ's sake; that is, our sins have been imputed or charged to Christ, the Savior, and Christ's righteousness has been imputed or credited to us" (Luther's Small Catechism, CPH 2017, pg. 209, Q. 206). Our sin is put on Christ on His cross and He suffered the punishment we deserved then rose again conquering sin, death and the power of the devil forever. Therefore, this gift of faith is most precious for it clings to Christ and Christ alone. God works through His means of grace, that is, His Word and Sacraments to create the very faith that receives the promises of salvation accomplished by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. This precious gift is ours by God's grace as He promises never to leave us nor forsake us through Christ our Savior (Romans 8:38-39). No wonder the hymn writer pens with great joy:

**By grace God's Son, our only Savior,  
Came down to earth to bear our sin.  
Was it because of thine own merit  
That Jesus died thy soul to win?  
Nay it was grace, and grace alone,  
That bro't Him from His heav'ly throne.**

**By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;  
In Jesus' promise I rejoice;  
For though I know my heart's condition,  
I also know my Savior's voice.  
My heart is glad, all grief has flown,  
Since I am saved by grace alone." TLH 373 verses 4, 8**

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt