

Saved by Grace — Debunked, Part II

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Prologue: The Error That Redefined Grace

Modern Christianity has embraced a counterfeit gospel—a message of comfort divorced from covenant. After all, if you consider what a covenant is, a conditional promise or an agreement in which God promises blessings that are conditional and limited by unfaithfulness, then one must consider what it is we must DO if we expect to be saved.

The slogan “saved by grace, not by works” has been repeated so often that few stop to ask whether it reflects the words of Christ or the dishonesty inherent in so many of the philosophies of men. Dishonesty, by the way, most often presents itself by seeking the convenient excuse for doing less and getting more, rather than the more conscientious version whereby truth is deliberately concealed or ignored. The efforts of self-deception and creative invention required to convince both others and oneself that what you are and what you represent is much better than the reality is what the guilty have instinctively done for time out of mind. And so, small wonder it is that those with little or no interest in facing the demands of justice would fabricate a theology that facilitates their delusions, deceptions, and dishonesty.

Saved by Grace—Debunked, Part I exposed this deception, showing that grace was never meant to excuse sin but to empower repentance; that Christ did not abolish or annul the law, but fulfilled and perfected it. The true doctrine of grace is covenantal—it requires faith, obedience, and endurance—allowing and enabling all sinners to overcome sin through correct knowledge, understanding, faith, sacrifice, and endurance, as so perfectly exemplified by Jesus Christ. Thus, we see that grace is the divine power that transforms the sinner into a saint, not by removing the necessity of righteousness, but by making righteousness understandable and attainable.

Part II now continues that argument, demonstrating from the Bible itself that grace and obedience are not opposing principles, but two inseparable halves of the same eternal law. ***Part III*** will expand the subject by demonstrating how these misunderstandings and fallacies are also found in Catholicism and modern Mormonism.

Putting Things in Perspective

Before proceeding further in Part II, it must be acknowledged that not all Protestant or evangelical believers are guilty of the “grace alone” error. Within the broader Protestant world, many men and women truly hunger and thirst after righteousness. Many understand that faith without obedience is hollow, and that grace without repentance is meaningless.

Some Protestant churches teach obedience and moral transformation with great earnestness. They call their people to live clean, disciplined, Christ-centered lives—to love God, serve their neighbors, and pursue holiness through daily repentance. These are the believers who understand that grace empowers, rather than excuses. They know that the command, “Be ye holy; for I am holy,”¹ still applies to all who would follow Christ.

¹ 1 Peter 1:16

The problem, then, is not every Protestant pulpit or every evangelical preacher. The problem is the dominant *tone* of modern Western Christianity—its reduction of grace to sentiment, its aversion to sacrifice, and its easy comfort with sin. Too many sermons soothe when they should awaken; too many hymns console when they should convict.

Let it be remembered: those who live the commandments of Christ, regardless of denomination, walk in the light of His covenant. Wherever grace points to repentance, obedience, and sanctification, the doctrine is true. But wherever grace is preached as permission to remain as we are, it is false, however sweetly it is sung.

Introduction: Faith and Grace Defined

The modern Christian world has embraced a strange paradox: a gospel that promises salvation without transformation, and blessings without obedience to the principles upon which those blessings are predicated. This doesn't work. And deep down everyone knows it doesn't work. But this message is so conveniently simple, so carnally seductive, and so delightfully convenient. It teaches that God's grace, being infinite, nullifies the legal necessity of obedience on our part, by nullifying the demands of justice. They teach that because Christ's sacrifice was so infinite, and because His love is so infinite, the laws of justice are fulfilled for those who merely confess His name, His holiness, and just do some very simple and basic things. This teaching comforts and excuses the sinner while contradicting the Savior.

It is no coincidence that this version of grace has emerged in an age when moral discipline and responsibility is so often shrugged off, repentance is redefined as a checklist, and obedience to God is treated as subservient to obedience to man. Yet from Genesis to Revelation, the message of God's covenant remains unchanged: *"If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me."*²

Grace does not give "believers" a free pass for continuing to sin; rather, it is the divine empowerment to overcome it joyfully. The notion that faith or grace alone saves us apart from obedience is not Christianity; it is rebellion in disguise. It is the most obscene form of false piety.

One of the primary reasons for this misunderstanding is the numerous false definitions of what it means to have faith. Many understand faith as a mere belief or a confession of belief. In actuality, faith is defined by correct belief, desire, and corresponding action, calculated to achieve an anticipated outcome.

Real faith is not blind, it is not unreasoned, it is not wishful thinking; instead, **faith is based on adequate evidence, reasoned, calculated, and applied in a deliberate effort to produce a preconceived outcome.** By this definition, we can understand why everything God does is by faith. And, big surprise, everything we consciously do is by faith too. Everything we consciously do is the result of calculated choices we have made. As intelligent creatures endowed with the abilities of reason, discernment, self-awareness, and free choice, everything we consciously do is calculated and chosen, as acts of faith.

To have faith in Christ is to believe in Him, to believe His teachings, and to seek to understand and follow His ways and His will, the best we can, as it is continuously revealed, in all we do. This is the continuous act of faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith is anticipatory. You anticipate your options, exploring and evaluating your opportunities, costs, gains, and results—continuously making choices accordingly. Those who want to do good seek to make good

² Exodus 19:5

choices. While those who are less about doing good, but more about immediately feeling good, make less good options, also called being bad or doing evil.

All the good God does is by faith. God knows all about how to do good by faith. A big part of that is the delight He experiences by showing us and teachings us how to do good things too. He has paid the price to know and understand these things. And so, He understands the value of what He has to offer and the joy that comes by receiving what He offers. What He offers is grace. And so, grace is the ability God gives us to also do good things by faith, including *working out our own salvation in fear and trembling before Him*.³

Popular Christianity interprets grace as a free pass to heaven for saints and sinners alike who confess Jesus in some way and perhaps do some basic things. God, on the other hand, defines grace differently. **God's grace is the opportunity to improve made possible by someone else.**⁴

*"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."*⁵

The "gift of God" that Jesus gives us is not magic; it is knowledge, understanding, and opportunity to improve. It is the opportunity to exercise faith by doing those good works that produce the best outcomes. And so, we find that God has done His part, but now we must do ours. We must do the "good works" that God has "ordained that we should" do. Otherwise, He is robbed of His glory, and we are deprived of the good outcomes we might otherwise have been blessed with.

The Problem with "Not of Works"

The phrase, "*Not of works, lest any man should boast*"⁶ is a very general and easily misunderstood statement. Taken in isolation, it sounds as if Paul were rejecting all human action as irrelevant or ineffective in producing or earning salvation. That reading, however, contradicts the next verse, which reads, "*created in Christ Jesus unto good works*," and Paul's many other admonitions to "walk worthy," "labor," "strive," "press forward," and "work out your own salvation." So, what does he mean?

First, we should address this in its historical context. Paul is addressing a mixed congregation of Jews and Gentiles. The Jews had long regarded obedience to "*works of the law*" (ἔργων νόμου, *ergōn nomou*)—the Mosaic ordinances—as the defining sign of covenant faithfulness. Circumcision, dietary codes, ritual washings, feast observances, and similar "works" had become boundary markers separating Jews from Gentiles. And so, when Paul says "*not of works*", he is not referring to righteous living or works of charity; instead, he is speaking of the ritual works of the Mosaic law as grounds of boasting, as if these, by themselves, guaranteed divine favor. His Greek wording makes this clear in other places:

*"A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ."*⁷

In the New Testament, whenever "works" are contrasted with "faith," they refer to Mosaic legalistic observances that rarely transform the heart, not to the righteous deeds that faith in Christ inspires or produces.

³ Philippians 2:12, Mormon 9:27

⁴ Note: Ultimately, all good things come from God; even when that goodness flows from God through others to us.

⁵ Ephesians 2:8 - 10

⁶ Ephesians 2:9, KJV

⁷ Galatians 2:16

The Modern Application of “Dead Works”

Just as Paul’s warnings against “works of the law” referred to the ritual observances of ancient Judaism in living the Law of Moses, the same principle applies today to the ritual observances of modern religion. The modern “works” that cannot save us are those outward, institutional, or ceremonial performances that do not lead to inward transformation. These include the endless cycle of attending church, participating in meetings, performing ordinances, engaging in church programs, visiting the temple, listening to talks, and even reading scriptures and offering prayers, all without the result of changing one’s heart or living more righteously thereafter.

So often, most people erroneously believe that doing overtly religious or churchy things will make up for not keeping the commandments of God. Thus, these are not saving works; they are dead works; they are damning works when done in lieu of keeping the commandments of God that matter most, right now.

They are what Paul would call “dead works” if they are not coupled with real faith in Christ and repentance. These are the modern equivalents of circumcision, ritual washings, and temple sacrifices—religious performances that comfort the conscience but do not result in true conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you can make a list of things that you know, deep down, you really should be doing, or know you should not be doing, but have not corrected in your life, but you continue to do these religious and churchy things instead, then you know you are filling your life with dead works that will not save you.

Dead works make us feel religious; living works help us become righteous. Dead works reassure the self that “all is well in Zion”; living works awaken the soul to honest introspection and repentance. Dead works seek comfort and solace without real improvement or repentance; living works are done in response to what the Spirit of God is urging you to do to improve your life and the lives of those you serve. Dead works are about appearances and validation; living works are about real improvement, transformation, and sanctification.

The religious world today, both inside and outside of Mormonism, is overflowing with dead works. People attend meetings, pay tithes, and participate in ordinances with the expectation that these will somehow purchase or prove their salvation. But Paul’s warning is timeless: “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Salvation is not earned through participation in religious programs or ceremonies. It is received as we exercise real faith unto repentance—a faith that manifests in obedience, diligence, humility, honesty, and genuine Christlike love.

When Paul wrote that we are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” he meant that the good works which follow our conversion are the fruit of a sanctified heart and mind. They are not external performances to be tallied but inward transformations that express themselves in outward righteousness. In that light, attending worship services or participating in ordinances is not inherently wrong, but it becomes wrong and evil if it is done in lieu of real repentance by doing what really matters most.

Examples of doing what really matters most might include: setting your own house in order, teaching one’s family the gospel rather than outsourcing instruction to the church, calling your family to repentance, teaching goodness to others who look up to you, not being a hypocrite, getting out of debt, emergency preparedness, ceasing idolatrous media worship, prayer coupled with faithfulness, scripture study led by the Holy Spirit rather than cultural or institutional influences, healthy diet, proper exercise, diligent study, not wasting time, getting adequate rest, not wasting money on dumb stuff, helping others, caring for the poor, visiting the sick and afflicted, being an example of goodness and high moral integrity, etc. **These are examples of “works of righteousness.” Righteousness is doing what you sincerely believe Jesus would do in your place, in agreement with the scriptures.**

The Biblical Framework of Grace

In Scripture, grace (*charis*) means “favor,” “gift,” or “divine benevolence.” But throughout both Old and New Testament times, God’s favor was always given to accomplish righteousness, not to excuse wickedness. God extends blessings not to enable, excuse, or rationalize the continued practices of sin and wickedness, but to encourage and enable additional opportunities for repentance and the ascent to righteousness.

The blessings of God are never just for our happiness, but are evidences of God’s goodness and love and desire to give us additional opportunities to improve and to choose the path of righteousness.

God grants blessings based on His goodness and on our merit.

When Noah “*found grace in the eyes of the Lord*,”⁸ it was *not* because he was a passive recipient of mercy, but because he was “*a just man and perfect in his generations*.”⁹

The same pattern appears in the New Testament. When the angel Gabriel hailed Mary as “highly favored,”¹⁰ her esteem before God was bound to her willingness to submit — “Be it unto me according to thy word.”¹¹ Grace is offered as a divine opportunity; obedience is the human response that completes it and makes it worthwhile.

Grace, in short, is not permission to do less than what is best; it is an invitation to be a more active recipient of His goodness by receiving what He offers by doing as He commands. Grace is God inviting mankind to do good, by laboring with Him in righteousness.

The Misuse of Paul

The false doctrine of “grace alone” rests almost entirely on misunderstood passages from Paul’s epistles. But Paul’s writings were never meant to sever grace from law; they were written to restore the law to its rightful purpose.

Paul’s mission was to liberate Gentile converts from the burdens of the Mosaic system—circumcision, ritual purity, ceremonial observances—which had become substitutes for true holiness. When he declared, “*A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*,”¹² he was not dismissing obedience to Christ’s commandments; he was condemning ritualism without righteousness.

The context makes this plain: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”¹³ To “establish” the law is to fulfill its purpose, not through self-righteous virtue-signaling, by doing churchy things, or by participating in weekly rites and rituals administered by pastors and priests, but through the inward transformation wrought by faith in Christ.

Likewise, when he wrote, “*By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*,”¹⁴ the very next verse clarifies the meaning: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto

⁸ Genesis 6:8

⁹ Genesis 6:9

¹⁰ Luke 1:28

¹¹ Luke 1:38

¹² Romans 3:28

¹³ Romans 3:31

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:8

good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”¹⁵ Grace does not cancel the requirement of righteousness — it enables it.

The True Partnership of Grace and Faith

Faith and grace are inseparable twins. Faith receives; grace empowers. Faith is man’s open hand; grace is God’s extended one. Together they form the bridge across the chasm of sin, but only when faith leads to obedience to the commandments of God.

James, the Lord’s brother, corrected the early tendency to interpret faith as mere belief. “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”¹⁶ He mocked those who claim salvation through confession while living in contradiction to Christ’s teachings: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”¹⁷

Paul and James do not disagree; they are speaking to different errors. Paul refutes legalists who trust in ceremonial cleansing without increasing in faith and without repentance. James rebukes libertines who trust in idle belief. Both affirm that true faith produces righteous action, for faith is obedience in action, and obedience is the evidence of faith.

Christ’s Teachings on Conditional Grace

The words of Jesus destroyed the illusion of unconditional salvation when He declared, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father.*”¹⁸ He defined devotion to God not as sentiment but as obedience: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”¹⁹ He taught that forgiveness itself is conditional: “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”²⁰

Nowhere does Christ teach salvation by confession alone. He repeatedly attaches the promises of mercy, eternal life, and divine favor to repentance, faithfulness, and endurance.

He warned of the easy gospel: “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction.”²¹ True discipleship, by contrast, is “strait” and “narrow,” requiring self-denial, daily cross-bearing, and perseverance.²²

Grace does not abolish this standard; it makes it achievable.

The Law of Cause and Effect

Divine law operates by the same principles as natural law. If you sow wheat, you reap wheat. If you sow weeds, you reap weeds. Paul affirms this immutable moral order: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”²³

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:10

¹⁶ James 2:17

¹⁷ James 2:19

¹⁸ Matthew 7:21

¹⁹ John 14:15

²⁰ Matthew 6:15

²¹ Matthew 7:13

²² Luke 9:23

²³ Galatians 6:7

Grace does not repeal this law; it hallows it. It allows faith and repentance to produce the divinely intended effect. Through grace, the sinner who has sown corruption can yet reap life *if* he changes the seed he sows into seeds of goodness and righteousness.

But he must change, he must improve, he must repent, and he absolutely **MUST** transition to sowing the seeds of goodness and righteousness according to the law of the gospel prescribed by Jesus Christ. The plowing of faith, the weeding of repentance, the labor of obedience, and the watering of prayer are indispensable. God gives the soil, the rain, the sunshine, and the seed; but man must plow, plant, and cultivate according to the principles of righteousness. Grace, then, is not the cancellation of required effort; it is the divine partnership that makes our effort possible and fruitful.

This understanding restores intellectual and moral coherence to the gospel. **God rewards not perfection, but sincerity; not flawless performance, but faithful labor, not truer-than-true righteousness, but honest and sincere best effort. Grace transforms honest striving into sanctification.**

The Psychology of Cheap Grace

Why, then, do people resist this truth? Because the counterfeit gospel flatters human pride while disguising it as humility. It says, “I can do nothing,” which sounds pious, but secretly means, “I will do nothing.”

Cheap grace comforts the conscience without cleansing it. It offers love without reciprocity or discipline, mercy without repentance, heaven without holiness. It allows one to remain both sinner and saint, both worldly and redeemed—a contradiction that Christ Himself condemned: “No man can serve two masters.”²⁴

Modern religion has become an enterprise of affirmation. The cross, once the symbol of crucified flesh, is now the logo of religiosity. But the Lord did not bleed to sanctify our excuses; He bled to expose them and correct them.

True grace does not say, “Come as you are, and stay as you are.” It says, “Come as you are, and become what you are meant to be.”

The Covenant of Obedience

From the beginning, every covenant God has made with mankind has been based on merit and conditioned on continued obedience to His commandments.

When the Lord covenanted with Abraham, He invited him into a new and improved partnership, saying, “*I will make my covenant between me and thee.*”²⁵ This favor was based on Abraham’s past performance, together with the expectation that he would continue as he had hitherto done. God’s purpose was to enhance their relationship of mutually beneficial faithfulness—a covenant in which Abraham’s willingness to obey God in all things became the foundation for future blessings for Abraham and for all the family of man.

This pattern continued with Israel at Sinai: “*If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.*”²⁶ Every divine promise carries this sacred *if*. Grace opens the door, but obedience is the step through it. The blessings of heaven are covenantal, never arbitrary, and never a free gift requiring little or nothing on our part. God’s favor is based on meritocracy, not unconditional amnesty or acceptance for all.

²⁴ Matthew 6:24

²⁵ Genesis 17:2

²⁶ Exodus 19:5

The Book of Mormon offers one of the clearest demonstrations of this principle in the words of King Benjamin. After teaching his people about the atoning power of Christ and their utter dependence on divine mercy, he invited them to enter into a covenant, not to beg for grace, but to respond to it. The people cried out:

“We are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days.”²⁷

Their covenant was not the pursuit of perfection through human wisdom and strength, but the humble acceptance of God’s grace as power to live in holiness by continued obedience to His commandments. King Benjamin explained that through the atonement and by their willingness, they had become *“the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters.”*²⁸ This new identity was not automatic; it was covenantal. They received His name only because they had bound themselves to do His will.

Benjamin’s sermon reveals that obedience is not the price of redemption but the evidence of it. Having received remission of sins through grace, the people were commanded to *“retain a remission of [their] sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God.”*²⁹ Grace pardoned them; obedience preserved them and perpetuated their covenantal relationship.

This principle echoes throughout scripture. Alma later confirmed it: *“If ye keep his commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence.”*³⁰ Additionally, Nephi taught that the Lord’s pattern never changes: *“Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise.”*³¹

These are not mere temporal conditions but eternal laws of cause and effect. Obedience aligns the soul with the structure of God’s nature and reality, who is the revealer of law, light, and truth.

Faith in Christ is manifest by obedience. It is the deliberate choice to trust in God’s wisdom more than our own perceptions or carnal desires as the way to increased joy and happiness.

Nephi testified, *“The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”*³² If the Lord commands it, then it must be possible. It is possible because he tells us how to do it. He explains everything we need to know. Hence, His grace is the “way” — the enabling power wrought by understanding that makes obedience possible.

Thus, the covenant relationship between God and man is not static but living. God reveals, and we respond. He forgives, and we forsake. He empowers, and we obey. King Benjamin’s people understood this when they covenanted to *“always remember God, and to keep his commandments continually.”*³³ In so doing, they entered the very pattern of discipleship Christ Himself established—the harmony of mercy and obedience, of grace and law.

²⁷ Mosiah 5:5

²⁸ Mosiah 5:7

²⁹ Mosiah 4:26

³⁰ Alma 9:13

³¹ 1 Nephi 2:20

³² 1 Nephi 3:7

³³ Mosiah 5:12

The gospel of Christ did not abolish that law; it perfected it and enabled it. As Paul wrote, *“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”*³⁴ Grace enables the fulfillment of the law by showing us the way, by engraving it upon the heart, transforming external commandments into internal convictions. Thus, the doctrine of obedience becomes not drudgery but a devotion, not a sword to the back threatening damnation, but a joyful call for us to live according to the divinely revealed manner of happiness.

When men and women, like Benjamin’s people, willingly enter that covenant of obedience, heaven is bound to bless them according to their faithfulness. For, as the Lord revealed, *“I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.”*³⁵

This is the everlasting covenant: that grace and obedience are two parts of the same divine rhythm: God giving light, and man walking in it. This is the partnership that enables transformation—the living bond between a merciful God and a willing heart that leads to living life more abundantly.

The Transformation of Grace

Grace is often described as “unmerited favor.” That is true, but incomplete. It is perhaps unearned in its *offer*, but conditional in its *effect*. Grace must be received and correctly applied to be effective, and it can only be correctly received by those willing to repent. Thus, Jesus’ invitation is universal, but its fulfillment is covenantal and conditional.

When Paul writes, *“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”*³⁶ he immediately adds the purpose of that grace: “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.”³⁷ Grace compels holiness; it never excuses sinful indulgence.

Grace is therefore not merely pardon, but power. It does not make righteousness unnecessary; it makes it possible. Through the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, God’s law is written on the heart: “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.”³⁸ This is the miracle of grace — not that God lowers the bar, but that He lifts us to reach it.

The Endurance of the Saints

Jesus’ constant refrain was endurance. “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”³⁹ Faith that does not endure is not saving faith. Grace that does not transform is not saving grace.

Paul shared the same conviction: “But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”⁴⁰ Even Paul, the herald of grace, feared falling from it, because grace is not static but conditional. It must be renewed daily through humility and continued faithfulness.

To abide in grace is to abide in Christ, and abiding in Christ means continual faithfulness. “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.”⁴¹ Grace is not gained in momentary belief. It is not a check on a checklist. Its eternal rewards are held in reserve for those who endure to the end through lifelong and eternal faithfulness. And so, ultimately, grace has no end—it is eternal.

³⁴ Romans 3:31

³⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 82:10

³⁶ Titus 2:11

³⁷ Titus 2:12

³⁸ Hebrews 8:10

³⁹ Matthew 24:13

⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 9:27-ESV

⁴¹ John 15:6

Grace and the Judgment of Works

The final judgment, according to Scripture, is not based on professions or declarations of belief, but on performance. “The Son of man shall come ... and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”⁴² “And the dead were judged... according to their works.”⁴³

If grace nullified works, the judgment would be meaningless. God’s grace forgives past sin but does not immunize the effects of future rebellion. The purpose of judgment is not to count deeds but to reveal hearts and character, which are revealed by deeds. Thus, Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.”⁴⁴

Grace that does not produce the fruits of righteousness has no efficacy. It does not save. Those who verily receive Christ’s grace are redeemed and are saved. Those who do not experience the redemption of Christ through righteousness cannot be saved. Only the righteous are saved.

Grace provides the soil, sunlight, water, and seed; works reveal the tree. By our works, the seed sprouts into a sapling, and by our faithfulness, the sapling is cultivated and grows into a fruitful tree.

The Expression and Fulfillment of Grace is Love

True love manifests not in words or feelings, but in obedience to God and in one’s willingness to sacrifice for the good of others. It is manifest in your honesty and efforts to do what is truly best.

God expresses His love by gestures of grace. He offers what we cannot provide or do for ourselves. His love is requited as we receive what He offers by our enduring faithfulness.

Jesus declared: *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”*⁴⁵

Our love for God is manifest by our faithfulness and obedience to Him.

People do not love God because they do not love truth. God represents the essence of all truth. And so, you really cannot love God if you do not love the truth that God reveals or represents.

You are what you love.

And so, if we are to love God, we must choose to desire, seek, and embrace all truth.

Thus, the truest test of divine love is not how deeply we feel, but how faithfully we act in concert with God’s revealed truth. This may seem like a colossal step to take, and so it is, but God teaches us how to do it by His grace and teachings.

Grace becomes the school wherein we may learn more about His love. We learn more about His love by learning his teachings, principles, and commandments—by learning about how He thinks.

This divine tutelage, which teaches us why we should prefer God’s ways above our own, is the mechanism that purifies our hearts and corrects our minds. It purifies our desires and corrects our thinking. It aligns our values and objectives with His. This alignment enables our willingness to submit to God in all things. It inspires and motivates us to choose the greatest good.

⁴² Matthew 16:27

⁴³ Revelation 20:12

⁴⁴ Matthew 7:20

⁴⁵ John 15:10

When we love God, when we really love and desire to become aligned with His truth, and when we truly love others as we should, then we find ourselves willing and able to do all things that God commands.

In this way, love becomes the living evidence that grace has taken root in the heart, and it becomes the enabling power whereby we can do all things that He commands.

Conclusion: A Look at the Past and Present

The tragedy of modern Christianity is that it confuses *the cost of grace* with *the cost to receive it*. Jesus paid the price in a million ways that we do not yet understand in order to extend to us His grace. He paid the price for His grace. We do not pay that price; He already paid it. But He absolutely requires us to pay the price that we are able to pay, through faith, repentance, and by fulfilling all the laws that are yet to be fulfilled by our obedience.

Unfortunately, the early Christian reformers redefined grace as a protest against ecclesiastical hypocrisy, greed, and corruption; then their descendants turned it into a protest against the need for holiness. The pendulum swung from works without holiness to grace without works—both equally fatal errors.

One could argue that they had all kinds of excuses for making these mistakes, but we have no such excuses. We have a bible that we can read and understand if we are prayerful and honest. And we have the Book of Mormon that clarifies the doctrine of Christ in very understandable prose. But we must make the effort to humbly, honestly, and faithfully search out what God has so abundantly revealed on these topics. The details are all there, so we will absolutely be held responsible for understanding and living these doctrines and commandments.