



HOLY HERESY 1: GRACE ALONE (SOLA GRATIA)

JAN 22/23, 2025

EPHESIANS 1:1-2:10; PHILIPPIANS 3:4-11

- I. Introduction
 - a. The Reformation: A movement that reshaped Christianity and the world (politics, culture, economics).
 - b. Focus of the Series: The Five Solas—*Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*, *Sola Christus*, *Sola Scriptura*, *Soli Deo Gloria*.
 - c. This episode focuses on *Sola Gratia*—Grace Alone (= God Alone).
 - d. Key Text: Ephesians 2:4–8: “By grace you have been saved... It is the gift of God.”
- II. Martin Luther’s Journey to Understanding Grace
 - a. Luther’s Early Life.
 - b. From a law student to a miserable monk.
 - c. Struggled with feelings of inadequacy, fear of God’s wrath, and guilt.
 - d. The Turning Point.
 - i. Discovering the message of the Gospel through Scripture.
 - ii. Realized God’s grace was not about fear and wrath but love and salvation (John 3:16).
 - e. Luther’s Revelation.
 - i. Saw God as a loving Father, not an angry judge.
 - ii. Grace became the foundation of his theology.
- III. The Historical Context of Luther’s Revelation
 - a. The Brokenness of the Church in the 16th Century.
 - b. The church manipulated people’s fear of hell for power and control.

- c. Luther's rediscovery of grace freed people from fear and spiritual blackmail.
 - d. Impact of Grace on Life and Faith.
 - e. Life in Luther's time was brutal, but grace brought hope and assurance.
- IV. What is Grace?
- a. Common Understandings of Grace: *Coordination, elegance, a name, or unconditional love.*
 - b. God's Sovereign Grace Defined (Fuller Definition).
 - i. Genuine Love: God loves us despite ourselves.
 - ii. Unstoppable Power: God's grace transforms and upholds us.
- V. God's Genuine Love
- a. Ephesians 2:4–5.
 - i. *⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...*
 - b. God's love is proactive, not earned.
 - i. Romans 5:8: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 - ii. God's Love is Greater than Our Sin.
 - iii. No matter our failures, God's love is constant and unchanging.
- VI. God's Unstoppable Power
- a. God Does Not Just Observe (monitor)—He Acts.
 - b. Grace is not passive; it is powerful and transformative.
 - c. Resurrection as Proof of Power.
 - i. God calls us from death to life, as demonstrated in Christ's resurrection.
 - ii. God's Sovereign Commitment.
 - d. His grace ensures no one can separate us from His love (Romans 8:35–39).
- VII. The Assurance of Sovereign Grace
- a. Salvation is God's Work.
 - b. Ephesians 2:8: "It is the gift of God."
 - c. Grace Alone emphasizes God's role, not human or institutional efforts. *No one (human or institution) gave it to you, so no one can take it away.*
 - d. Philippians 3:4-7: — *⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*
 - e. Luther's Confidence in God's Grace.
 - f. "Thank God... salvation depends on His grace, not my effort."
- VIII. Application: Living in the Palm of God's Hand
- a. Dr. Ben Lacy Rose: In the midst of danger, assurance came from being "in the palm of God's hand."

- b. God's Sovereign Love Holds Us Secure.
- c. From creation to eternity, God's grace sustains us.

IX. Conclusion

- a. Luther's Declaration Against the Devil.
- b. Confidence in Christ's grace: "I deserve death and hell, but Christ has saved me."
- c. Encouragement to Rest in Grace Alone.
 - i. God's sovereign grace is sufficient, unstoppable, and eternal.
 - ii. "What God has started in you, He will finish."