

*November 6, 2016—Fall Quarter 2016—Sunday Morning Bible Class*

UNMERITED  
FAVOR

*Your supernatural advantage for a successful life*

JOSEPH PRINCE

## *Your Right to God's Unmerited Favor*

**T**here is no doubt that all believers want to experience God's unmerited favor in their lives. All of us want to experience success in our marriages, families, careers as well as ministries. We all want to enjoy God's best and richest blessings. We want His provision, health and power flowing mightily in our lives, and we know that all these blessings are wrapped up in God's unmerited favor. When His unmerited favor is on your side, nothing can stand against you. But if His favor is unmerited, how can we qualify for it? If we cannot earn, deserve or merit it, how can we be confident that we have His unmerited favor?

Down through the corridors of church history, there have been many quality writings on how believers can experience the favor of God. We have been taught how to think big, be positive and to expect preferential treatment. I give thanks to God for Christian ministers and writers who are challenging believers to expect God's favor in their lives today. I have been very blessed by such ministries that bring tremendous hope and encouragement to the body of Christ.

We need more new covenant ministries like these all around the world, ministries that are full of the person of Jesus, exalting the cross and lifting up the finished work of Christ. We need ministries that remind believers that God is no longer angry with them because of their sins and that all their failings-past, present and even those in the future-have been perfectly nailed and judged at the cross. We have had enough of ministries that are based on the antiquated law, that represent God inaccurately as someone who is harsh and angry.

One of the key things that I desire to do in this book is to build upon the existing teachings on favor and to give believers a firm foundation on **why they have the right to God's unmerited favor** in their lives today. Do you know the answers to the following questions?

- Why can you expect good to happen to you?
- Why can you enjoy God's unmerited favor?
- Why can you ask God for big things?

## **Your Righteousness In Christ Is Your Right To God's Unmerited Favor**

Beloved, your answers are all found on the Mount of Golgotha, the place of the skull. It's the place where the sinless Man became sin, so that you and I can become the righteousness of God in Him. His righteousness is **your right to God's unmerited favor**.

- You can expect good ...
- You can enjoy God's unmerited favor ...
- You can ask God for big things ...

...because you have been made the righteousness of God through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross!

Don't just take my word for it. It is important that you read and know the Scriptures for yourself:

FOR HE [GOD] MADE HIM [JESUS CHRIST] WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM [JESUS CHRIST].— 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

Your righteousness in Christ is the sure foundation on which you can build your expectations to receive God's unmerited favor. God sees you through the lens of the cross of His Son, and as Jesus is today deserving of blessings, peace, health and

favor, so are you! (1 John 4:17)

## The Right Definition Of Righteousness

There is a lot of misunderstanding over the definition of "righteousness" today. Many believers associate righteousness with a list of things that they have to do, and if they fulfill this list, they feel "righteous." Conversely, when they fail in terms of their actions or behavior, they feel "unrighteous". But this is the wrong definition and understanding of righteousness.

Let's go back to what the Bible has to say. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21 again. We are not righteous because we do right. **We became righteous because of what Jesus did for us at the cross.** "Righteousness", therefore, is not based on **our** right doing. It is based entirely on Jesus' right doing. Christianity is not about **doing right** to become righteous. It is all about **believing right** in Jesus to become righteous.

Do you realize that we have been conditioned to associate being blessed with doing right? Most belief systems are based on a system of merit whereby you need to fulfill certain requirements--give to the poor, do good to others and care for the underprivileged--to attain a certain state of righteousness. It all sounds very noble, self-sacrificial and appealing to our flesh, which likes to feel that our good works have earned us our righteousness.

But God is not looking at your nobility, sacrifices or good works to justify you. He is only interested in Jesus' humility at the cross. He looks at His Son's perfect sacrifice at Calvary to justify you and make you righteous! Attempting to be justified by your good works and trying your best to keep the Ten Commandments to become righteous is to negate the cross of Jesus Christ. It is as good as saying, "The cross is not enough to justify me. I need to depend on my good works

to make myself clean and righteous before God."

There is a beautiful verse in the New Testament where the apostle Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace [unmerited favor] of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:21)

My friend, let us not take this verse lightly. Consider carefully what Paul is saying here. He is effectively saying that if you are depending on **your** good works, **your** doing and **your** ability to keep perfectly the Ten Commandments to become righteous, then Jesus died for nothing! That's what "in vain" means--for **nothing!**

### **Your Righteousness Is Freely Given, Not Earned**

If you have not watched *The Passion of The Christ* directed by Mel Gibson, I encourage you to get the DVD and watch all that Jesus has done for you on His road to the cross. Observe the anguish that He endured in the garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed in preparation for the ordeal that He knew was to come.

See how your King was taken by ruthless Roman soldiers, who mocked Him and rammed a crude crown fashioned from thorns onto His head. Look at how your Savior suffered lash after lash from whips designed to inflict maximum pain - whips laced with broken glass and hooks, so that every stroke ripped off flesh from His already lacerated back.

In one scene, Jesus collapsed from the blows, and I screamed in my heart, willing Him to stay down so that His tormentors would relent. But He did not stay down. With you and me on His mind, He clung on to the beating post and dragged Himself up to receive the full measure of the scourging, knowing that it is by His stripes that we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

**His agony did not end when the hardened soldiers grew tired of flogging Him. The soldiers shoved a heavy cross onto His completely bloodied back, forcing Him to carry the splintered planks toward Golgotha. After barely surviving such vicious treatment, it was no wonder that Jesus fell under the weight of the cross after staggering part of the way, and the soldiers had to force a passerby to help Him carry the cross. Our Lord was then stretched out over the cross and huge, long nails were hammered cruelly into His hands and feet.**

**Did Jesus endure all this for nothing? Was this all in vain?**

**That is precisely what Christians who insist on trying to earn their own righteousness through the law are saying.**

**Let me quote Paul again so that you can see for yourself what I mean:**

**I DO NOT FRUSTRATE THE GRACE [UNMERITED FAVOR] OF GOD: FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COME BY THE LAW, THEN CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN. — GALATIANS 2:21. KJV**

**My friend, do not frustrate the grace (unmerited favor) of God in your life by looking to yourself and trying by your own efforts to make yourself righteous before God. We cannot earn God's favor and acceptance. We can only receive righteousness as a free gift from God. God's righteousness is free for us, but it cost Him dearly. He paid for it with the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. It is a gift that can only be given freely not because it is cheap, but truly, because it is priceless!**

*"But Pastor Prince, how can I, who did no right, be made righteous?"*

**Well, answer me this first: How could Jesus, who knew no sin, become sin on the cross for us?**

**You see, Jesus had no sin of His own, but He took upon Himself all of humanity's sins. On the other hand, you and I had no**

righteousness of our own, but on that cross, Jesus took upon Himself all our sins, past, present and future, and in exchange, gave us His perfect, everlasting righteousness. Now, is this righteousness that we have received a result of our own works or His work? It is clear that our righteousness is a result of His work and we can only receive His righteousness through His unmerited favor!

*Our righteousness is a result of Jesus' work and we can only receive His righteousness through His unmerited favor!*

Let me give you the clearest definition of grace (unmerited favor) in the Bible:

AND IF BY GRACE [UNMERITED FAVOR], THEN IT IS NO LONGER OF WORKS; OTHERWISE GRACE [UNMERITED FAVOR] IS NO LONGER GRACE [UNMERITED FAVOR]. BUT IF IT IS OF WORKS, IT IS NO LONGER GRACE [UNMERITED FAVOR]; OTHERWISE WORK IS NO LONGER WORK. — ROMANS 11:6

Do you follow? There is no middle road. You are either righteous by God's unmerited favor or you are trying to merit righteousness with your own works. You are either depending on Jesus or you are depending on yourself.

## The Voice Of Accusation

Perhaps you are wondering, "What's the big deal? Why is how I became righteous so important? Isn't this stuff for theologians and Bible school students to figure out?"

We are coming to the exciting part. This is important because while you are trying to believe God for big things and trusting Him that your prayers will be answered, you will be hounded by this voice of accusation:

*"Who do you think you are?"*

*"Don't you remember how you yelled at your spouse this morning? Why*

*should God give you favor for your important presentation at the office today?"*

*"Look at how easily you lose your cool on the road. How can you have the cheek to expect good things to happen to you?"*

*"You call yourself a Christian? When was the last time you read your Bible? What have you done for God? Why should God heal your child?"*

Do these accusations sound awfully familiar? Now, how you respond to this voice of accusation will expose what you really believe. This is the litmus test of what you believe. This is where the rubber meets the road! A person could think, "Yeah, you are right. I don't deserve this. How can I expect God's favor to be on me for my presentation at the office when I was so harsh with my wife this morning?" Now, that's the response of someone who believes that he needs to earn his own righteousness and place of acceptance before God. This person believes that he can expect good from God only when his conduct is good and his own checklist of self-imposed requirements are met to the hilt.

He would probably storm into his office, still seething with anger at his wife. Worst of all, he feels cut off from the presence of Jesus because of his anger and thinks that he does not qualify to ask for God's favor for his presentation. He steps into the boardroom disheveled and disorganized. He forgets his points and fumbles, causing his company to lose that major account. His bosses are disappointed with him and give him a huge tongue-lashing. Frustrated and shamed, he drives home like a maniac, sounding his horn at every car that does not move the instant the traffic lights turn green. When he gets home, he is even more upset with his wife because he blames her for putting him in a foul mood in the morning, for his terrible presentation and for the loss of the major account!

**Now, it is all HER fault!**

**Now, see the difference if this person thinks, "Yeah, you are right. I don't deserve to have God's favor at all because I lost my temper with my wife this morning. But you know what? I am not looking at what I deserve. I am looking at what Jesus deserves. Even right now, Jesus, I thank You that You see me as perfectly righteous. Because of the cross and Your perfect sacrifice, I can expect God's unmerited favor in my presentation. Every one of my shortcomings, even the tone I used this morning, is covered by Your righteousness. I can expect good not because I am good, but because You are good! Amen!"**

**See the amazing difference? This person is established upon Jesus' righteousness and not his own right doing or good behavior. He goes to work depending on the unmerited favor of Jesus, and he aces the presentation and clinches a major account for his company. His bosses are impressed by his performance and mark him for the next round of promotion. He drives home with peace and joy, feeling the Father's love and favor. Consequently, he is more patient with other drivers.**

*Right believing always leads to right living.*

**Now, does this mean that he sweeps all his failings under the carpet and pretends that they never happened? No way! This man, full of the consciousness that the Lord is with him, will find the strength in Christ to apologize to his wife for the tone he had used on her. You see, a heart that has been touched by unmerited favor cannot hold on to unforgiveness, anger and bitterness. Which of the above accounts demonstrate true holiness? Of course, it is the second account. Depending on God's favor results in a life of practical holiness. Right believing always leads to right living.**

# The Grace Of God Answers You In Your Most Undeserving Moment

The grace of God is the unearned, undeserved and unmerited favor of God. When God answers you in your most undeserving moment, **that is grace. That is His amazing, unmerited favor!** At your lowest point, your darkest hour, His light shines through for you and you become a recipient of His unmerited favor, and a recipient of favor can't help but want to extend grace to others.

My friend, in and of ourselves, we don't deserve anything good. But because we are in Christ and in His righteousness, God will not withhold any blessing from our lives today. Our part is not to struggle in our own works and be independent from God, but to focus on receiving all that we need from Him.

I believe that the more righteousness-conscious you are, the more of God's unmerited favor you will experience. When the voice of disqualification comes to remind you of all the areas that you have fallen short in, **that's the time to turn to Jesus and hear His voice, which qualifies you.** That is the true fight of faith! The fight of faith is to fight to believe that you are made righteous by faith and not by works. Paul, speaking of his own achievements under the law, said that he counts them all "as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having **my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.** (Philippians 3:8-9)

So there are clearly two types of righteousness in the Bible:

- (1) A righteousness that comes from **your** obedience and from **you** trying to earn your way to attain it.
- (2) A righteousness that comes from faith in **Jesus Christ**.

**Only one of these has a solid, unshakable foundation. One is built upon **you** and **your** ability to keep the law, while the other is built upon the Rock of all ages-Jesus Christ. One can only give you the occasional confidence to ask for God's favor, depending on how well you perceive you have done. The other gives you confidence ALL THE TIME to access His unmerited favor, even when you feel that you are greatly undeserving.**

**What do you want to depend on when push comes to shove-your wavering righteousness or the perfect, rock-solid righteousness of Jesus? It is your faith in the righteousness of Jesus that gives you the right to God's unmerited favor. Today, because of what Jesus did on the cross, you can expect good things to happen to you. You can ask God for big things and reach out to the blessed destiny that He has for you and your family.**

**His righteousness is your right to God's unmerited favor! Don't let any voice of accusation tell you otherwise!**

**Today's Prayer:**

**Father, I thank You that Jesus has paid the price for me to have Your unmerited favor. He took my sins and gave me His righteousness. And because I am righteous in Christ, I expect blessings such as peace and health to crown my head. I rest on Your Word that declares that as Jesus is, so am I in the world in Jesus' Name. Amen.**