

There Go I But For The Grace Of God

Romans 9:25-29

God is under no obligation to favor a sinner with gifts of grace, including regeneration of the heart, faith in Christ, and repentance of sin. He is just when He condemns. He is gracious when He saves. God's choice to favor the pagan Gentiles astonished Israel. But Paul says that this has been God's eternal purpose from the beginning (verses 25-28).

What happens to sinners when God chooses not to bestow His sovereign, saving grace? God speaks the solemn words "***Let them alone***" (Matt. 15:14) and He "***gives them up to their own hearts' lust***" (Psalm 81:12). Sinners become progressively more sinful, and nations become progressively more wicked, storing up for themselves the wrath of God.

"And as Isaiah said before, 'Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah'" (Isaiah 1:9; Romans 9:29).

I. Graced sinners ought to be gracious.

Christians, above all others, should display patience and tolerance to the immoral we know. "*For who maketh thee to differ from another? What hast thou that thou didst not receive*" (I Cor. 4:7). Immoral behavior should cause us to say "*there go I but for the grace of God.*" Grace does not mean you don't speak the truth, but it means you speak the truth in love. A lifestyle of sexual immorality, including the 'homosexual' lifestyle, is a mark of God's reprobation. In Romans 1:28 Paul says "*God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things they ought not do.*" Christians should be the most loving people on the face of this earth to homosexuals. Christians also should tell the truth about homosexuality - *it's a mark of reprobation.*

II. Graced sinners ought to be grateful.

The basis of contentment for the believer is never in his circumstances (Phil. 4:11). Genuine happiness and joy are the offspring of one's gratefulness for God's grace. Christians lack contentment because they have never been astonished by His grace. Only when a sinner sees that God has the right to not grace him will He appreciate it. "*He who forgets the language of gratitude can never be on speaking terms with happiness.*"

Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

III. Graced sinners ought to be godly.

Salvation is an act of restoration. Reprobation is a decree of condemnation. Salvation requires an active God. Reprobation requires God to do nothing. God is at work in this vast world saving His people and restoring in these sinners the image of Himself. Henry Scougal refers to this in his great work '*The Life of God in the Soul of Man.*' "*He did predestinate us to be conformed to the image of his Son*" (Romans 8:29).

I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be; but I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'

John Newton