
AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION

Steadfast Table

Season 2, Episode 12

Grace That Teaches: Faith, Works and Assurance

Mara Hale with Daniel Brooks

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Transcript sample by Faithful Transcript

MARA HALE

Welcome back to Steadfast Table. I'm Mara Hale, and today we're talking about a phrase Christians use constantly: saved by grace. It is a beautiful phrase, but sometimes we use it so quickly that we forget how much it actually includes.

With me today is Daniel Brooks, a Bible teacher and longtime friend of the show. Daniel, welcome back.

DANIEL BROOKS

Thank you, Mara. I'm glad to be here, and I agree with you already. Grace can become one of those familiar words that we affirm sincerely, but we do not always slow down enough to define it carefully.

MARA HALE

Exactly, and maybe we can start there. When Scripture says we are saved by grace, what are we saying? Are we just saying that God is kind, or is there more to it than that?

DANIEL BROOKS

There is definitely more to it. God is kind, yes, but biblical grace is not merely divine niceness. Grace is God's undeserved favor toward sinners. It means salvation begins with God's mercy, not our moral achievement. We do not climb our way up to God by becoming impressive enough. God comes down to us in Christ.

MARA HALE

That distinction matters so much because people often hear Christianity as if it were mainly a system of improvement: become better, try harder, stop failing, and then God will accept you.

DANIEL BROOKS

Yes. But the gospel is not, 'Improve yourself until you are lovable.' The gospel is that Christ saves the ungodly. Then, because we are united to Him, a changed life begins to grow. Obedience matters, but it is not the root of our salvation. It is the fruit.

MARA HALE

That root-and-fruit language is helpful. It keeps us from throwing obedience away, but it also keeps us from treating obedience like a ladder into God's love.

DANIEL BROOKS

Exactly. Ephesians 2:8-10 is probably the clearest passage to put on the table here:

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.

— Ephesians 2:8-10
New King James Version

MARA HALE That passage holds both truths together. It says we are saved by grace, not by works. But then it says we are created in Christ Jesus for good works.

DANIEL BROOKS Right. And that order is everything. Good works do not purchase salvation; they display that God has made us alive. When the order gets reversed, assurance becomes fragile. People start asking, ‘Have I done enough? Have I repented enough? Have I served enough?’

MARA HALE And the answer, if we are measuring ourselves as the basis of acceptance, is always no.

DANIEL BROOKS Always. That is why our assurance has to rest in Christ Himself. Not in the intensity of our feelings, not in the neatness of our spiritual habits, not in whether this week looked better than last week. Those things may encourage us, but they are not the foundation.

MARA HALE What would you say to the person who hears that and worries, ‘If I emphasize grace too much, won’t people become careless about sin?’

DANIEL BROOKS That is an old concern, and Paul addresses it directly in Romans 6. The answer is not to weaken grace, but to understand grace properly. Grace does not merely pardon sin; grace also trains us. It brings us into a new life under a new Lord.

MARA HALE So grace is not permission to stay asleep.

DANIEL BROOKS

No, not at all. Grace is the voice of God calling Lazarus out of the tomb. It creates life where there was death. And once life is present, there will be movement. It may be slow, it may be uneven, but there will be movement toward Christ.

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