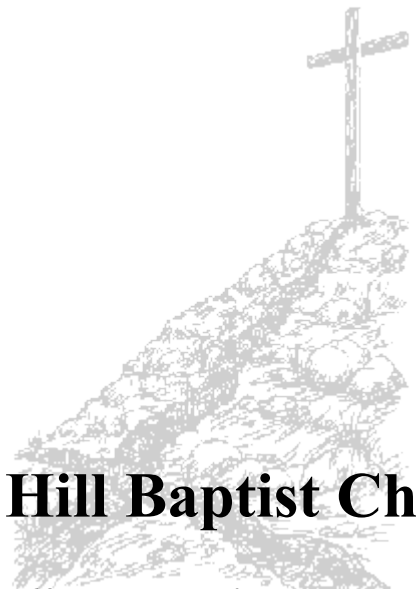


# Continue In The Grace of God

Acts 13:37-44



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**FOCAL** Acts 13:37-44 (KJV) "But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. {38} Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: {39} And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. {40} Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; {41} Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. {42} And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. {43} Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. {44} "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

I am so honored to be able to stand before you today, speaking at the gracious request of your dear Pastor Franks. There is not a day that goes by that I do not sense in a very real way my unworthiness to be His servant. I am what I am because of His Grace. Had not Jesus made the sacrifice He did for me and for you on that terrible tree we call Calvary neither of us would be here today. Had He not risen from the grave as He said He would, ever living and abiding on the right hand of God the Father, we would have no strength to even face tomorrow.

**"Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.  
Because He lives, All fear is gone.  
Because I know He holds the future,  
And life is worth the living just because He lives."<sup>1</sup>**

Though we read a rather lengthy text, the focus of the message tonight will be the last six words of our text:

**"continue in the grace of God"**

The success or the failure of our mission to Belize will be determined by whether or not we **continue in the grace of God**.

## **1. We Continue In His Grace Because Grace Alone Saves**

**FOCAL** Acts 13:39 "And by him all that **believe**<sup>2</sup> are **justified**<sup>3</sup> from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

We must **continue in the Grace of God** for this is the only means by which a person can be saved. The Mosaic Law *could not* bring salvation to even one person, just as being *a good person* cannot save even one person. The Apostle preached:

**"ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"**

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1 Bill and Gloria Gaither, *Because He Lives*

2 Present Active Participle pisteuo {pronounced pist-yoo'-o}, keep on believing

3 Aorist Passive Infinitive dikaiōo {pronounced dik-ah-yo'-o}, to render or declare righteous. Refers to the action that God as Judge would make from His exalted state.

That word **justified** means *to declare righteous*. The Bible teaches us that our forefather Adam fell into sin (**Romans 5:15**) and in so doing carried all of humanity into sin with him. Adam's act, and every act that we have committed apart from the Grace of God carries with it God's righteous judgment of sin. From the beginning, immediately after Adam's fall, God began to teach us that salvation can only come through His Grace. Adam and Eve, naked but for a few leaves off of some trees, were covered by God's Grace when He took an innocent animal's life to cover these two poor deceived people.

**Genesis 3:21 (KJV) "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."**

Even in the Garden we see the **Grace of God and the Blood**. There's a stream of Blood that starts in Genesis, a river that runs all the way through until the last **Amen** of Revelation. The River Bed is called **Grace**, and that which fills the channel represents the rich Blood of Christ. We're saved by the River of His Grace - that's where we launch the ships of our souls if we expect to get to where God is.

It is the **Grace of God** that saves, that **justifies**, that allows God to declare us righteous. This is the message that we carry into the world with us: Faith alone in Christ alone saves! Many people today have, much like the Jewish population of Antioch, *deluded* themselves into believing that salvation can come by the Mosaic Law or by being good. The Apostle's message was

**FOCAL** Acts 13:39 "And by him [Jesus] all that **believe**<sup>4</sup> are justified<sup>5</sup> from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Believe in Jesus, trust in Him, and thou shalt be saved. Faith in the finished work of the Son allows God the Father to *justify* you, to declare you righteous. It's exactly like using a credit card. Most Americans know what a credit card is: It's a piece of plastic that you use when you're shopping on borrowed money. The credit card company allows you to purchase things you want with money you don't have. That's credit! Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our failure, for our sins. If you believe on Him then God *credits His righteousness* to your Heavenly account. The wonderful thing about salvation by faith in Christ is that *you are not obligated to pay back* righteousness credited to your account. You cannot! That's the lesson the Law taught Israel, and should teach us all. In another place the Apostle says:

**Galatians 2:21 (KJV) "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."**

If the Law *could* have brought righteousness, if a man could stand justified before God *on his own merit*, then why did our precious Redeemer have to die? His death **was not in vain**, for without Grace we would all be dead in our sins. The love of God planted in our hearts *because we are saved* drives us to tell others about Him.

4 Present Active Participle pisteuo {pronounced pist-yoo'-o}, keep on believing

5 Aorist Passive Infinitive dikaiōo {pronounced dik-ah-yo'-o}, to render or declare righteous. Refers to the action that God as Judge would make from His exalted state.

We are obedient to God *because we love Him*, but not because our works *keep us* saved. It is the Grace of God that saves us,

**Titus 2:11 (KJV) "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"**

and it is the love of Christ and His promise that *keeps us*. Jesus said:

**(John 10:28-29 KJV) "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. {29} My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."**

He **tasted death** for us so we would never have to go to that place of torment (**Hebrews 2:9**).

We continue in the Grace of God because this is the only thing that will save us *and keep us*. God will accept no other coin other than that stamped out on the Press of Calvary, a coin marked with suffering and pain. **Read the face on that Coin** again:

**FOCAL** Acts 13:37-39 (KJV) "But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. {38} Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: {39} And by him all that believe are justified from all things ..."

Through Jesus Christ we preach **forgiveness of sins**.

Because we are justified by Him, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Romans 5:9). We are saved from wrath *because of Grace* we are justified from all things. There is no sin left unforgiven, once it is covered by His Blood. We continue in His Grace, because it is the only thing we can continue in.

## 2. We Continue In His Grace Because Grace Is Where The Power Is

**FOCAL** Acts 13:40-41 (KJV) "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; {41} Behold, ye despisers<sup>6</sup>, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

We continue in the **Grace of God** because it is His Grace alone that *empowers* us. We are not going to Belize in our own power, nor is it our message that we are preaching. Though we love our local Churches - Corinth is a wonderful Church full of wonderful believers, just as Rock Hill is - it is not our Church nor our methodology that empowers us. **It is the Grace of God alone that strengthens**, that gives the ability, that will be behind our work.

The Apostle quotes (in verse 41) a warning that came to Israel long ago through the Prophet Habakkuk. We read:

**(Habakkuk 1:5 KJV) "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work**

<sup>6</sup> kataphrontes {pronounced kat-af-ron-tace' }, someone who casts down, despises, scoffs at or considers foolish

**a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you."**

God's chosen nation Israel was filled with unbelief and pride in their own power. They were proud that they were chosen by God. They were puffed up, and rejected salvation by faith in Christ for worship of the Law. Habakkuk warned that a day was coming when God's first love would reject the Grace by which He saved them. This is exactly what happened.

When Jesus Christ came and walked among His people, His people all had their own agenda. Some looked for a *conquering Messiah*, Someone Who would overthrow the hated Romans. Israel was in bondage to Rome because she had repeatedly rejected God's Grace. Habakkuk prophesied that Israel, hardened by unbelief, rejecting God for their own power, would be *blind* to the work that God was doing among **the heathen** or the **non-Jewish peoples**. From the beginning God has called His people, relying on His power and Grace, to tell *the whole world* about salvation by faith in Christ. God said:

**FOCAL** Acts 13:41 (KJV) "... I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

God is doing this work. "**I work a work**". Those Whom God saves and empowers, God expects them to lovingly live out their faith *in Him*. The better part of Israel *received the Grace of God in vain*. God saved Israel, He blessed Israel, He took them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and set them up as a great nation. In return Israel

rejected the Grace of God, rejected the Savior, and embraced a system of Law that should have convicted them of sin.

**2 Corinthians 6:1 (KJV) "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."**

Only the most churlish child will receive Grace from God, then refuse to serve Him through that Grace. When you see the *first generation of Israel* dead in the wilderness, you see the danger of receiving the **grace of God in vain**. We do not receive the Grace of God in vain, but are going to step out on faith believing that the *power* in the Christian way of life is the *surrendered life*. We are not high minded about what we are doing, but we intend to be surrendered to **Christ in us the hope of Glory (Colossians 1:27)**. We will labor for the Master, but we will also allow the Master to labor *through us*. If anything is accomplished, then it will be accomplished because it is the **Grace of God working in us**.

**1 Corinthians 15:10 (KJV) "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."**

To God be the glory!

**3. We Continue In His Grace Because God's Work Requires Partnership with God and with One Another**

**FOCAL Acts 13:2-4 (KJV) "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them. {3} And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. {4} So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."**

**FOCAL Acts 13:44 (KJV) "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."**

We continue in His Grace because the Grace of God *demands our partnership with both God and one another*. In many local churches today there is the sense of *competition*. Yet we are not called to compete with one another, but we are (**1 Corinthians 3:9**) "**laborers together with God**". When we work together toward the common goal of glorifying Jesus Christ our Lord there is no limit to what we can do. And we *must* work together: this is essential in God's Great Commission. **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**, one of the great preachers of yesteryear, said:

**"What a man can do for himself God will not do for him, and what Christian people can do for sinners they must not expect the Lord to do; they must work themselves according to the ability God has given them up to the point of possibility, and then they may look for Divine interposition."**

What was Brother Spurgeon saying? Throughout Christ's

ministry on this earth He showed us that we are called to work together both *with God* and *with fellow believers in Christ*. When Christ decided to feed the multitude of *five thousand* the Apostle Andrew said:

**John 6:9 (KJV) "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"**

Five barley loaves and two small fishes are *not* sufficient to feed five thousand people. But God in Christ took that little bit which the Apostles brought forth and multiplied it into a *vast quantity* of food - more than enough to feed everyone there. Over and over again Jesus showed us this principle:

When asked to make wine at the wedding feast Jesus had *six water pots filled to the brim with water*, and only after they were filled did He turn the water into wine (**John 2:6-7**). Could He have created those pots out of nothing, and made them full of wine? Absolutely! He Who put His hand out and said "Let there be light" in the genesis is *more than able* to accomplish such a minor miracle without man's help. Yet Grace allows the mortal the joy of partnering with the Immortal - and His servants bring forth the water pots.

When our Savior brought Lazarus back from the grave He first ordered that *the stone be rolled away* (**John 11:39**)? Could not our Jesus have rolled that stone away Himself? Someone moved the stone on Jesus' tomb (**Mark 16:3-4**) - Jesus could have just as easily commanded that this stone be moved and it would have

moved at the merest utterance of the Almighty! Yet Grace desires that we partner with God, so human effort moves the stone - but Divine effort raises the dead. We go forward on mission because we can, because we are called, but God will save the souls.

Over and over again we see this principle of partnership between God and man. The *man born blind* had to *wash in the pool of Siloam* if we wanted to be healed (**John 9:6-7**). When our Precious Jesus wanted to bless the disciples with a large haul of fish He commanded that they *let down their nets on the other side of the boat* (**John 21:5-6**). They did what man can do, but God did what God can do - and were rewarded with great blessings. Jesus performed 9 miracles over nature; 17 miracles over the sick, deformed or injured; 3 miracles over death; and 7 miracles over devils. All of His miracles were acts of merciful Grace save one, the miracle of the *fig tree* (**Matthew 21:19-20**). This miracle alone was *an act of judgment*, and I believe it significant that this is the only miracle I can think of that Jesus performed *without partnering with mortal man*.

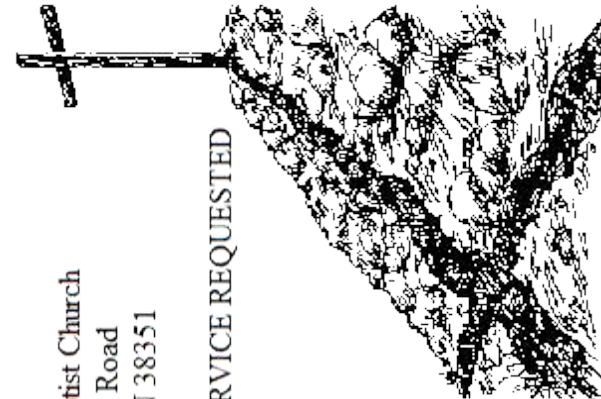
God could save man from his sinful estate *without our aid*, just as He could have created wine, bread, and fish from nothing. God knocked Saul down on the Damascus Road and led him to salvation. What He did once, He could do again - there is nothing impossible for our God! But this is not what He would do. Jesus Christ has *all power in Heaven and in earth*:

**(Matthew 28:18-19 KJV) "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me**

**in heaven and in earth; Go ye therefore ..."**

yet we are ordered to **(Matthew 28:19) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"**. God could do it alone, but Grace demands we do it with Him and with one another. This is the Biblical pattern we follow tonight as we lay hands on the missionaries, sending them out from God's Church. We begin on a wonderful missionary outreach for Christ our Savior, partnering with Him as we go into Belize. You are part of that process tonight, a process of Grace that will result in glory for Jesus Christ our Lord.

May God touch your hearts with this message.



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