

**Discipleship:  
An  
Introduction to  
Systematic Theology and  
Apologetics**

**Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation**

**The Heights Church October 27, 2019**

## Grace: Roman Catholic understanding (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- In its natural state, your soul isn't fit for heaven. What you need to live is supernatural life (sanctifying grace), not just natural life.
- **Sanctifying grace** stays in the soul. It's what makes the soul holy; it gives the soul supernatural life. More properly, it *is* supernatural life.
- **Actual grace**, by contrast, is a supernatural push or encouragement. It's transient. It doesn't live in the soul, but acts on the soul from the outside, so to speak. It's a supernatural kick in the pants. It gets the will and intellect moving so we can seek out and keep sanctifying grace.

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- If sanctifying grace dwells in your soul when you die, then you can live in heaven (though you may need to be purified first in purgatory; 1 Cor. 3:12–16).

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved ,but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- If it doesn't dwell in your soul when you die—in other words, if your soul is spiritually dead by being in the state of mortal sin (Gal. 5:19-21)— you cannot live in heaven.

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- You then have to face an eternity of spiritual death: the utter separation of your spirit from God (Eph. 2:1, 2:5, 4:18).

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (2:1)

even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--  
by grace you have been saved (2:5)

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God  
because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (4:18)

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- For instance, he moves you to repentance, and if you take the hint you can find yourself in the confessional, where the guilt for your sins is remitted (John 20:21–23).

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- Through the sacrament of penance, through your reconciliation to God, you receive sanctifying grace. But you can lose it again by sinning mortally (1 John 5:16–17).

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life--to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- Mortal sins are deadly sins because they kill off this supernatural life, this sanctifying grace. Mortal sins can't coexist with the supernatural life, because by their nature such sins are saying "No" to God, while sanctifying grace would be saying "Yes."
- Venial sins don't destroy supernatural life, and they don't even lessen it. Mortal sins destroy it outright. The trouble with venial sins is that they weaken us, making us more vulnerable to mortal sins.



## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- When you lose supernatural life, there's nothing you can do on your own to regain it. You're reduced to the merely natural life again, and no natural act can merit a supernatural reward. You can merit a supernatural reward only by being made able to act above your nature, which you can do only if you have help—grace.

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- To regain supernatural life, you have to receive actual graces from God. Think of these as helping graces. Such graces differ from sanctifying grace in that they aren't a quality of the soul and don't abide in it. Rather, actual graces enable the soul to perform some supernatural act, such as an act of faith or repentance. If the soul responds to actual grace and makes the appropriate supernatural act, it again receives supernatural life.

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- Sanctifying grace implies a real transformation of the soul. Recall that most of the Protestant Reformers denied that a real transformation takes place. They said God doesn't actually wipe away our sins. Instead, our souls remain corrupted, full of sin. God merely throws a cloak over them and treats them as if they were spotless, knowing all the while that they're not.

## **Grace: Roman Catholic understanding** (source: catholic.com Catholic Answers)

- But that isn't the Catholic view. We believe souls really are cleansed by an infusion of the supernatural life. Of course, we're still subject to temptations to sin; we still suffer the effects of Adam's Fall in that sense (what theologians call "concupiscence\*"); but God has removed the sins we have, much like a mother might wash the dirt off of a child who has a tendency to get dirty again. Our wills are given the new powers of hope and charity, things absent at the merely natural level.

\*Augustine, used the term "concupiscence" to refer to sinful lust. In Catholic theology, concupiscence is a desire of the lower appetite contrary to reason.

## Grace: Eastern Orthodox understanding

- In the Orthodox Church, grace is identified with the *Uncreated Energies of God*\*.

\*light revealed on Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration of Jesus, identified with the light seen by Paul at his conversion.

## Grace: Eastern Orthodox understanding

- Among Eastern Christians generally, grace is considered to be the partaking of the Divine Nature described in 2 Peter 1:4 - 10

**3** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who **called** us to his own glory and excellence, **4** by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. **5** For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

## Grace: Eastern Orthodox understanding

**6** and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, **7** and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to **make your calling and election sure**, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

## Grace: Eastern Orthodox understanding

- The *Holy Mysteries* ("sacraments") are seen as a means of partaking of divine grace because God works through his Church, not just because specific legalistic rules are followed; and grace is the working of God himself, not a created substance of any kind that can be treated like a commodity.



# Grace: Eastern Orthodox understanding

- There is:
  - No distinction made between mortal and venial sins,
  - No doctrine of Purgatory (although there is a strong tradition that upholds "purification after death" and prayers offered for the dead)
  - No Treasury of Merit whereby merit may be transferred from one person to another.

## Grace: Eastern Orthodox understanding

- Instead, the Eastern Church has emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life and has maintained ascetic disciplines such as fasting and prayer.
  - The minimum fast obligatory on Orthodox faithful is two days weekly and before receiving Communion, not as a way to make satisfaction for past sins or to build up merit, but as a means of spiritual discipline to help reduce one's susceptibility to temptation in the future to exercise self-control, and to avoid being enslaved to one's passions and desires.