

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

Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation

The Heights Church November 10, 2019

Grace: John Wesley – 3 kinds of grace (Review)

1. *Prevenient grace* Wesley did not believe that humanity was totally "depraved." He believed everyone is born with just enough grace to enable the individual to recognize and accept God's justifying grace.
2. *Justifying grace* today is what is referred to as "conversion" or being "born again." God's justifying grace brings "new life in Christ." Wesley believed that people have freedom of choice—to accept or to reject God's justifying grace.
3. *Sustaining grace.* Wesley believed that, after accepting God's grace, a person is to move on in God's sustaining grace toward perfection. Wesley did not believe in the "eternal security of the believer."

Prevenient Grace?

- *Prevenient grace* is a phrase used to describe the grace given by God that precedes the act of a sinner exercising saving faith in Jesus Christ. The term *prevenient* comes from a Latin word that meant "to come before, to anticipate."
- While all grace could be called prevenient, when contrasted with the Reformed view of grace there are two major different understandings of *Prevenient Grace*.

Prevenient Grace?

1. Classical Arminianism teaches that until the Gospel, is presented to a sinner, the sinner is in complete bondage to sin. The Holy Spirit works with the presentation of the Gospel through teaching and convicting the sinner. The Holy Spirit opens the heart and mind of the sinner, wooing the sinner to Christ, and encouraging the sinner to exercise his newly freed will in placing his faith in Christ for salvation. However, Arminians teach that, although the sinner is now enabled to place his faith in Christ, this enablement by no means guarantees that the sinner will actually do so.

Prevenient Grace?

- So why does one person believe and another does not? The Father gave the Son a flock and everyone of these sheep will believe.

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but **you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My** Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:24 – 29)

Prevenient Grace?

2. "*Wesley's Order of Salvation*" defines *Prevenient grace* as follows: "Human beings are totally incapable of responding to God without God first empowering them to have faith. This empowerment is known as "Prevenient Grace." Prevenient Grace **doesn't save us** but, rather, comes before anything that we do, drawing us to God, making us WANT to come to God, and enabling us to have faith in God. Prevenient Grace is **Universal**, in as much as all humans receive it, **regardless of their having heard of Jesus**. It is manifested in the deep-seated desire of most humans to know God."

Prevenient Grace?

- Universal Prevenient Grace is not scriptural.

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:13 – 17)

Prevenient Grace?

- There is no deep-seated desire of most humans to know God.

as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. (Romans 3:10 – 12)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1 – 3)

The Reformed view of Grace

- The Reformed view speaks of grace in three ways.
 1. *Sola Gratia* – A distinguishing mark of Protestantism versus Catholicism as developed in the Reformation namely that Salvation is accomplished by grace alone and does not include any works. Good works are the result of salvation not a cause of salvation. Notice that neither Roman Catholics, Arminians or Methodists can completely affirm *Sola Gratia*.
 2. Irresistible Grace – previously covered in the Doctrines of Grace
 3. Common Grace – Primarily a reformed concept.

Reformed Doctrine of Irresistible Grace

- The Doctrine of Irresistible Grace does not mean that every instance of the Holy Spirit's work cannot be resisted.

So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? **For who can resist his will?**" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" (Romans 9:18 – 20)