

How To Enter God's Mercy and Grace

Ralph Yankee Arnold has been preaching for over 50 years, pastored a church and has over 15,000 subscribers on his YouTube channel. In a recent video he stated:

“A man can go to heaven simply by accepting what Christ did on the cross for him, nothing else added.”

—Ralph Yankee Arnold

So, did Jesus tell His disciples to preach "simply accept what I did on the cross"? No, He told them to preach "repentance and remission of sins":

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them,

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

(Luke 24:45-47)

In fact, Jesus warned we'll perish unless we repent:

"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

(Luke 13:4,5)

Peter makes it clear: come to repentance, or else perish:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

(2 Peter 3:9)

Given that we must repent or else we'll perish, it is obvious that Mr Arnold's statement "nothing else added" is incorrect.

Of course there are those who would tell you "repent" means nothing more than "change your mind" and accept what Jesus did on the cross . . . nothing to do with turning from sin. Are they right? No. For example, here's the apostle Paul telling the Corinthians to repent —turn from sin:

"And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."

(2 Corinthians 12:21)

Here's another example: God changed His mind about about punishing Nineveh because

they changed their mind about continuing in sin. They "turned from their evil way":

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

(Jonah 3:10)

Here's what Jesus had to say about Nineveh. And note this: He used "repented" in reference to turning from sin:

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

(Jesus, in Matthew 12:41)

So, who gets God's mercy and grace? Is it those who "accept what Christ did on the cross"? No; it's those who obey and come to Him in repentance, confessing and forsaking sin:

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"

(Acts 17:30)

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

(Proverbs 28:13)

If we'll obey, our past sins will be "blotted out":

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"

(Acts 3:19, NKJV)

That's right: our past sins remain - neither blotted out nor paid for - unless we come to Him in repentance. The idea that all sins were "paid for, past present and future" the moment Jesus died on the cross is gross error. A payment for past, present and future sins was made **available** the moment Jesus died on the cross. **Huge difference!**

On the cross Jesus made available a ransom: He made His death and blood available to cover the death penalty we earn for sin.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

(Titus 2:14)

We can have that mercy and redemption if we'll turn from sin, sin that earned us the death penalty to begin with. Otherwise we'll remain outside His promised mercy and redemption and we'll perish, just as Jesus warned.

If we'll obey and come to Him in repentance, we'll also enter "the presence of the Lord" as we saw in Acts 3:19. How do we enter His presence? By the gift of the holy spirit, given "to them that obey him" and "repent":

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

(Acts 5:32)

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

(Acts 2:38)

While we abide in and walk with Jesus in repentance, following the holy spirit, we are in His mercy and grace; we are in justification —not under condemnation:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

(Romans 8:1)

While we abide in and walk with Jesus in repentance, following the holy spirit, He will correct us and lead us out of slavery to sin:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

(Jesus, in Revelation 3:19)

He is the potter, we are the clay. If we are not in repentance, He cannot work with us. But if we abide in Jesus in repentance, He will help us overcome slavery to sin:

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

(Revelation 21:7)

While we abide in and walk with Jesus in repentance, following the holy spirit, we have "the hope of salvation": the promised gift of eternal life, to be received at Jesus' "revelation" — His return:

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"

(Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:8,9).

"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life"

(1 John 2:25).

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"

(1 Peter 1:13)

While we abide in and walk with Jesus in repentance, following the holy spirit, Jesus will be our advocate with the Father:

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"

(1 John 2:1)

While we abide in and walk with Jesus in repentance, following the holy spirit, Jesus will "cleanse" us - present tense - from new sins:

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

(1 John 1:7)

What happens if we no longer abide in Him in repentance, and revert to a life of willful sin? Our new sins are not covered:

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

(Hebrews 10:26,27)

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

(Jesus, in John 15:6)

In that case we fall away from justification and return to condemnation, and we forfeit that "hope of salvation."

Judgment is on "the house of God" - His people - right now:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

(1 Peter 4:17)

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

(Hebrews 4:1)

You might be thinking "Doesn't the Bible say "believe" and you'll be saved? So why would Jesus and Peter say we must repent - turn from sin - or else we'll perish? This seems confusing and contradictory."

Yes, it would seem contradictory if you assumed "believe" means nothing more than trust or intellectually accept that something is true. Just trusting or accepting is FAITH. Faith in the original Greek was πίστις (pistis), a noun. Trust or faith is something you have. Believe or πιστεύω (pisteuō) in the original Greek was a verb, meaning committing to your faith by acting on it. Believing goes beyond just trusting.

The apostle James used Abraham's example to illustrate the difference. Abraham had faith: he trusted God's promise of the promised land. But he went beyond that: he acted on his faith—he obeyed and left home for the promised land:

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

(Hebrews 11:8)

"By faith" or "through faith" (Ephesians 2:8) he saw he had a choice to make. He chose to obey. Later Abraham obeyed again and offered his son Isaac. Here's James:

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
(James 2:20-24)

Believing goes beyond "faith only." Abraham acted on His faith and obeyed. That was his works, and for that he was deemed a believer and was justified . . . "and not by faith only."

Faith is necessary, but faith alone is not enough. Faith without works - obedience - is dead.

"Works" refers to different things in different contexts. Abraham's works had nothing to do with Paul's works or "deeds of the law" in Romans 3,4 and 5 and nothing to do with Paul's good works or deeds done for others in Ephesians 2:9,10.

So now when we read John 3:16 the word "believe" comes alive in its full meaning and there is no contradiction with Jesus' warning "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish":

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
(John 3:16)

Like Abraham, we must believe: we must obey —not just have faith. Today, sadly, the gospel is presented as something we just have faith or trust in. Peter shows the gospel is to be obeyed, not just trusted in:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

(1 Peter 4:17)

Here's another example. Peter does not call non-believers faithless . . . he call them disobedient:

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner"

(1 Peter 2:7)

Today faith shows us a better promised land: eternal life in the Kingdom of God. But our journey will not begin until we - like Abraham - act on our faith and obey. We are commanded to confess and forsake sin. Obey, and then will we enter justification - His promised mercy and grace - and we'll receive the holy spirit, and we'll have that "hope of salvation."

"Faith alone" is not enough. Today Jesus is

". . . the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"

(Hebrews 5:9)

There's one more thing I should mention. Again, here is Mr Arnold's statement:

"A man can go to heaven simply by accepting what Christ did on the cross for him, nothing else added."

The statement presumes and suggests we "go to heaven." That is another error commonly taught in churchianity today. There is no promise anywhere in the Bible that we spend eternity in heaven. If you think you have a verse in the Bible that says we spend eternity in heaven, please post that verse in the comments to this video.

Jesus said "the meek shall inherit the earth":

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

(Matthew 5:5)

We are promised a new, re-created earth where God will dwell with us:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

(Revelation 21:1-4)

—George Burdick
November 14, 2021