

Wonderful Grace

If you asked many Christians today how we are saved, they would probably answer that they have tried to live a good life and it's by good works they have done to reflect that. Of course, we, as Lutherans believe that salvation comes by grace alone.

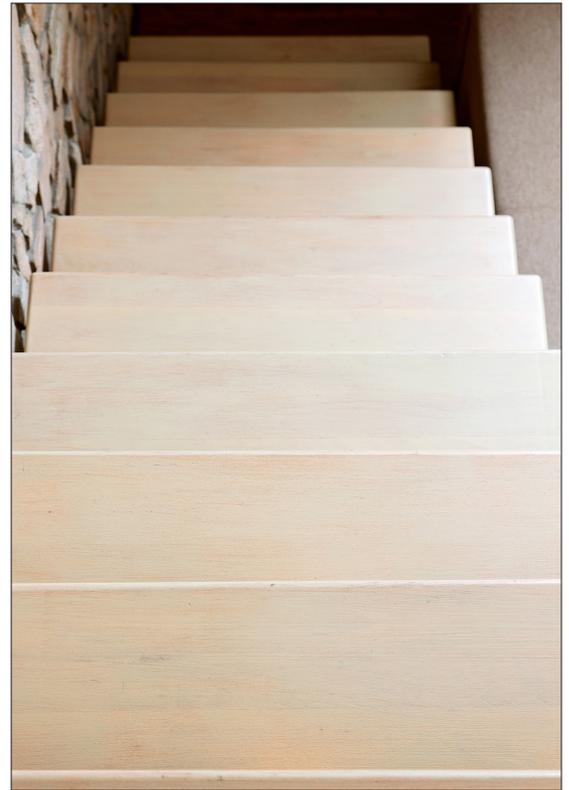
I was once told a story about a boy whose fond memories of his dad included the following incident that reinforces this concept of grace. It goes something like this:

My younger siblings and I were standing at the bottom of a set of stairs in my childhood home looking up at my dad who was at the very top. "Okay kids, I want you to come up to me," my dad was saying, "but you're not allowed to touch the stairs. If you can figure out how to do it, we're going to get ice cream!" With this ultimate motivation in place, we started scheming how to accomplish this.

I was still young enough to be quite imaginative...maybe there was a way I could levitate just inches above the stairs?! He said that we couldn't touch the stairs, but I thought that maybe we could climb up the railing?! He shot down that idea very quickly - and came up with the question, "How can you come up here without touching absolutely anything?"

I'm not certain how it finally dawned on us, and I'm sure my dad gave us some further clues, but it felt like a lightbulb moment when I said, "Dad, you'll have to carry us!" Yay, Dad came down the stairs and carried us - each one by one up to the top. My dad then shared Jesus' love with us saying, "This is how Jesus carries us to be with Him in heaven. There is nothing we can do to earn our salvation; it is all by God's grace and all His work. He loves us so much!" Clearly this event had an impact on me, as I still remember it today. My dad shared God's love (and ice cream) with us, in such a simple way.

After reading this story, I'm certain that the words of St. Paul to one of the churches of his day come to mind: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).



The words of the hymn "By Grace I'm Saved" say it all:

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;
My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why stagger at this word of promise?
Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?
No! Then this word must true remain:
By grace you too will life obtain.

LSB #566 v. 1 Public Domain

*by Barb Jurgens
Ontario District*