

Skit begins with one person holding on as if they have fallen off of a cliff, and three or four people standing around him/her. There must be, at least, one girl in the standing group.

Person over cliff: Help!!! I've fallen and I can't get up!

Girl in standing group: Look someone's hurt, let's go and help them.

Group rushes to the person over the cliff

Person 1: I'd like to help, but what's in it for me? I'd got needs and wants. Do you have any gold that you can give me for helping?

POC Gold? No I'm sorry, but that was taken from me. I have nothing.

Person 1: Well, too bad for you. (*Walks away*)

Person 2: Hey I don't need any gold to help, but it would be nice to get paid in some way. Do you have any money?

POC : No

Person 2: CD's?

POC : No.

Person 2: Spare change?

POC : No.

Person 2: Look, work with me here. How about some Gum?

POC : No

Person 2: Mac card? Credit card? Baseball cards?

POC : No, no, no.

Person 2: Shoes?

POC : These (*points to the shoes on her/his feet*).

Person 2: (*examines them*) These will never do. Sorry pal, I can't help you. (*Walks away*)

Person 3: I can't believe how selfish some people are. Wanting all of that stuff just to help. Money, gold, some people are just so concerned about themselves. I mean it just makes me sick. I would help without any need for that...*(Person over the cliff reaches out to take person 3's hand. person 3 looks away)* If it weren't for the fact that I am due at church right now, I would help you up, but, what can I say. I can't, I'm sorry, but I really am busy. It's tough being a pillar of the community, with my involvement at the church, and in the community groups. Heck, I almost never have any time for myself anymore. Don't get me wrong, it's not your fault or anything, but it's just that I'm so important, and so busy....Oh, look, I'm late. All this time here helping you, and now I'm late. *(Walks away talking)* There is just so much to do, and so little time to do it in. I'm busy, busy, busy. I'm so proud of me that I stopped and helped that person. Not everyone would do that you know

Girl :Here, let me help. *(helps the person to their feet)* Okay, now where are you Going? I'll help you there?

POC :Over there, *(points off to a chair that is on the set)*

Girl :*(walks with POC towards chair)* Just hold on to me, and you will make it. Just a little further, *(sits POC down in the chair)* There, now is there anyone I can call for you? Or something I can get you?

POC :No, Thanks, you really saved me back there. Thank you very much. *(Girl starts to walk away)* Hey, by the way, what's your name?

Girl : Grace *(turns and walks away)*

POC : *(looks at the audience)* So always remember, it is GRACE ALONE that saves us.

It's sometimes difficult for us to admit that we need saving at all.

I mean, we live in a world that teaches us to be self-sufficient.
a society that hold up the self-made man or woman.

From a young age, we are conditioned and groomed for success.
and our parents are conditioned to make sure that we get it.

All that pressure to get our kids in the best schools and the best sports teams, and the best after-school activities.

We are told that we can, and must, earn our way in this world.

So is it any wonder that we would come to our relationship with God with the same expectations?

We figure that if there is a way to win or earn our way into earthly success,
There must be a way to win God's favor as well.

If we just try a little harder,
or read the Bible a little longer,
or serve our neighbor a little deeper
or pray a little stronger

we are sure that we can do it.

Yet, what our Scripture lessons remind us of today,
Is that when we think we can earn God's love, we deceive ourselves.

The truth is that we all fall short of the glory of God.

No matter how hard we try, we cannot please God.

There is no human being who can meet all of God's requirements.

In fact, the truth is that we can't even keep the first commandment.

There is not one of us who can love God above all things..

Not one of us that loves the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind.

And it was that realization that terrified a monk and priest named Martin Luther.
Martin Luther had an overactive conscience.

He recognized very clearly that if his relationship with God depended on him, he was
doomed.

And so are the rest of us.

Luther explained that our human wills and human natures became skewed after the scene
in the Garden of Eden,

so that now, we are incapable of putting God before ourselves.

we are incapable of keeping God's commands to the letter of the law.

In fact, Paul tells us in our passage from Romans that the law cannot save us.

Since we can't keep the law by our own efforts, the only thing that the law can do for
us is point out our sin.

The law is like a mirror, that shows us the same thing that Luther saw,
Without God's intervention, we are doomed.

There is no earning anything with God.

Without someone to help us, we are like the girl in our skit, hanging off the edge of a
cliff....

But thankfully the Word of God encompasses more than the Law.

As Lutherans put it: the Word of God is both Law and Gospel.

The law shows us our sin, but the Gospel shows us God's saving response to that
sin.

God loves us so much that God desires to save us, even from ourselves.

God loves all of creation so much that God desires to bless and save the entire created
order.

But God does not do this because God has watered down God's standards.
Sin is still sin. Sin is still separation from God that deserves death.
God wasn't willing to just say that sin doesn't matter anymore.

Instead, God created a plan before the foundations of the world,
to make satisfaction for human sin.
to send Jesus, the sinless one, into the world, to take on our sin for us.
So that we could receive forgiveness and grace.

Lutherans talk a lot about grace....grace is God's undeserved love.
we are loved and forgiven not because we deserve it,
but instead, because Jesus deserves it.
When we are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ,
We are promised this forgiveness and grace.
We are sealed with the cross of Christ forever.

No matter what we do...
No matter what we fail to do...
God will not abandon us.
The Gospel always follows the Law.
When we are showed our sin by the law, we are also shown God's forgiveness
through the sacrifice of Christ.

So in Christ Jesus, we are no longer left clinging to some branch on the side of a cliff.
Instead, we cling securely to the promises of God,
Trusting that God's promises are sure.

So remember: it is GRACE ALONE that saves us.

And we all need God's saving grace.
And it is GRACE ALONE that motivates us to try to live according to God's standards,
Not in order to be saved, but in response to salvation already given.

We are justified by grace through faith.
We are saved through Christ Jesus our Lord.
Thanks be to God.!

Amen