

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Grace Wrought Living

Titus 2:11-15

Keywords: Redemption, Sanctification, Blessed Hope, Holiness, Salvation, Purity

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. Give context from prior messages.
- B. Flow of Text:
 - 1. Paul is moving from application to theology that explains the former. Normally he goes the other way but this is not uncommon either.
 - 2. This is the theological core of the entire letter and this is a very dense passage.
 - 3. Vss 11-14 is one sentence with *charis* being the subject.
 - 4. There are several parallels and contrasts. Christ's first coming is a manifestation of God's grace (11); his second coming shows God's glory (13). Vss 11-12 spell out the two fold aspect of his coming: deny sinful ways and live righteously. The same is repeated in vs 14.
 - 5. There is a threefold presentation of the time of salvation, the past in Christ's appearance (11, 14a); the present obligations due to that salvation (12, 14b); and the future hope of Christ's return (13).
 - 6. Vs 15 is a transitional vs that can go either way but I put it primarily with what was just said in chapter 2, tying up everything with the bookends of vs 1 and 15
- C. Paul just finished telling the bond-servants that as they live and work in a manner consistent with the gospel that they would adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every way.
 - 1. The transition is immediate, "for" and it now gives the reason for all Paul has commanded Titus in this chapter.
 - 2. The various groups in vss 1-10 MUST live godly lives because God's grace teaches them to deny ungodliness and live justly.
 - 3. The question I have in mind is why?

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- a. It teaches us this because we know what Jesus graciously came to do through his death and resurrection. He conquered the enemies of sin, Satan and death. If they are his enemies then they must be the enemies of those who love him and call him their Lord.
 - b. Therefore, a true follower would be oriented (via the Holy Spirit) to have a desire to be far from anything connected to these.
- D. Let us learn from the grace of God how we ought believe and live if we are to call ourselves Christians.

II. Grace Wrought Living (11-15).

- A. "God's grace appeared".
- 1. Speaks of the whole of Jesus' first coming. It begins with his incarnation and ends in His resurrection and ascension.
 - a. in vs 13 it will then involve his second coming as well.
 - b. The idea of "appearing" is not just someone showing up. It speaks to the whole saving event attached to that person. This is the image Paul is drawing upon.
 - 2. When we think of "grace", especially God's grace, we need to remember that grace is based solely on his love and our total inability to meet God's standards. God's grace is a gift we do not deserve and cannot earn. Without God's grace, there can be no salvation since grace is foundational to salvation (Ephesians 2:4-9).
- B. The "all men" speaks to the universality of access to God's grace.
- 1. It was not for only one people group, such as Israel. If it meant every person then the contradictions would abound in that it is clear that many are not saved but live and die rejecting that very grace offered.
 - 2. A common way to explain this is that the salvation offered in Jesus Christ is sufficient for all but only efficient to those who believe and follow Him.
 - 3. It is never correct to say to a person that the offer of salvation and grace may not be theirs. Rather that God's grace appeared in the form of His Son Jesus Christ and we are called to believe in him and follow him.
 - 4. It is worth remembering what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:25 regarding false teachers, "if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth."

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5. The grace of God is present and for all people groups. This verse is one of the machines that power forth the whole of missions work.
 - a. We can confidently go into a land not reached and tell them of the grace that appeared in Jesus.
 - b. We can pray for those people knowing that out of every tribe, tongue and people God has bought out people for His Name's sake.
 6. But God's grace is not some passive event that makes us happy and in some vague way saves us. It is a grace that instructs....
- C. God's grace instructs.
1. "teaching us" shows that the grace is not intended in merely saving us from the results of our sin--the wrath of God.
 2. It is also educational.
 - a. The coming of Christ is such that we are to consider what God is instructing us through it.
 - (1) In the Greek world that Crete existed in the culture was the *paideia* that instructed the people on how they ought to live.
 - (2) But Paul says that only God's gracious gift can truly teach us on how we are to be.
 - b. That term I just used, *paideia*, is an interesting one on many levels. But one that is worth mentioning here is that it speaks of instruction that involves chastisement. Which is why ESV chose "training."
 - c. The appearing of Christ teaches us that to live any life without God must be relinquished and the only proper response is a life pursuing God. But to do that requires a radical break in many long cherished beliefs, standards and thought-processes.
 - (1) It is interesting that Paul choose three virtues here: self-controlled, upright and godly. They are three of the four virtues of Greek ethics.
 - (2) In doing so he again co-opts the thinking of the day and shows that only through the Grace of God in Jesus can these be truly attained and practiced.

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- d. This verse emphasizes present-day obligations and contrasts itself with the next with anticipates the Lord's return and it is a death-blow to any theology that separates salvation from the demands of obedience to the Lord.
3. Notice that it is done in a negative and positive manner.
 - a. What we are to deny.
 - (1) Grace teaches us that it is NOT sufficient to eschew/shun/avoid evil, but we must pursue after integrity and holiness.
 - (2) Chrysostom points out, "He has not said 'avoiding' but 'denying.' Denying implies the greatest difference, the greatest hatred and aversion."
 - (3) We are to deny *asebeia* which is ungodliness. It can manifest itself in many outward ways that are commonly thought of as being sinful or wrong.
 - (a) But remember that it is simply the lack of reverence and care of God in one's life.
 - (b) It is the idea of just floating through life without considering how your choices show an honor and trust in God. This is expressed clearly in vss 2-10.
 - (c) It is also one of the most common things that your elders find themselves thinking about in this church.
 - (d) Why are certain decisions being made by people? On job choices, marriage choices, parenting styles, spending habits.
 - (e) The list is almost endless. As I referenced in my sermon on unity a short time ago regarding school choice. The issue is less about which choice was made but why it was made.
 - (4) Believing the gospel means that we believe that Christ truly did come to die for sinners and because of sin. That he has

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

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by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

truly come to redeem this world in every sense of that word.

- (a) This means that God is very serious about rebellion and rejection. Christ came as our savior out of that state of rebellion and rejection.
 - (b) And this means that we must deny any aspect in our life that reflects either open rebellion or simple rejection/ignoring of God in our lives.
 - (c) To be blunt, this should cause all here to stop for a bit and do some serious soul searching.
- (5) And to make this point all the more powerfully he says that grace teaches us to deny worldly desires as well.
- (a) Worldly desires are never seen as proper or fitting.
 - (b) They speak to the desire of this age to conform us to its standards, goals, and purposes (cf. Romans 12:1-2).
 - (c) In Ephesians 2:1-3 we find that we once walked according to it.
 - (d) It is something that must be actively resisted.
 - (e) I might add that worldliness is seldom what people normally think it is---dancing, smoking or drinking.
 - (f) It is more like sexual impurity of any type, envy, covetousness, gossip or slander. It would involve pride and a love of money or power. In a simple phrase, it would be the American Dream in many ways.
 - (g) I recommend my series on Romans 12:1-2 which is made up of about 16 sermons if you really want to get your head around this idea of worldliness.
- b. What we are embrace in our life.
- (1) These are rather obvious in that they are the opposites of what I just talked on.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

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- (2) But these are important as well because the Christian life is not merely a life of denial but it is a positive living of life out before our God and Savior.
 - (a) Now remember that these three terms are also virtues that were taught within the very culture of Crete. But they were taught apart from the grace that made them have meaning and become attainable.
 - (b) "Sensibly" has been mentioned repeatedly in vss 2-10. A sound and sober mind.
 - (c) "Righteously" or "Justly" speaks of living uprightly. We are not to be a people skirting truth and justice; we are to be leading the way.
 - (d) "Godly" speaks of orienting yourself under the presence and purposes of your God.
4. The new life (salvation) is a present reality made so through the time/space appearing of God's grace, which was Jesus. Therefore these actions are to be taken up now (this present age), not later in the "eschaton".
5. However, this salvation and its attendant lifestyle must always be kept in mind in reference to the future appearing which will complete this present event. Which is exactly what Paul does next. . . .
- D. The grace of the coming of Jesus prepares us for the promise that Jesus shall return and we are called to live in that anticipation.
 1. There is the parallel of God's grace appeared at the incarnation and God's glory will appear with the coming of Jesus. Both events are central displays of God's grace to mankind.
 2. I would say that this is possibly the weakest point that I find in my heart and perhaps you would agree for yourself.
 - a. It is easy to get caught up in just living that suddenly a year is gone and no reflection is upon the reality that Jesus is coming again to set all things right and to righteously judge heaven and earth.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
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- b. I give thanks to the way so many of the songs we sing speak to that day and encourage more songs like them to be taught to us.
3. Our Christian commitment is not only a lifestyle obligation for here and now but also a hope for the future that is both an expectation and an obligation: an expectation of seeing the Lord and an IMPLIED obligation to stay true to one's commitment until that day.
4. It is common throughout the NT that an expectation of the return of Jesus breeds perseverance and preparing oneself for His return (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 6:14; 1 Peter 1:17)
5. "blessed hope" is probably exegetical meaning that believers live in an expectation of seeing the blessed hope.
 - a. What is it? Their great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - b. One aspect of the coming of Jesus in the greatness of His glory is what happens with it, "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." (Col 3:4)
6. On an important side note there is a theologically key question on whether this refers to two persons or one.
 - a. If it refers to one, then this is a direct statement of the divinity of Jesus. The arguments for both sides are rather complex grammatically and have little value in a sermon.
 - b. Note that God and savior appear together in 3:4 with reference to one person.
 - c. Also when Paul speaks on the appearing of God it never refers to the Father but the Son, Jesus Christ.
 - d. All of this to say that this is a very powerful verse that speaks of the divinity of Jesus.
- E. The grace of God appeared in Jesus to redeem us and make us into a people of His own possession (14).
 1. The "giving" of himself stresses the self-sacrifice and the preposition distributes that action to others—us.
 - a. It was a conscious act not one done against his will. "for us" is very important theologically and for our hope and peace of mind.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
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- b. It speaks of Him stepping into our life and situation and becoming our substitute. And in doing so he became our representative.
 - c. It is the wonderful words of Jesus in John 10, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." (John 10:11)
 - d. It is the hope of Galatians 3:13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us."
 - e. As it is written in Ephesians 1:7-8, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight."
2. What was the purpose of giving himself? Two effects specifically:
 - a. It removes us from the power of sin in every respect. The imagery is one of buying a person out of slavery through redeeming him by making the ransom payment.
 - b. Also to make for himself a people who are his. Reminiscent of, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." (Eph 5:25-27)
 3. The greatness of our salvation is in the fact that we were redeemed from enslavement to sin and death by God offering himself in our place. And it was not purposeless, but that we would then be doers of good works.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Paul then tells Titus, these things are to be your talking points (15).
 1. The command to be in a consistent state of talking about these things.
 2. For those who are teachable and learning, he is to exhort and urge onward.
 - a. Give an example how this could be done.
 3. For those who resist and rebel, he is to rebuke.
 - a. Give an example how this would look.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
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- B. Titus is to have full confidence that his message is true and therefore his presence when he teaches it should reflect that. The pulpit is not a place for guessing or suggesting. It is a place to proclaim what is true as truth.
- C. And in all of this it means that Titus cannot allow himself to be disregarded.
 - 1. Interesting that this responsibility lies on his shoulders and not the listeners.
 - 2. It implies that he is to teach in such a way that those listening are forced to make a decision, to be confronted with the Word.
- D. Good words for us all.

Small Group Questions

- Why is "the grace of God" a fitting way to describe the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus?
- Why is the revelation of God's glory in Jesus Christ something to hope and rejoice in for the believer?
- What are the things in your life you find help obscure the anticipation of the return of Jesus. Are these things then that require that you make some changes (i.e. denying worldly desires in this present age)?
- How does our lifestyle reflect our actual understanding of the first and second coming of Jesus Christ?