

Titus 2:11-15

Intro: Right in the middle of this letter that is so full of practical instruction and exhortation to good works, Paul gives one of the most remarkable doctrinal statements on the grace of God. The grace of God is the basis of our salvation and all the practical exhortation and rebuke Titus was to give.

--Grace is hard to explain. Grace can be a shadowy spiritual idea for some people. They know that it is important, but they simply don't know how. They have a hard time taking a real intellectual or experiential bite out of it. J.I. Packer's description of how many Christians think about grace is tragically still true.

*Packer (Knowing God): *"They may pay lip service to the idea of grace, but there they stop. Their conception of grace is not so much debased as nonexistent. The thought means nothing to them; it does not touch their experience at all. Talk to them about the church's heating, or last year's accounts, and they are with you at once; but speak to them about the realities to which the word grace points, and their attitude is one of deferential blankness. They do not accuse you of talking nonsense; they do not doubt that your words have meaning; but they feel that, whatever it is that you are talking about, it is beyond them, and the longer they have lived without it the surer they are that at their stage of life they do not really need it."**

--If we are going with a definition of grace, I like how G. Campbell Morgan summed it up:

*Morgan (The Corinthian Letters of Paul): *"Grace is ultimately the activity of God which puts at the disposal of sinning men and women all the things that give delight to Him."**

--That said, we don't have to understand the grace of God completely to benefit from it! Paul's explanation of grace here is something all of us should understand to some measure.

--Paul presents grace in its past (**has appeared**), present (**in the present age**), and future (**looking for the blessed hope**) aspects.

--He builds his teaching on grace around three major points:

- 1) The salvation brought by grace (Deals with legalism).
- 2) The lessons taught by grace (Deals with license).
- 3) The hope sought by grace (Deals with longings).

Verse 11: For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

--Paul wants to speak about the salvation brought by grace.

--He says that the grace of God **brings salvation**. . . Salvation has been brought to us. Not earned by us. Not asked by us. Not deserved by us. Brought to us by grace.

--The lost sinner is found as he is in his sin. Grace arrives as a gift.

--Next, Paul makes the point that the grace he is speaking of **has appeared**. . . or been made manifest. Where did the grace that God brought for salvation appear?

--The grace of God has appeared in the incarnation, the coming of the Son of God to be the Son of Man. In the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

John 1:14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

--God came to us in flesh and bone, so we could touch Him, see Him, hear Him, and know Him.

--Who did grace bring salvation to? Who did Jesus Christ appear for? **To all men!** For me? Yes! For you? Yes! **For all men!**

--Paul wants Titus to make it clear that the grace of God brought salvation to old men, old women, young men, young women, slaves and free, and all lost sinners!

John 3:17: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

--The grace of God brings salvation to all men. Paul wants all the Cretan believers to understand that the grace of God is the source of all godly living. There is no purpose in exhorting and rebuking those who have no Christian life to live a Christian life.

--The right understanding of this grace destroys all legalism. Our works outside of the grace of God cannot earn salvation or make a sinner righteous before God.

Verse 12: teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

--Paul wants to speak about the lessons taught by grace.

--**Teaching.** . . means just that. It was a word which typically described the process of raising a child. The training of parenthood goes from birth to adulthood. It is a step-by-step process of continuous small gains.

--Who is grace teaching? Paul makes it very clear—**us**. That being believers.

--Once we are saved, **in this present age**, we begin the process of learning what it means to live as a child of God. The process of how grace instructs our lives doesn't happen in a "magic moment" or at one part of our lives. Our learning continues until Christ comes, or we step into the next age. The lessons of grace are lifelong lessons.

--It takes quite a bit of time to teach a child. There is space for mistakes, immaturity, and failings (Who wants their Jr. High years held against them?). There is also incredible love, patience, faithfulness, and presence! *Think of the patience of our perfect Heavenly Father with the Israelites and the kindness of Jesus with the disciples Vs. Modern parents who decide to abort their children, abandon their children, or simply refuse to have children because kids will "ruin" their lives!*

--What type of lessons does the grace of God teach us? Negative and positive.

--First, the negative lessons are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

--**Denying.** . . means more than avoiding! It means to openly renounce. It means to make a decisive act. It means to say **No!**

--Have you renounced all ungodliness? Can you call your own sins what they are in the light of salvation? Do we excuse our sins, or explain them away? Do we defend them by claiming "grace"? If so, we don't actually understand the grace of God.

--**Ungodliness.** . . describes anything unlike God. It is a total lack of acknowledgment of God or reverence for God. The grace of God would never leave us in our **ungodliness**. How could God's grace do anything but produce godliness? It is from God after all!

--The grace of God will **redeem us from every lawless deed**, not make us more ungodly or lawless.

--If anyone is asking for grace to remain ungodly, and excuse their ungodly actions, then they are not asking for the grace of God. Maybe they are asking for excuses, but not grace.

--Anyone who knows the grace of God is in the process of learning to say *No!* to ungodliness to be more like their Savior.

--**Worldly lusts.** . . Are not just sexual. It means any lust that is focused on this present evil world. Particularly those lusts of the eyes, the flesh, and the pride of life.

*Fenelon (The Complete Fenelon): *"We think we are far away from the world when we are in a place of quiet religious retreat. But we still speak the world's language. We have its feelings and curiosities. We still want a reputation and friendships. We want to be entertained. We still have high-minded opinions of ourselves. We still suffer the slightest humiliations with great indignations.*

*"We say we want to forget the world, but in the depths of our hearts we do not want to be forgotten by it. We are searching to no avail when we try to find a halfway point between Jesus Christ and the world. As the apostle Paul said, it is not enough for the world to be dead to us. We must also be dead to it."**

--The grace of God will never make a person more worldly. The grace of God will **purify for Himself His own special people**.

--The grace of God will teach us to say *No!* to **foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Tim. 6:9); Flee also youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22); and abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).**

--Anyone claiming grace to remain in, or defend, or compromise with worldly lusts does not know the grace of God. They are asking for something else.

--Second, the positive lesson grace teaches us is to live **godly in the present age**.

--Many commentators note the personal, public, and heavenly aspects of these three terms.

--**Soberly:** Describes personal self-mastery and discipline. This is now the fifth time Paul has used the term: **1:8** (for elders); **2:2** (for older men); **2:5** (for older & younger women); **2:6** (for younger men).

--The grace of God will never teach any child of God to live a life lacking in self-control. We are not to be driven by instinct like the animals, or by fleshly desires like the unsaved.

--**Righteously:** Describes our actions toward God and others. Are we living rightly?

--We cannot live by trying to avoid bad things alone. We must live denying what is wrong and embracing what is right. Trying to live avoiding what is wrong without doing what is right is like trying to fight in a battle with only a shield and no sword.

--Are we spending our lives rightly? Grace will teach us to give ourselves to the right people and the right things in the right ways.

--**Godly:** Describes our devotion and loyalty to God. The grace of God has brought salvation and our indifference to God has changed. Now we love, worship, and serve Him.

--The lessons we are taught by grace should deal with all license or excuse for sin.

Verse 13: *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

--Finally, Paul wants to speak about the hope sought by grace.

--**looking for.** . . Could be translated *waiting for*. It describes someone gladly welcomed home or favorably received. *Is the return of Jesus Christ a blessed hope for us? Or does the idea scare us?*

--If we are saved, and being taught by grace to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live actively sober, righteous, and godly lives our hope will be set on things above. Our hope in Christ's return will be muddled to the extent that the first two lessons of grace are off.

--**the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.** . . The hope grace teaches us to look for is a *Who* and not a *What*. Our Great God became in time our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

--His **glorious appearing** will be so different from His first humble appearing. Jesus' final moment in the world's eyes was being speared in the side, taken off a cross, and placed in a tomb. Only His disciples saw Him resurrected.

--When He comes again, He will be glorious, share His glory with us, and establish a glorious kingdom! That is why we are waiting for Him!

1 Corinthians 1:7: *eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Hebrews 9:28: *To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

Jude 21: *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

--What are we eagerly longing for? What are our hopes? Are all our hopes small, shallow, passing, worldly hopes?

--The hope sought by grace will be found in the glorious Person of Jesus Christ.

Verse 14: *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

--Paul finishes by summarizing the outcome of God's grace in our lives.

--Grace appeared when Jesus Christ appeared and ***gave Himself for us.*** . . Our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ gave Himself for us! That is why salvation is only in Christ Jesus. *The value of something is set by what people are willing to pay for it.*

Galatians 1:4: *who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6: *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

--Jesus Christ didn't just die for the world. He died for you. Can we say like Paul:

Galatians 2:20: *and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

--Why did Jesus Christ give Himself for us? ***That He might redeem us from every lawless deed. .***
. because we were all lawless and lost outside of Him.

--We all needed to be redeemed. The price was nothing less than the blood of Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 1:18-19**).

--In the first half of the verse, we see the grace salvation brought and a denial of our ungodliness and worldly lusts.

--In the second half, we see grace teaching us to live and hope in a godly manner.

--*and purify Himself His own special people. . .* Jesus gave Himself to redeem us and then make us like Him. To purify us.

Ephesians 5:25-27: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

--Paul's focus here is that by the grace of God, our salvation in Christ Jesus has broken the power of sin—not just the penalty of sin. *Think of the Egyptian army being destroyed in the Red Sea.*

--*Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and make me pure.*

--We are not to go back to Egypt, to the slavery, muck, and mud Jesus Christ gave Himself to save and purify us from.

--What are we to be? ***His own special people, zealous for good works.***

--Are we enthusiastically serving our Great God and Savior who is returning soon? Or is the worship and service of God a bore? A reluctant chore? Are we eager and wise to do evil and find doing good a drudgery? If so, we are either unsaved or untaught in the lessons of grace.

--Allow me to sum up. Because God is gracious:

1) The Father sent the Son to bring me salvation

2) I was found a sinner and an enemy, and yet saved.

3) The Holy Spirit began to teach me how to turn away from sin and turn to righteousness.

4) Where sin had made me guilty and dirty, Jesus has now cleansed my conscience and purified my dirty body, heart, and mind.

- 5) I have been chosen as a special part of the purpose God has in this world.
- 6) I have hope in seeing the Christ who died for me in the past arrive in the future.
- 7) I have the promise of eternal glory and life.

--So anyone who teaches a grace that is anything other than amazing teaches something that is not the grace of God!

Verse 15: *Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

--The tenses are: *Keep on speaking these things. . . and exhorting and rebuking with all authority.* Titus' job was to not give up or slack off. Continually speak, exhort, and rebuke as needed.

--He was to do so ***with all authority***. The Greek word for ***authority*** (*epitage*) is used six other times in the NT and is always translated *commandment*. Each time the word is used in reference to a commandment of divine origin. Either coming directly from God Himself (**Rom. 16:26; 1 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:3**) or Paul letting others know something is not directly from God (**1 Cor. 7:6, 25; 2 Cor. 8:8**).

--Paul's point is that Titus can speak with all authority because the authority is coming from God's own Word—not Paul or Titus. The truth taught by Titus, from God, put everyone (Paul and Titus included) under the authority of the Word of God.

--That is always why Paul could say: ***Let no one despise you. . .*** or disregard you.

--People try all types of things to escape the authority of God's Word.

-They disparage or kill the messenger.

-They try to rationalize why obedience or faith is not a good idea.

-They try to pit one commandment against another.

-They imagine the cost of obedience is higher than the cost of disobedience.

-They presume upon a "grace" that isn't the true grace of God as described here.

Romans 6:1-2: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*