

September 6, 2009
Titus 2 Part 5 v11-15

Alright good morning. It is good to be back with you today. Take your Bibles and let's return to our study of the book of Titus. We are in some ways wrapping up chapter 2 today. Remember that Titus is a letter written from Paul to Titus who is on the island of Crete and has been charged with organizing and establishing the churches on that island so that they reflect God's plan for His church. And so that is why we are studying this – that is what directs our effort – we want to let God show us through Titus His blueprint for His church – for this church.

This is our 5th time to look at chapter 2 itself and today this is one of those passages that sums up in a few words the great message of the Bible. There are many of these passages throughout the Bible and they don't always describe salvation the same way – because God's plan, love, and action are just too great a reality to be summed up adequately – but we have these passages here and there that when taken together, give us the broad picture – the wide angle if you will.

For example – **John 3:16:** *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*

Ephesians 2:8-10: *For it is by grace we are saved through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Statements like that tie things together for us – they show us how things relate – like Christ's death to our faith – God's grace to our daily living, etc. And that's the kind of passage we have today in Titus 2:11-15. Again – we could spend probably a month of Sundays unpacking this passage, but I am going to do my best to restrict us this morning to looking at what specifically relates to chapter 2 and God's blueprint and we will probably come back in several weeks and revisit.

So look at it with me and you'll notice verse 11 begins with "For..." That is a transition word that connects what is to come to what has just been said. Remember from verse 2 to 10 Paul has been saying this is how you are to live, this is how you are to behave, this is to be your lifestyle up to verse 10 where he ends by saying "*so that in every way [you] make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.*" So he defines the teaching about God our Savior as the basis for the kind of life we have just been instructed to live. And now in our verses today he goes on to describe that foundation for all Christian conduct – and **the foundation for all Christian conduct is that God has saved us so that we might be zealous for GOOD WORKS so that we are used by God to lead others to Him.** We live to put God's power on display. Or to go back to our umbrella from the past two weeks, at every stage and station of life, our character and practice must reflect the effectiveness of the gospel. If God is going to show His saving power, He's going to have to demonstrate it through saved people.

Now obviously we have to speak the truth – you can't be saved without hearing the truth about Jesus, but getting someone to listen to it is dependent on the demonstration of its power they've seen in the lives of others. That is the point of the text today. So let's take a look. **Verses 11-15.**

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Again – so much here can't tackle it all today. Let me just point out what we need in order to get God's truth for where we are.

Paul focuses on the God who saves from sin and starts here with the grace of God. Verse 11 "For the grace of God has appeared."

Every aspect of salvation is predicated on grace – whether it be God’s choosing in the past or our glorification in the future and everything in between – it is all by grace. We just read Ephesians 2:8-9 – it is by grace you are saved.

What is it? You know but let me jog your memory – grace is the unmerited or undeserved favor of God toward wicked unworthy sinners by which He delivers them from sin and its penalty.

But as we read this passage, this isn’t just a term to be defined, God is personifying that grace into a person. For the grace of God has appeared – the word there is *epiphaneia* – has become visible – has come into the light – had broken forth. It means to appear suddenly and visibly.

Question – who is the fulfillment of that? Jesus Christ! When he says here the grace of God has appeared, he is talking about the incarnation – the grace of God appeared suddenly visibly when Jesus arrived. Jesus is the embodiment of the grace of God by which we are saved.

The NIV says that grace that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Well a better translation is what you find in the New American Standard version that says the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men. Because the grace of God has not appeared to all men – not yet – there are still parts of the world – there are still groups of men - that have not heard of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. That appearing was a historical event that happened in Bethlehem 2000 years ago. And the reason for that appearing was to bring salvation for all men.

And in the context of what is being taught, all men obviously does not mean that all people are saved, because we know that is not the case – but salvation is made available to all the various kinds of people considered in the 10 previous verses – the young the old the rich the poor male female slave free – **salvation is brought by the GRACE of God in Jesus Christ to EVERY stage and station of human life.**

And at that point of salvation, we become new creations – we are cleansed – the Holy Spirit of God takes up residence in us – in who we are – and prompts us toward every increasing holiness. That’s what we see in verse 12 when Paul says that this grace of salvation in Christ teaches us. It reprograms the computer if you will – out with all the old disks and drives and our spiritual computers are reprogrammed with longing for holiness and righteousness and virtue and the goodness of God. That’s what happens in the transformation of salvation.

So when he says in verse 12 that the grace becomes our teacher – the word there is *paideuo* – which is where we get our English word *pedagogue* which refers to a teacher or instructor. **We come under the TEACHING of God by His Spirit through His Word and a process of training goes on – as through sanctification we are made more and more like JESUS.**

And still in verse 12 we see that reprogramming of the inner us means we are taught to deny some things and to affirm some things – and we’ll come back to that in a minute because that is huge – but there is both the negative and the positive here – moving away from sin and toward Jesus.

There are some people who say – ‘well no, when I got saved all I wanted was fire insurance. I just wanted to make sure I didn’t go to hell.’ Frankly – you might question someone like that. Not that that fear can’t lead someone to truly embrace Jesus, but when you see a genuine conversion, it will be marked not only by a concern about the fear for the future, but a desire to be delivered from the present power of evil.

In other words – the person isn’t so much saying that ‘well I’d like to continue my life the way it is, but I certainly don’t want to die and go to hell.’ That’s not the stuff of genuine repentance. Because God’s Word says when the Holy Spirit brings conviction, according to John 16, He is not convicting the world of hell. He is convicting the world of what? Sin. People come to be saved from sin – being saved from hell is just a by-product. **To reduce salvation to just deliverance from hell and not from the POWER OF SIN day to day is to destroy the gospel.**

And that’s what we are seeing here in Titus 2. Verse 12 says that grace of God in Jesus Christ that saves us *“teaches us to say No to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”*

Again at every stage and station of life – self-controlled, upright, and godly. There's that Greek word *sophron* again we've seen 4 or 5 times already – self controlled. One of the things that is hammered home in this chapter is that one of the transformations that happens in salvation is that you have self control. You can control yourself. The natural man – the lost man – cannot – he can't do the things of God – it is impossible for him. All he does is sin, sin, and sin some more.

But a Christian can bring himself under control – can bring the old defeated sin nature under the control of the Spirit of God and do what is right. That self control means balance and spiritual priorities and wise choices and all of that.

Why? The key to all of this is in the end of verse 14 – that **Jesus saves us to make us his OWN** – that we might be a people it says “zealous to do what is good.” **A people who live in good deeds so that others can see the saving power of God on DISPLAY** – that's the point. That's why the word 'zealous' is important. Jesus doesn't just want us doing good works. He wants us passionate about good works. That's what he wanted from Israel in the Old Testament. Listen to **Deuteronomy 26:18-19** “*And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands.*”

Why? Verse 19 says: for “*praise, fame and honor*” – in other words God wants to lift you up above everyone else so that you bring Him honor, praise, and glory.

Israel failed – at times they did ok – but as a people they failed. So God showed us the rest of His plan – He isn't doing it through earthly people any more – He is doing it through heavenly people – through His church. And we've been saved for the same reason – to be held out above the people so the world can look at us and give glory and honor and fame to God – so that people might see the salvation of God.

Now listen to me – look at me here – having spent the past two weeks in Titus looking at the specific lifestyle commands for the different ages and genders and stations of Christians in God's church – the works that we are to be about in our lives – and with what we are fixing to dive into – I am trusting that none of this will lead any of you into a legalistic spirit this morning – that none of this can be confused as anything like trusting in your works. That when we speak of good works today it is in no way confused as promoting your eternal salvation. And if anything I say should slip and be mistaken for legality – then I beg you to put two and two together and reject what that sounds like.

But here is the deal – the people of God – are a holy people. It is for this purpose that we are born and brought into the world – that we would be holy. For this we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus and made his precious possession. God's end in choosing and giving faith – **the end of God's purposes is not complete until we become a people ZEALOUS for good works – to do what is good.**

And in that as we hone into what God wants us to see out of these verses related to chapter two and God's blueprint for His church is what we have seen characteristically in Paul's writing over and over again. The Christian life is described in a double way – both negatively and positively. Think back to **Colossians 3:5-10** where we as Christians are told to put to death what belongs to our earthly nature – to take off the old self – the negative. And then to put on the new self – to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, etc. – the positive. Everywhere there is the double action – putting to death and bringing to life.

And we have it here all over the place in these verses. Look at Titus 2:12 with me – in **verse 12** we are to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and by context to say yes to self control and godliness.

Again in **verse 14** – where we see Christ died for us to both redeem us from wickedness and to purify us for himself – to make us zealous to do what is good.

Even in **verse 15** where Titus is told to both rebuke – clear out the bad – and to encourage – to strengthen what is good.

It is not enough to take the bad parts out of a non-working car. New parts have to be put installed and adjusted and put to work.

All right thinking about the Christian life will embrace this double motion – this action in opposite directions – to put sin to DEATH in our hearts and lives and to make more and more of who we are and how we live an expression of the HOLY SPIRIT God has place within us.

We cannot read these 5 verses – no serious, devout Christian can read these verses without immediately thinking about how poorly he or she says no to ungodliness and worldly passions. But it isn't just the no – saying no isn't enough – we've also got to say yes. The Christian life isn't the story of what you don't do. We have to work into our lives the positive behavior we are called to – to be faithful, to love others intentionally and practically and usefully.

In fact there are many experts in the life of faith who will tell us that **of the two parts of the action in the Christian life – the negative and the positive – the no and yes – it is the POSITIVE, the yes, that is most important. And the reason is because it enables the other half. As you put on virtue – you CROWD OUT vice and sinful desires of the heart.**

The best way for a selfish man to kill his selfishness – to say no to his habitual concern for himself first – is to be generous and kind. He must say no to himself – no doubt – but he does so by saying yes to Christ and His love. It is replacing selfishness with Christ's selfless love for others that will kill his selfishness and keep it dead.

And folks you're going to laugh at me here – but the way to do that – the way to put on virtue – to build character into your life – the way to make it more and more who you are is simply to do it. Plan to do it, and do it. Think about how you can do it and do it. Think of the good works that Christ would be pleased with in you and do them!

Maybe you're thinking 'I tried that – it didn't work.' Listen – Jonathon Edwards – the great Puritan preacher – once wrote of his own life –

“Resolved: never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.”

What Paul is telling us here in Titus is not only to have that determination, but that there will be success in it. These verses right here tell us that **Jesus giving Himself for us means that we CAN say no and we CAN say yes.** Now obviously we must still be taught and encouraged and exhorted and even rebuked – that's what Paul is doing here. If godliness were the automatic and effortless result of Christ's atonement for us, there wouldn't be all this encouraging and rebuking with all authority in verse 15.

But what is perfectly clear here is that Paul expects them and us not only to heed his word – but that as we do – we will say no and yes. Because he isn't asking us to do anything in our own strength. **God is asking us to put into PRACTICE what Christ has done for us and given to us.**

Listen – can an adult become a child again? No. But can an adult act like a child? Yeah. We have all seen adults acting childishly many times. And when an adult acts like a child, we tell them very wisely to grow up – to act your age – to act like the adult you are. That is what Paul is saying here. You are redeemed from sin and death – you are a new creation in Christ. You have the Spirit of God in you. Now act like it. He tells Titus in verse 15 – tell them to act like it. Don't let them get away with not acting like it. They can do it because Jesus has done it for them and given them the power of no and yes through his cross and resurrection and these good works are the evidences of that.

There are a lot of people – maybe people in this room – who hear this and buck up against it thinking I don't need that – I don't require evidences – I can live without them. Many are ready to say “I know I am not saved by good works” so – like the hymn goes – nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the

cross I cling. And they believe they are Christians – they are saved – because – though they have no good works as evidence – they think they have faith.

Listen to **Charles Spurgeon** as he responds to that position.

“Ah sir, you have faith and there is another gentleman quite as respectable as you are, who has faith. I shall not tell you his name this morning, but he is better than you are, for it is said “he believes and trembles,” while you sit unmoved by the most powerful appeals.”

Obviously he is referring to the devil himself from **James 2:18-19** where the Bible says *“But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder.”*

Spurgeon goes on and says –

“yes you who think you are children of God while you live in sin, you are in the most dreadful error. There is no delusion which is more dreadful than the delusion of a man who thinks that sin and grace can reign together....Works are the evidences of our faith – by faith our souls are justified before God – by works our faith is justified before ourselves and fellow men.”

Which gets back to the heart of God’s blueprint here in Titus 2 – **the heart of God’s blueprint is that our lives are to reflect the effectiveness of the GOSPEL.** The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten. But what we preach with our lives is rarely forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice – holy character – biblical lifestyle – if we would preach to our world.

To again let Spurgeon speak the difficult challenge we need to hear, let me read you his words again:

“The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride is simply this – that [so many professing followers of Jesus] are in a large measure a disgrace to religion and many of those who are joined to the church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, “We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself.”...[Then he warns them and us all:] Take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidence and some of you should be found manifesting not inconsistency but a most fearful consistency - living in sin and iniquity and therefore being consistent [only] with yourselves in hypocrisy.”

Church the reason why God spent chapter 2 talking about that which accords with sound doctrine – the behaviors that must be lived at every stage and station of life – laying out how our lifestyles must reflect the effectiveness of the gospel is because if they don’t, then the gospel has not affected us on the inside either.

Salvation is accomplished by GRACE – lived by FAITH – and proven by WORKS every single day of our lives as we follow Jesus. That’s what it means to be a Christian. And that is the very best life there is.

For the next several weeks we will be looking together at the corporate aspects of that very life – life in Christ – and what Jesus expects us as His church to do together to grow in discipleship together. We must follow Jesus. And we’re going to see what that means. I ask you two things. One – take this text and what I just told you seriously and begin to pray for yourself – for your family – for your friends – for our church and its leadership that God will do a new and mighty work over the next several weeks as we listen to His Word.

And two – commit not only to be here every week unless providentially hindered – meaning God himself makes it impossible for you to be here – but commit to come seeking God’s heart for your life.

Now before we come to the table today, let me show you why we do – it is in this passage today in Titus. Take your wide angle lens and look back at verses 12-14 with me. In **verse 12** the aim of God's grace – of Jesus Christ – of salvation is said to *teach us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*

That is the same thing as saying in **verse 14**: that Jesus aimed to *redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.* So verses 12 and 14 form a sandwich around verse 13. Both verses describe the aim and effect of God's grace and the meat in the middle of the sandwich is our blessed hope. **Verse 13** – that what God's grace has begun in our lives through the first coming of Christ, he will complete in our lives through the second coming of Christ.

So I think it is fair to say on the basis of this passage today, that **the incentive** and the power to **live like** we have been challenged to live today – **comes from** two directions – from

- **looking back with GRATITUDE to the grace of God that appeared in Christ when He came to purchase our redemption on the cross**
- **And it comes from looking forward with HOPE to the glory of God that will appear at the second coming of Christ when He completes that redemption once and for all.**

And that is exactly what the Lord's Table is designed to remind us of. So as we head into not only the week ahead of us – but the next several weeks as God draws us as church into what it means to be His, let's let Him remind us of the power by which we are not only saved – but by which we live every one of those days.

We have a tremendous privilege as the children of God and with it comes a tremendous responsibility. We've been left in this world to be a people zealous for good works who thereby make the teaching of God our Savior attractive in every respect. The truest thing that can be said about God in his relation to man is that he is a saving God. But is it not shocking to us that the evidence of His saving power is in great measure dependent on us? That is a high calling, a great privilege, an awesome responsibility, and that is why we are taking serious God's blueprint for His church – for us – over the next several weeks. Be praying – be planning to be here – and have a great week.