

The Abundant Grace Of God: Hope For The Future

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 December 2024

Preacher: Pastor Ken

[0:00] All right, if you would please take your Bibles and open up to Titus 2. Titus 2 is where we're! Titus 2 is where we're going to be starting at this morning. I'll just say that I was amused up here while Ian was leading the doxology. And even before that, there were nerves or sweats, sweat drops going down his forehead as he saw a candle that was slightly tilted. And I was just telling him, I was like, no, that just makes things exciting. But the insurance man that he is was very nervous. And so we directed that upright for you. So you feel comfortable now? Yes, you're welcome.

All right, so let's go ahead and read Titus. The pink one is leaning a little bit. That is all right. Although, I mean, unless you're a counter of the offering, then you might be concerned where that flame's going to end up. But I think we'll be okay. Let's go ahead and read Titus 2 verses 11 through 14, as we've been covering the last several weeks, just to regain context of what we're talking about. Titus 2 verse 11, for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works.

Father, I thank you again for our opportunity to re-engage this text and to be back in this portion. Please guide us, Lord, help us to have understanding. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. So as I have mentioned the last few weeks, this passage, these verses particularly, highlight God's abundant grace, and it reveals Christ as the ultimate revelation of that grace as our Savior. God's abundant grace, as we saw several weeks ago, is shown in the incarnation, salvation for all people, showing his inclusive love and his generous offer to people, all people, not just a certain group of people. Salvation is offered. In fact, as verse 11 and other verses of Scripture say, the grace of God has appeared, which is good news of great joy that is for all the people.

[3:05] The Word became flesh, who is Christ the Lord, and was born in the city of David. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But he brings salvation for all people. To all who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. That is a smash together of Titus 2.11, Luke 2.11, and John 1.9-14.

But it's good to, I don't recommend doing that often with Scripture, but it's good to tie all the pieces together to see a greater picture of the abundant grace of God through the giving of his Son.

As we celebrate this time of year, Christmas, our focus can get misdirected. We can lose focus even at times, realizing that, as Eric pointed out earlier, we celebrate the birth of our Savior and what that entails and what that means and what that shows of God and what that tells us about who we are and how he views us. It's not about gifts. It's not about family gatherings.

It's not about a man in a red suit and a white beard. It's not about those things. I'm not saying those things don't bring, you know, enrich the time and, you know, are not enjoyable in and of themselves.

[4:50] But it's not what it's about. It's about a baby that is born, a baby who is born for the purpose of dying on our behalf for our benefit and because of God's great love for us.

As we continue in this passage in Titus 2, we see also how it shows God's abundant grace by calling us to holy living. Verse 12, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. This is what God is calling us to.

His love poured out. His grace made clear through the coming of Jesus Christ on Christmas. His love made evident that that baby, after he was fully grown and had three and a half years of public ministry, would go to a cross and be nailed to a cross and shed his blood on our behalf and take God's wrath on himself so we don't have to receive that. Offering forgiveness in his name. Call on

the name of Jesus and be saved. But it doesn't, it's not just that either because those who have done that, God has called us to something more. Ezekiel 36 verses 26 and 27, God speaking of the new covenant, which by the way is made active through the death of Jesus Christ and his shed blood.

And in Ezekiel 36, God says, and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. God has graciously given us his son to save us, to make us part of his family.

[7:02] That we would be blessed with a new heart and his spirit in us. To give us new desires. To cause us to walk in newness of life, Romans 6, 4.

And he's given us his son as a model for godly living. And he's given us his word of instruction to learn and obey. God's abundant grace in his call to holy living.

Romans 12, 2. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

That by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

God's call on the life of a believer is to be transformed in the renewal of your mind. Renew your mind and your thinking and your intent. Read scripture.

Get to know the God whose love I'm telling you about. And Christmas, by the way, it didn't start in Bethlehem.

[8:11] It started in the Garden of Eden. When sin entered the world and death through sin. And God promised a deliverer. And so as you read through scripture, you see God's plan unfolding through time to ultimately bring the deliverer, Jesus Christ, into the world.

Understanding this call to holy living ought to reshape our lives to be conduits of hope in a world yearning for truth. God's truth. This involves God's spirit transforming us from worldly passions to self-controlled, upright, and godly lives.

This change testifies to the hope within us. As your life is changed, as you're being transformed, it is a testimony to the hope that is in you.

It is a testimony to the spirit that dwells within you. It is a testimony to the God who loves you and is transforming you and changing you into the image of his son who he's given us.

Our present living should mirror the future hope that we have in Jesus. The hope of his return, ultimately.

[9:37] That's what verse 13 in Titus 2 is about. Waiting for our blessed hope. The appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. That is, we're called to holy living, and we look forward to the blessed hope.

We look forward to the return of Christ. I want to consider a couple points regarding that hope.

Because that's one thing that we have as believers that the world does not have is a true hope.

A grounded hope. Not a wishful hope, but an anticipatory hope. First, we see in verse 14a that this blessed hope is the completion of our redemption.

It says that he gives himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness. God has made clear what our redemption looks like in Christ.

He has redeemed us from all lawlessness. He has redeemed us from all sin. He has purchased us so that we can be free from the domination of sin in our lives.

[11:01] But in Romans chapter 8, and maybe you want to turn there because we're going to be in Romans 6 later. In Romans 8, verses 29 and 30.

Excuse me. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified.

And those whom he justified, he also glorified. I don't want to dabble too much on this topic of predestined.

But one nugget of truth that I want you to understand when it comes to this topic of predestination, which can take you down rabbit holes in theology, and you ultimately become, you know, blind to the rest of Scripture if you follow it too far.

[12:13] You are predestined to something. And that something is you are predestined to be conformed and to be made into the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

So that is one thing we must keep in mind, that he has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son. We're to be conformed to Christ's image. Jesus has lived a life on this earth.

He has shown an example. He is the living example of the grace and truth of God. He is God in the flesh. He is grace and truth in the flesh.

He has expounded the Father to the world. And we are to be conformed into that image. Now, we will not perfectly form and conform to that image.

But it is a work in progress. And it is the ultimate goal. It is the ultimate destination for all believers is to be like Christ.

[13:13] So we are to be conformed into Christ's image. We are called out of the world to live a life of holiness. We are justified by the righteous acts of Jesus so we can stand in the day of judgment.

When you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, what happens is his perfect, sinless life is credited to your account.

And then you put on that cloak. You put on that robe of righteousness where when God looks at you, he sees his son.

We are justified because of what Jesus has done, the life he has lived and the death he has died, and the fact that he has raised again from the dead to attest to his righteousness and work being done.

And ultimately, we will be glorified when we are in his presence. So if you were to look at Romans 8, 29 and 30, you see what God's intent is for you to be conformed to the image of his son.

[14:19] That is still a work in progress. But it is your ultimate destination. You are to be called. You are called by God out of the world to live a life of righteousness and to live to his glory.

You are justified through Jesus Christ and the day will come where you will be glorified as well. So presently, we ought to live confidently in Christ, seeking to be more like him through our increasing knowledge of the word and looking less and less like the world that we are called out of.

So more like Christ, the more you know the word. Less like the world, the more that you are in Christ and living obediently to God. It's putting off the grave clothes and putting on the grace clothes.

We should be regular, and one thing we should be doing every day is regularly asking, what does God want from me today? What is it that God desires from you as a believer?

What is it that God desires from us as a church? And we should always ask that question. When we ask that question, and we pray and ask God for an answer to that question, immediately, we should go here.

[15:40] Because this is the only place that you're going to get the answer to that question. What does God want from you? It's found in here. There are no people in this world receiving new revelation from God that has a new word from God to give you new information from God.

But what we do have is the completed word of God at our fingertips, on our phones, our iPads, or you may have several copies and different versions.

But it is the word of God that you go to to seek that answer. What, God, do you want from me? And though we may err from time to time, we have the confidence of already being justified through the shed blood of Christ.

We're no longer condemned. Right? What's that? Romans 6, 1. Maybe we should just study Romans sometime. Because there is a tremendous amount to gain from.

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? I guess it's chapter 8, verse 1.

[16:59] Sorry. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We have no condemnation. We're to seek not to live in sin.

That's Romans 6, 1. We are to seek to live as obediently to Christ as we can. But when we fail and we err and we will and we do, we don't have a condemnation because we're in Christ.

We live in anticipation of what is yet to come. We're not perfect, but we seek to live obediently.

And we anticipate the coming of God. We anticipate the return of Christ. We anticipate the day that we graduate to glory and are always in His presence.

And that's what it is. While we are alive, we anticipate and hope for the return of Jesus. And should the Lord call us home in death, it is, as I like to refer to it, a graduation to glory for the believer.

[18:05] Leaving this world to be in the presence of God forever. 1 John 3, 2 says, Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when He

appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

I absolutely love that verse. Because there's first the reality that we are God's children now. It is not yet to come. It is our present reality. It is who we are when we are in Christ.

We are God's children. But we have the promise from God that we will one day be glorified. That we are predestined to be in the image of Christ.

And we don't know what that is. What we will be, John says, has not yet appeared. We will be the image of Christ, but that hasn't appeared yet to us.

We haven't seen it. But we know that when He does appear, we will be like Him, because we'll see Him as He is. So either He's going to appear on the earth, returning, and we're alive and well and ready to see that, or we're going to leave our earthly dwelling in our body and be present with Him in heaven, and we will see Him there, and we'll be like Him there.

[19:26] But the point is, when we are in the presence of God, what we will be is what we have been predestined to become, the image of Christ. And when the blessed hope of His return happens, and when we're in His presence, our redemption will be made complete because we will be glorified.

We've been predestined to be conformed. We've been called. We've been justified. And we will be glorified. And when that happens, the redemption is complete, at least of us.

This hope should inspire and comfort us. It should serve as a reminder that our present challenges are temporary. Our hope in His return should fuel our faith and our witness.

We should never shy back and be afraid to proclaim Christ and to love God publicly and openly. Let people hate you for it. Let people try to shout you down for it because they will.

Let people try to shame you for it because they will. But do not be ashamed of the gospel. Do not be ashamed of Christ. Right?

[20:41] Romans 1.16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God to salvation for all who believe. To the Jew first and to the Greek.

Both Jews and Gentiles. All who believe the gospel is their hope and salvation. So let's not shy away.

Let's not shrink back. I think Hebrews 10 or 11 is what refers to that, the shrinking back of a bold witness. Do not shrink back.

Live boldly and unashamedly. I love what Matthew Henry has stated about this. He's a commentator and a Puritan. So his commentary is from a few hundred years ago.

And it's probably the most common commentary I've seen around because it's free. But what he says is a life spent in the service of God in communion with Him is the most comfortable and pleasant life that anyone can live in this world.

[21:46] This man, Matthew Henry, 300 years ago or so, said that a life spent in the service of God in communion with Him is the most comfortable and pleasant life that anyone can live in this world.

Because you're in communion with your Creator. You're in communion with the One who has saved you. And you're giving your life to serve Him. I've made a lot of mistakes in my life and there are a lot of decisions that I regret.

But never have I ever regretted doing something for God and living for Him. 2 Corinthians 4.17 For this light, momentary affliction, that is, the world we live in, the trials and hardships that we endure, Paul writes as light, momentary affliction, is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

I love that verse. I just love to, I'm an analytical person and I love to just, I'm like, wow, momentary light affliction.

What did, what is Paul talking about? Momentary light affliction. You know, I mean, you think about 2 Corinthians 11. This isn't in my, this isn't in the sermon, but it's coming up.

[23:17] This is my plus 10, all right? Okay. So, 2 Corinthians 11. Go ahead and turn there real quick. I want to read this.

Verse 16 through the end. Paul writing to the Corinthians. I repeat, let no one think me foolish. Don't let anyone think I'm a fool.

But even if you do, accept me as a fool so that I too may boast a little. What I am saying, whoever says there's no humor in scripture, I mean, really, there is, it's there. What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would, but as a fool.

Since many, since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. Verse 19. For you gladly bear with fools being wise yourselves. For you bear if someone makes slaves of you or devours you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or strikes you in the face.

To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that. But whatever anyone else dares to boast of, I am speaking as a fool. I also dare to boast of that.

[24 : 27] Are they Hebrews? Verse 22. So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?

I am a better one. I am talking like a madman with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.

And we'll pick up in verse 24. I want to remind you what he writes earlier in this book, in this letter. This light, momentary affliction.

Pick up in verse 24. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. He was whipped 39 times on five different occasions.

If you've ever seen the passion of the Christ, this is what he would have endured, similar to what he would have endured when he was whipped, when Jesus was whipped. Paul, five times.

[25 : 31] Okay. Verse 25. Three times I was beaten with rods. Now I don't know what these rods are exactly. It does not sound pleasant to be beaten with them.

Three times. Once I was stoned. And to give you an idea of what stoning is, they would have thrown him from a high position onto rocks, and they would have thrown rocks onto him with the intent of killing him.

So he endured that once. Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was adrift at sea. That is a terrifying statement for me. I hate water as it is.

But to be a night and a day in it would be horrible. Verse 26. On frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from the Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

And apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to fall and I am not indignant?

[27 : 06] That is quite a testimony from Paul to understand what he has endured and gone through. Likely there is nothing he has endured that we haven't.

And as I was reading that, the different dangers in the city and in the wilderness and at sea and from false brothers and so on and so forth, it sounds like our world today. Everywhere in our minds is dangerous.

And yet this is a light, momentary affliction that Paul is referring to. That is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

So as much as you go through and as much as you endure and whatever hardship you're going through, whatever trial you're going through, whatever loss you have in life, whatever it is that brings you crashing down and feeling like you can't go on, whatever it is you're going, that is a light, momentary affliction for the believer who has hope in Christ and an eternal weight of glory.

eternal weight of glory. You can't hold that up. You can't hold it up compared to the momentary light affliction of this world.

[28 : 28] That is a tremendous encouragement for believers. The hope we have, the blessed hope which brings about the completion of our redemption as we are glorified in the presence of God.

And finally, my second and last point in this sermon from Titus 2 verse 14b. We're talking about what does the blessed hope accomplish for us?

To purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. The blessed hope, the return of Christ is the purpose of our purification. It's the purpose of our purification.

Why he's purifying us as his own people. We're purified by Jesus because we are his. We acknowledge him as our master and we ought to follow his example.

John 13 verse 13 through 15. He's talking to his disciples. He says, You call me teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am. If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

[29 : 42] For I've given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Jesus is our example to follow.

Though the old man still creeps in from time to time, we must not be confused as to who it is we serve. Matthew 6 verse 24, No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other or he'll be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and in the verse it says money or mammon. I'm just going to leave it at and fill in the blank. You can't serve God and something else.

You can only have one master. And I hope you're still in Romans 6. I told you we'd be there if we just hadn't got to the point that I planned on being there.

And though Jesus is our master, we have a daily struggle with sin due to our sin nature. So, Romans 6 verses 16 through 18.

[30:54] Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey? Either of sin which leads to death or of obedience which leads to righteousness?

But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. And having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness.

righteousness. So, either sin is your master or God is your master. But you are a slave no matter what.

Who do you obey? And then chapter 7 verses 21 through 25. This is another transparent moment from the Apostle Paul. Romans 7 verse 21.

So, I find I could have gone back further. And probably should have. I will. I will. Go back to verse 13.

[32:02] Did that which is good then bring death to me? Talk about the law. No. By no means. It was sin producing death in me through what is good in order that sin might be shown to be sin and through the commandment and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

So, let me sum up where we're at. Paul's saying that the law didn't bring sin didn't bring something bad the law was something good.

You are a sinner period. The law just exposed you to that. It made exceedingly! It's exceedingly known by you now because of the law of God that you're a sinner.

You just go back to the law and what does it say? You shall not kill. You shall not bear false witness. You shall know the ten commandments. He's saying that's not bad. But what's been made known because what's made known through that is your exceeding sinfulness.

That's what he's saying. Verse 14, For we know that the law is spiritual but I am of the flesh sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate.

[33:18] Now, if I do what I do not want I agree with the law that it is good. So, now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh.

For I have the desire to do what is right but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Now, if I do what I do not want it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. By the way, I'm just saying Paul's not saying the devil made me do it. That's not the he's recognizing that there is that sin nature.

He's recognizing he's weak in flesh. I mean, surely you've been in that moment where or you've had that reflection where you want to do good and you want to obey and you want to love God show your love to God through your obedience but you just can't do it perfectly.

You have those moments in the flesh. Your anger creeps out and makes itself known. Now, you have your road rage or you have whatever. Like, whatever it is, a weakness that comes out, you don't want that.

[34:30] As a believer, you don't want that. You want to be Christ but you're not perfect. So, this is a great transparent moment by the Apostle Paul. So, I find it to be that the law, this is where I wanted it to be.

So, I find it to be, verse 21, a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being but I see it in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord so that I myself serve the law of God with my mind but with my flesh I serve

the law of sin.

Verse 1 of chapter 8, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. As a believer, you recognize that you want to obey God and you want to live for His glory but you can't do it perfectly because you are flesh and in that flesh is sin and there's this desire to sin and desire to feed the flesh and there's this constant battle and it's a warfare that keeps going on, right?

And who is it? I know, Paul refers to himself as a wretched man. Who will deliver me from the body of this death? That phrase, by the way, has an interesting etymology that I would like to share with you sometime.

[36:02] But he said, who will deliver me from the body of this death? And he says, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He recognizes Jesus is the only one who can save him from the sin nature and he recognizes that that's going to happen ultimately in the end when he appears with that blessed hope.

We recognize that we belong to Christ and he continues to purify us day by day as we're being conformed to his image, as we're being transformed through the renewing our mind and it won't become perfect and it won't come to completion until he has returned or we are in his presence because we are no longer on this earth.

So we are purified by Jesus because we are his and we are purified by Jesus because we are to do good works. The world rejoices in its own goodness and acts of compassion yet as believers we have a different purpose behind what we do.

Hint, spoiler alert, it's not about us. It's not about us. Being born again in Christ establishes a newness to our lives, newness in deeds and newness in purpose.

Ephesians 2.10 says we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. In Matthew 5.16 let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

[37:38] We don't do good works to be recognized and praised by others. We don't do good works to make ourselves feel good about who we are or to make ourselves feel good about what we have done bad in our past.

We do good works to show Jesus to others and to point them to God that he may be glorified and not us. so yeah we are purified by Jesus because we need to do good works for his glory and praise.

The hope that we have in Christ empowers us to live righteously today looking forward to the glorious future that he has promised and when Jesus returns Jesus' return will be the fulfillment of the prophetic promises throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament.

it will complete God's story of redemption and it will be the culmination of our life of faith lived on this earth when Jesus returns. The blessed hope.

In a world so dominated by hopelessness and fear may we truly be salt and light of the world living in anticipation of the blessed hope and pointing people to Jesus because God's abundant grace gives us hope for the future and this world desperately needs hope.

[38:59] Let's pray. Oh Lord this is a lot to think about and consider.

Lord you call us to righteousness and holy living and Lord it's not about us this life that you've called us to it's about you and this time of year we reflect on your love your care and compassion your desire for us through your son Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem born in a low estate humble the God of all glory and creation humbly laid in a feeding trough for animals on your first on your first night on this earth and as you came in in such low means in the state Lord you leave as well as you were nailed to the cross rejected by men and yet you still love us

Lord I pray for anyone here today who doesn't know you as their savior who's never called on you for salvation Lord I pray that they would do that that they would seek to know you Lord they would call on you for comfort and peace and hope that only you provide that they would recognize that Jesus died for their sins Lord and that you provide forgiveness that when we stand in the day of judgment you will see your son and not our sinfulness not our sin thank you Lord for this reminder of the hope that we have because of your abundant grace toward us in Jesus name Amen