

The Gospel Of Grace

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[0 : 00] The truth is that this passage is at the very heart of everything that Paul is communicating to Titus and to these believers in Crete. It is, in one sense, it is the sound doctrine with which Christian behavior is to accord.

We remember that from the very first verse of this chapter. Just put your eye on it in chapter 2 and verse 1. But as for you, Paul says, teach what accords with sound doctrine. The behaviors, the mindsets, the attitudes, the things that harmonize with sound doctrine.

When we get to verses 11 through 14, this is essentially the sound doctrine with which our behavior and our lifestyles are to be in harmony with.

And what he gives is a concise explanation of the gospel of Jesus. And the importance of teaching it as the foundation for practical instruction cannot be overstated.

Consider this from Graham Goldsworthy. He wrote, To say what we should be or do and not link it with a clear exposition of what God has done about our failure is to reject the grace of God.

[1 : 26] And it is to lead people to lust after self-help and self-improvement in a way that to call a spade a spade is godless.

Do you see what he's saying there? For us to give exhortation and practical instruction about what people should be and what people should do, but not to immediately accompany that exhortation with an exposition of the gospel is to actually remove grace from the equation, and it is to preach a works salvation.

If we think that, think of Christian conduct or religious practice, the things that we're doing this morning even in our gathered worship, if we think of those things apart from the gospel of Jesus, we will inevitably labor to go through our list of do's and don'ts, either in hopes of earning God's favor or in fear of losing it.

If it's not about the gospel, if it's really about fulfilling our list and doing our things, if we're living in fear that we don't have God's favor and we need to get it, or we're living in fear that we have it but we might lose it, then we've missed the gospel.

And think about this in relation to our evangelism and our efforts at cultural engagement. If our confrontations of sin and our calls for people to repent are not immediately linked with what Christ has accomplished through his death and resurrection, we are preaching a message of behavior modification, moralism.

[3 : 13] We are not preaching a gospel of grace. And if we go through and we're witnessing to people or maybe what we do in the influences that we have through social media or social engagement in some other way, and some of us, we're very faithful to say what everybody's doing wrong, that you are a bad person.

But how many of us are actually faithful to immediately say, but Christ is good, and he has come to redeem you from this and demonstrate the glories of the gospel, not just the depravity of the world in which we live.

If we don't immediately pair it with the gospel, immediately pair it with the glories of Christ, then we've gone wrong.

And we're not actually preaching a gospel. We're preaching people into a different form of bondage, moralism. So it's no surprise then that when Paul gets to the end of these exhortations, he immediately grounds the entire letter in the gospel message.

And the spring from which this saving gospel burst forth off of this page in verse 11 is the limitless grace of God. Biblical grace is God's favor toward undeserving sinners.

[4 : 42] In the simplest way, we typically define it as unmerited favor. But in a biblical sense, it is God's unmerited favor toward undeserving sinners.

But the grace of God is not some abstract idea that's kind of floating around out there, and we just hope that at some point along the way, we grasp it. No, that's not what it is.

Paul says in verse 11 that the grace of God has appeared. It is a tangible thing that has been made visible. To us.

It's not just some kind of idea. He brings it in concrete terms. It has appeared to us. And this is an interesting word. It's the word from which we get epiphany.

It means a sudden manifestation or a sudden appearance of something. And what Paul intends to say here is that the grace of God has been manifested, made visible in a person.

[5 : 43] And a person. It's not an idea. The grace of God is a person. And that person is Jesus Christ. In other words, if you want to see and understand God's favor toward undeserving sinners, look at Jesus.

He is God's grace personified. He is God's grace manifested to us and manifested for us.

And his gospel, this gospel of grace, is the proper motivation and focus of Christian belief and behavior.

All of the things that Paul says in chapter 2, it's not about fashioning a group of people to live according to his personal preference. That's not what Paul is commanding these people to do.

He is commanding them to live in the grace of God. And if we are to live in the grace of God, it's going to radically affect the way that our lives look and the decisions that we make.

[6 : 49] So let's walk through the verses together and examine this glorious gospel of grace. The first thing I'd like to point out to you is the work of God's grace.

The work of God's grace. Look with me again at 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, godly lives in the present age.

We've already established that the grace of God has been manifested in a person and in the work of Jesus Christ. It's not just a theological concept.

It's a person. But what does the grace of God through Jesus accomplish? What does it actually do for us? And I think Paul gives two dynamics of God's grace here that we need to see.

The first thing that he says is this. God's grace saves sinners. God's grace saves sinners. Verse 11. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

[8 : 01] Jesus has come, and with him he has brought salvation for us. Let's make sure we understand this in the appropriate way. This is not a promise that all people will ultimately be saved.

That's not what Paul means to say here. That's universalism. That's a damning doctrine. We don't need to follow that. That's not what the Bible teaches us. That's not what Paul is teaching here. The Bible is actually very clear that while many people receive God's mercy, many will also face his judgment.

And God's mercy and God's judgment both are eternal. Consider Matthew chapter 25 and verse 46. Jesus himself says, All of these, those who do not follow him, those who do not live this gospel of grace, all of these will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

There's a distinction, clearly, in the New Testament. Some people will receive eternal life. Some people will receive eternal hell. So Paul can't be saying in Titus chapter 2 that all people will ultimately be saved.

That's not his point. Consider Revelation chapter 21. When we get to the very end in this vision that John has of heaven, the revelation of Christ, he says, But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

[9 : 44] Paul's not saying that all people will ultimately be saved. So what then does this verse actually mean? What does it mean that God has brought salvation for all people? Well, think about the immediate context here.

What has he just said in verses 9 and 10? He's addressed slaves in the church. Slaves who have been converted, they belong to the church in the process of instructing them here.

He declares that Jesus has brought salvation for all people. He means that no person is excluded from salvation on the basis of their race or their gender or their nationality or their social status.

There is nothing about you that is deserving of God's grace and there is nothing about you that excludes you from God's grace. That's his point. That the grace of God has appeared in Christ and he has brought salvation for all people.

For all people. And while Christ's atonement is applied particularly to those who believe, it is sufficient for the entire human race, which is what allows for Jesus to give a universal call to believe the gospel.

[11:00] So in other words, not everyone will be saved, but the invitation to receive eternal salvation through Jesus extends to everyone.

It extends to the whole world. So Jesus says, go. Go and preach the gospel. He says, come to me all who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 4. He said, God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

All people. So if God desires all people to be saved and Jesus's atonement is sufficient for the whole human race, then this eternal salvation is offered to you.

And it's offered to me. On the cross, Jesus bears the wrath of God against sinners.

[12:02] And by his resurrection, God proclaims, I have received with satisfaction, complete satisfaction, the sacrifice of Jesus on behalf of sinners.

So what then does God's grace accomplish? It brings salvation to all who believe and follow Christ. Ephesians chapter 2, Paul makes it clear.

For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It's the gift of God. Not a result of works, so that none of us may boast.

The work of God's grace, the first thing it does, God's grace saves sinners. But then, notice in verse 12, God's grace transforms sinners.

God's grace transforms sinners. Look again at verse 12. Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives in the present age.

[13:11] Training us. What's the subject of the verse? The subject of the sentence? The grace of God. The grace of God brings salvation. The grace of God trains us to do certain things, to live in righteousness.

In fact, the gospel itself, this is the point, the gospel itself teaches us to renounce ungodliness and pursue godly lives instead.

Instead, he says, renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, which is an interesting term here. Because both of these words, on their own, are morally neutral.

We could say desires or passions. Well, passions and desires, on its own, are not inherently immoral or moral things.

They're just passions. The world, on its own, is not a moral thing. It is a thing. It is a thing that exists. But when the Bible brings these two things together, worldly passions, it gives it a significant moral weight, which refers to the desires that are entirely centered on the systemic thinking of a fallen world, a world that is in rebellion against God.

[14:33] When Paul says worldly passions, he's talking about a mindset that is focused entirely in the way that a rebellious world is focused. So that the decisions a person with worldly passions makes, the decisions that they make, the life that they live, is really motivated by what they see in the world rather than what they see in God.

We belong to a fallen world, a world that is apart from God. Yet, we are responsible to fulfill God's purposes and desires for our lives.

But on our own, we cannot possibly do this. It's not possible. But through the salvation of God's grace, God transforms our affections.

He gives us a new heart. This is what God does for us. This is his work. He takes our greatest desires, which are fixed on self and on pleasure and on happiness and on worldly passions, and he transforms them.

So now, in Christ, our greatest passion, our greatest desire is to please God. God. So that the grace of God then trains us.

[15:49] It actively disciplines. It teaches us to renounce those worldly passions, to say no to those things in order to live self-controlled and upright and godly.

Brian Chappell said, by adding the word godly to the ways grace teaches us to live, the apostle reminds us that the Christian life is one of dependence on God.

Godliness is not a consequence of human resolution or willpower. It is a relationship with God that results in a life that is honoring to God.

You see, it's not about what you just want to do and willing yourself into this. It begins with knowing God. And as we know God, the gospel itself transforms us and it trains us to pursue him and to pursue his desires for our lives.

You see how incredible this is? God doesn't save us and then leave us on our own to figure the rest of it out. He saves us by the power of his grace and he actively transforms us by the power of his grace.

[17:06] Philippians chapter one or, excuse me, Philippians chapter two, we are his workmanship. He is working in us. Created in Christ Jesus for good works.

What are good works? It is the things that honor him. It is the things that glorify him. And those who truly know Christ will willfully pursue this transforming work out of love for what God has done for them in Jesus.

So what does the grace of God actually do? Well, it saves sinners and then it transforms them. And the sequence here is crucial. God doesn't train us in godliness so that we might earn his favor in salvation.

No, the order here is absolutely critical. He saves us by his grace. Then he transforms us from the inside out.

In other words, our motivation for godliness is not to earn God's favor, but it is in recognition that in Christ we have already received God's gracious favor.

[18:16] That's the work of God's grace. Secondly, I want you to see the hope of God's grace. The hope of God's grace. Verse 13, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Well, set your eyes at the very end of verse 12 again. At the end of verse 12, Paul says, believers are to live godly in the present age. He's not simply referring to a particular historical moment. That's not what he means by that. That's not excluded, but it's not really what he intends to say. He's speaking of a unique time frame in God's plan of redemption.

When we get to verse 13 here, we get more clarity as to what he's actually saying. And he uses this word appearing again. Do you see that? Look at verse 13. Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Just as God's grace was manifested in Jesus' first coming, so will it again be manifested in the Lord's second coming.

[19:27] The present age then is this time frame between the two things. The present age is the time frame between Jesus' first appearance and Jesus' second appearance.

In his first appearance in verse 11, Jesus came and the glory that he had as being God, the Son of God, was veiled. That's why people were so confused by him. That's why the disciples were so blown away on the Mount of Transfiguration.

They've seen this man, powerful man, but this man, but then all of a sudden on the Mount of Transfiguration, they get a glimpse of his glory, his glorified state. So when he first comes, the glory is veiled, but when he comes the next time, Paul says right here, it will be in full display of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is coming again and it's going to be magnificent. It's going to be a magnificent appearance of God's grace. And Paul's point is that our lives now in the present age should reflect a hopeful expectation of this return.

And we immediately see the past, present, and future realities of salvation here. The past reality of salvation, we have been saved.

[20:42] That's verse 11. The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation. At some point, if you know Christ, at some point, the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit has transformed your life and you are saved.

Past tense. You have been saved. That's verse 11. But then we see the present tense. That's verse 12. We are being saved. He is actively training us, disciplining us, fashioning us to live a life that is worthy of the gospel.

We are being saved. But then there's this future salvation, the future dynamic. We will be saved. That's verse 13. That right now, as we are being trained by God's grace, we longingly await our future salvation, that glorified state.

We taught the kids about this on Thursday night and it was in conjunction with the dynamic of our security in Christ and in salvation. But a big part of it was the benefits of the glorified state, a new

body, whose back doesn't get thrown out, who can lay down and breathe just fine, who doesn't have to spend a week in the hospital because of congestive heart failure. There's no more sickness there. There's no more sin. There's no more heartache. There's no more sadness. We long for that.

[22 : 15] Paul tells us in the book of Romans that the whole creation groans for it. We will be saved. That's what Paul's getting at here. And in the meantime, in this present age, our lives should reflect what we know will be true in that moment.

And he calls it our blessed hope. Of course, biblical hope is not a wish. It is a certain expectation that God will do what God has promised he will do.

And Christians can rejoice in hope of Christ's return because the scriptures guarantee our future glorification. All those things that I just mentioned.

He guarantees it in Romans chapter 8, verse 30. Those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justifies, he will glorify.

It's a guarantee of God's word. It's a guarantee of God's grace. This is what we will be. Philippians 1, 6. I'm sure of this, Paul says, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

[23 : 32] Now it is this certain expectation of Christ's return and the benefits of what awaits us in the glorified state that motivates and informs our pursuit of godliness now.

And I want to show you a passage that makes this clear. In 1 John chapter 3, it's on the screen if you want to follow along or you can turn to it in your Bible. In 1 John chapter 3, John says, beloved, we are God's children now.

And what we will be, that is in the glorified state, 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.

So John is setting us up for this future expectation. This is what we will be in heaven. We are going to be like Christ. We are going to be fashioned after him. Now look what he says in verse 3. And everyone who thus hopes, everyone who is certain of this reality, purifies himself.

Why? Because he sees the purity of Christ. The hope of God's grace is such that it informs and motivates our godliness because as we keep our eyes set on heaven and we keep our focus set on Christ, we see his purity and we see his loveliness and we see his glory and it makes us want to purify ourselves and pursue that glory which will be ours in eternity.

[25 : 07] Understanding the fullness of the gospel means recognizing that God will finally transform us. and the word that John uses for this is pure.

Those who have been saved by God's grace and are being transformed by God's grace should desire to exemplify this purity in the present age.

And once again, the truth of the gospel of grace drives us to godliness. thirdly, I want you to see the agent of grace.

We've seen the work of grace, what grace does. We've seen the hope of grace. We set our eyes on heaven and we live as if we are there already. Okay? Number three, the agent of grace.

Verse 14. Perhaps the most important verse of all of it. 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.

[26 : 21] This is the heart of the whole discussion. At the center of the gospel is the self-sacrifice of God's son for undeserving sinners.

That's the grace of God. That's the grace of God that has appeared. the self-sacrifice of Jesus for sinners. He's provided eternal salvation according to this verse by giving himself for us.

But how is it that Jesus gave himself? Philippians chapter 2 helps us with this. The men studied this on Wednesday morning at Chick-fil-A. It says, though he was in the form of God, he did not account equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

So first, Jesus gives himself by leaving the throne of heaven to become a man. he condescends to us. Then the sinless son of God gave himself by submitting to death on a cross, a criminal's execution for a sinlessly perfect man.

The one who knew no sin bore God's wrath against sinners so that they could then know his righteousness. righteousness. That's 2 Corinthians 5.

[28 : 03] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. And why did he give himself?

That's how he gave himself. Why did he give himself? What was Jesus' substitutionary death meant to accomplish? Well, Paul tells us right here in the verse. He gives us three reasons.

First, he gives himself to rescue us from sin. To rescue us. He says he gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness.

Lawlessness, according to John, says lawlessness is sin. Redemption here, redeem, it means to release on receipt of ransom. He redeems us in his death from sin, from the bondage of sin and from our deadness in sin.

The penalty of sin. But he doesn't just stop at the rescue. That's the thing. See, this is where a lot of people get confused. They come to Christ expecting the rescue, but they stop there. Look at what he also says.

[29 : 10] He gave himself to rescue us from sin, but he gave himself to cleanse us of sin. Redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify us.

You see, Jesus is not content to leave us in sin. It's not as if he saves us and he says, all right, you're good.

Go on. No. He saves us, he keeps us, he rescues us, and then he cleans us. I remember when Julie gave birth to both the girls.

It's bizarre. Those of you who have been there know, most people say it's a beautiful thing. It's not a beautiful thing. It's a bizarre thing. And I remember both girls when they emerge, all of these people gather around and they pick up the girls.

And what's the first thing that they do? They put them on Julie's chest. They say, hey to mom, and then they rip her right back out of her hands. And they go over to the sink or whatever the thing is and they weigh her and then they get that thing and they start to scrub her down, right?

[30 : 13] They're not content to leave them in the mess. They say, this is what Jesus does. You see, at the point that he saves us, it's like being born. In fact, that's exactly what Jesus says.

We receive a new birth, regeneration. And Jesus doesn't come to that moment of birth and then just kind of throw us out there and say, hope things work out for you.

No. No, he takes us and he takes us and he loves on us and he gives us attention and he cleans us. He washes us. He purifies us. He cleanses us. And then he says, not only does he rescue us from sin, he gave himself to cleanse us but then to make us his own.

To make us his own. A people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Here's the transformation again. Paul says to another church, we are not our own.

We have been bought with a price which pushes against the common mindset not only in our culture but honestly I think in a lot of cultural Christian circles. That says, yeah, I follow Jesus but this is my life.

[31 : 28] This is my body and this is my money and this is my stuff and I'm going to do it the way that I want to do it. Paul says, no, that's not actually true.

You are not your own. If you know Christ, you belong to him. He's bought you. There's a lot of misconceptions about the purpose of God's grace and salvation.

There's a lot of cultural Christians who identify as with Christianity in some sense out of, to gain what MacArthur says is fire insurance.

they're not really interested in being rescued from sin or knowing Christ. They just come to a point where if there is a hell, maybe this is the way that I can possibly escape it.

So they do whatever the church says that they're supposed to do. They get baptized or they attend or they volunteer. They do the stuff but there's really, there's nothing about Christ that's at work in their life. And they think grace is just there so that I don't have to go to hell.

[32 : 34] And they've misunderstood grace. There's others who maybe don't take quite that position but in their minds they think, well, grace just makes me free now.

It makes me free so that I can kind of live the way that I want to live without consequence. And there's a lot of Christians that probably you even know yourself, maybe you're one of them, that lives in that kind of state of mind or at least practically.

There's even some genuine Christians that can be carelessly indifferent to behaviors that dishonor God. But the Bible directly confronts these attitudes.

Romans chapter 6. You know the passage. Paul says, how can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead, we too might walk in newness of life.

[33 : 39] That means there's a transformation that has now happened. It's not God has given me his grace. I don't have to go to hell. I can just keep doing my thing here and just feel comfortable about it. You've misunderstood grace.

Paul goes on to say, let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

To the one who has been gripped by the truth of the gospel, they will routinely say, I don't want to live in sin.

Christ has saved me from that. I don't want to go back to it. And think about it in terms of the instructions Paul has given. Hang with me, we're almost there, okay?

Think about it in terms of the instructions Paul gave in the first ten verses. Someone gripped by the gospel says, I do not want to live a slanderous life. Christ saved me from that.

[34 : 50] I don't want to do that. I don't want to live in drunkenness. Christ saved me from that. I don't want to do that. I don't want to live in constant conflict with my husband or with my wife.

Christ saved me from that. I don't want to go back to that. You see, we need to evaluate all of our conduct on the basis of the fact that Christ died to rescue and cleanse us from sin.

I want to ask you maybe this hypothetical question, maybe you were asked this as a young person growing up. So maybe even the kids would need to hear me.

Give me your ear here. If Jesus was with you today, physically with you, he was spending the day with you, would you be at peace with the typical decisions that you make?

Or, would a part of the conversation with your Lord be, Jared, I was crucified to rescue you from that. Why would you do that?

[36 : 00] Jared, I was crucified to redeem you from those words and the sin of your mouth.

Why would you continue in that? Jared, I was crucified to rescue you from those things that you're entertaining yourself with on the TV and on your phone. Why would you do that?

And we could go down the list. Jesus gave himself to redeem us and this gospel of grace literally, it teaches us.

If you understand the gospel, then you understand it's never okay for me to sin. I shouldn't want to. I shouldn't desire it because Christ has died for it and he wants to cleanse me from it and one day he will finally cleanse me from it and I'm going to live for him now because of what he's done for me.

Do you remember the question that I asked you at the beginning? What's the why behind the way that you live your life and make your decisions? Why do you do what you do?

[37 : 22] Why do you say what you say? Why do you enjoy what you enjoy? If the dominant motivation of your life is self fulfillment, that is it's my life, I'll do it how I want.

If that's the dominant reason in your mind, I don't know that you're a Christian. The call to salvation is a call to self-denial.

That's what Jesus says. He says, whoever will come to me will have to deny himself, not pursue himself. The grace of God in salvation transforms our affections.

The Bible makes that clear and if your dominant affection in your life, your dominant desire is not to please the Lord, I don't think you're a Christian, at least according to the Bible.

people. But as we discovered in verse 11, God extends this offer of grace to you. Receive his grace.

[38 : 23] Receive the grace in Christ. Let him rescue you from sin and cleanse you from it forever. Now that's one way you could answer the question.

The other way that some of you may have answered the question is if you do what you do out of fear that God will be angry and remove his favor, I don't think you understand the gospel.

Our motivation for godliness is not to gain God's favor. It's actually a loving, worshipful response to the favor that he's already given us. That's the motivation.

Jesus said, we read it in Matthew 11, Jesus said that his salvation would give you rest, not anxiety.

Rest. And if you're constantly living in fear, you're probably not trusting Christ. You're probably trusting your ability to do your best and try your hardest and do the list of things.

[39 : 35] And somebody's told you, if you fall short of that, you're not doing it right. We need to care about godliness. But our godliness is not what saves us.

We cling trustingly to the Lord Jesus, even when we fail, even when we fall. We're grieved by our sin. But it should never bring us to a point, if we know Christ, and if we understand the gospel, it should never bring us to a point that in our sin, we're now overwhelmed with fear that God's going to take it away, that he doesn't love us anymore, that he's going to cast us out.

Remember what Jesus said, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. And if you're living in constant fear, I think you just don't understand the gospel, and you need to study the gospel.

You need to study these verses. You need to learn the gospel of grace, so that you might look to Jesus, and then live.