

Titus 2:11-15

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[0 : 00] All right, I think I'm here and I think I'm live for you. So friends, I'm excited to be with you again virtually because, well, that's what we can do in this moment.

And as Randy said, I was actually thinking of saying something very similar. I just was thinking yesterday about how much I can't wait to be with you again as a church family. I can't wait to minister God's word face to face.

It's so wonderful to me to be able to do that. And I'm very excited about today's passage. Mike last week mentioned that he was being very diligent in not bleeding into this part of Titus chapter two. And he did an admirable job at that. So I can't wait to bring it and open it up to you because it really is sort of the heartbeat of the book of Titus.

But I'm excited to get into it. So let's pray and then I'll open up the word and we can get started with it. So, oh, Lord, our God, thank you that you even in the midst of this trying circumstance, allow us to hear your word that you have not abandoned us.

[1 : 15] Lord, that each of us has a Bible in hand or can easily get one that you have given us access to your throne of grace by prayer through our great high priest, Jesus Christ.

And Lord, as we attend to your word today, I pray that you would open it up to us, that you would excite us for what it has in store for what you have in store for us, for who you are and what you want for our lives.

We pray this all in the name of our great high priest, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. All right, friends, this week we are going to be in Titus chapter two, verses 11 through 15. So let me read that for us. 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.

Declare these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority, let no one disregard you." Friends, that is God's word. Now, if you noticed there, verse 11 begins with the word for, or depending on your translation, or maybe because or since.

[2 : 44] And that means that this is the grounds on which we do what we have been instructed to do thus far in the book. And what have we already seen in the book of Titus?

Now, from the very first word, the first words of the book, the first verse, Paul has been talking about the knowledge of truth, that is the embrace of the gospel, which accords with godliness, that results in a transformed life.

In chapter one, he was concerned that the elders and the pastors exhibited that godliness as they led the church. And then in chapter two, why? Well, because in chapter two, the pastors are leading the whole congregation into that holiness.

And as we saw last week, Titus chapter two evens out the playing field. It's the great leveling agent in the life of the church.

The whole church is, A, called to this high calling, and B, the whole church is recruited into the ministry of instructing and building one another up in love into holiness.

[3 : 53] And that's through direct instruction and by holy example. Everyone from the highest social status to the lowest is commanded to holiness. No one is exempt and everybody's called into the same high calling.

And so he, Paul is upholding a high Christian standard for every member in whatever their life circumstance. And they're being spurred on to the same Christian maturity that we saw on display in the leaders in chapter one.

And so up to this point, Paul has set the stage for us that the church is to be holy. Her doctrine is to be pure. Her pastors are examples of godly living and sound teaching.

Her church is to be holy and the whole congregation, and the whole congregation, from greatest to least, is striving together towards godliness. Now and today, our passage starts with four, right now and that gets us right to the heart of the Book of Titus.

Because it's one thing to say, you know, pastors must live holy lives, chapter one, and the congregation, too, chapter two. But how do we get there? But, you know, how do we make that happen?

[5 : 04] Do we just grit our teeth and make it happen? Do the elders, you know, or do we hand out a whip when we ordain them so that they can crack it and, you know, drive us on to stop that bad stuff?

How do we pass out incentives? Is there, you know, like ice cream if we do it right? How do we, as Paul says in verse 12, live godly lives in the present age?

How do we do it? Well, he begins in verse 11 with that four. He begins in the past tense. He says that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to the whole world.

And that is the message of Jesus Christ, right? That the simple gospel message that we stand condemned before a holy God, but that God is merciful and loving and cares for us and does not want to see us perish.

And so he came down and joined himself to human nature so that all who are found in him, well, he bore the burden of their sins on his shoulders when he went to the cross.

[6 : 11] And the punishment that we deserve, he gladly bore on our behalf so that all who are found in him might be found in him in his resurrection, guiltless and free.

And so, friends, if I don't know who's watching this and it looks like, you know, quite a few people are. I can see like the number on the live stream. I don't know who I'm talking to right this moment. But if you've never come to know that grace, but it has appeared. And he says it's gone to all.

Everyone is offered this free offer of the gospel.

You may be reconciled to the living God who loves you because his son, Jesus Christ, died on a cross and rose from the grave and offers forgiveness to you as a free gift of grace.

And all you have to do is trust him and trust yourself to him as we call faith. And if if you need to come into that saving relationship with God and into the life that we're talking about here in Titus chapter two.

[7 : 20] Well, please, please let us know. Contact us so that we can pray with you and guide you into this. That's the whole point of the book of Titus. And so this salvation, friends, is for all of us.

And then he says something very strange. Verse 12, he says that that grace trains us. That's an unusual thing. And it says it trains us to one renounce ungodliness and worldly passage and then to put on the new life.

Right. Put off the old, put on the new live self controlled, upright, godly lives in this present age.

Now, that's basically you think about it a summary of what we've seen in chapters one and two about holy living.

Stop the bad stuff. Do the good stuff. Simplicity. Right. But how how does it happen? He says it trains. Doesn't even make sense that grace would train us. Isn't grace God's grace about forgiveness and mercy?

What's this training bit? Right. Well, here's what we're seeing in this. And if you looked at verse 14, you see it even clearer. God's grace doesn't only expunge the guilt of our sin.

[8 : 28] It doesn't just change the balance in your heavenly bank account with no impact on today on your life right here and now. God is powerful and his grace is working here and now instructing you to live a godly life.

Might at first, though, some like a constraint, right, the opposite of gracious freedom. But that would only be because we're still in the wrong frame of reference. Right.

Consider an addict. Right. Let's say opioids. Right. Because that's so prevalent in our nation and in our region right now that person sees loss when they consider rehab.

Right. They only see pain, only constraint. It sounds awful. But but rehab is the way to freedom.

Right. That person, the most gracious thing you can do for that person is to help them get to rehab and support them through it.

Now, anger and lust and pride and selfishness and all the rest, all the things that Paul is asking us to cast off and walk in holiness. They're no different. They're just more socially acceptable. Right. [9 : 40] They're more prevalent and they're acceptable and polite company. But make no mistake. Right. They're offenses against God. They're unloving towards other people and they are damaging and ruinous to you and to me and our hearts just the same.

And God, in his grace, aims to free you from your sin, not just the penalty for sin, but but sins presence and its power in your life.

That's the comprehensive grace of God. Now, Paul is about to say in the next chapter that before we had this transformation, this hope that that we were slaves to various passions and pleasures. But God's grace, verse 11 breaks the chains, verse 12 of our slavery to passions and pleasures by by what we're going to see here is by gutting them of their power over us.

Look at verse 14. It says Jesus gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works.

[10 : 46] So, yes, he liberated us. He liberated us from the guilt and eternal punishment of our sins. But what other liberties in the gospel? He gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness.

That is, he liberated us from the power of sin. We are no longer slaves to our sinful desires. Right. Because verse 14 doesn't just say that he redeemed us from judgment over our lawlessness.

He says that he redeemed us from all lawlessness. That is the actual commission of sin. That that's a that's an incredible transformation. Jesus didn't in his death only pardon us from sin.

His death doesn't only work to restrain us from lawlessness, either that that the commission of sin, but also that we would be zealous for good works.

He instructs us as it looks like in verse 12 right in holiness. And that is the incredible transformation that's being brought about and the linchpin, the whole center of the book, the whole center of this passage, especially, but of really the whole book is verse 13.

[12 : 01] And that's the how. Right. I feel like we've kind of beaten around the bush here about the how quite a bit. And I'm eager to share it for you. Like we've talked about the call for holiness, the liberation from sin, the zeal to good works.

But how does God's grace, verse 11 actually train us, verse 12 to do it right. Is it just is it a set of instructions? Is it a curriculum? How does grace train?

Now, if you watched Shoreline's midweek live stream, we examined that word train and looked at how how do we understand what the words in Scripture mean?

What did we discover? Those of you who were able to tune into that. And if you haven't seen it, it's still on our Facebook page. So you can go check that out. What we discovered about that word when the thread, the Bible used in several different ways. But when God is the person doing the training here, I'll check a list here.

Hebrews chapter 12. The Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. Hebrews 12 again. Our fathers disciplined us for a short time to seem best to them.

[13 : 18] But he that is God, our father disciplines us for our good that we may share his holiness. And then Jesus in Revelation chapter three said those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.

So be zealous and repent. What does that mean? Training when God is doing it is a loving father growing his children in maturity.

And we're about to see the coolest thing in Titus two year end, especially verse 13. If we know that the training we're getting is a love is a training from a loving father.

He said, look at verse 13. I'm so excited about this guys really said waiting for our blessed. Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, you might be thinking, Dave, you've been promising me how that doesn't look like how. What are you even talking about? Well, normally when we talk about the fight against sin and the pursuit of holiness, we talk about how the Lord renews our hearts that we desire what is good.

[14 : 34] It's the doctrine of regeneration. The Old Testament prophets prophesied that the Lord was going to take out the heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh and give us new desires in us.

Or we talk about how God the Holy Spirit himself in dwells us right empowering us and inspiring us to fight sin and grow in the fruits of the spirit. And Paul is actually about to mention both of those in chapter three.

But here we see something different. Another tool in the fight. Here is a weapon that doesn't just help us resist temptation. It cuts the legs right out from other under it and it's hope.

How is that the training from our Heavenly Father that trains us in Godliness? Think about that for a moment. How?

How is the hope, verse 13, the training, verse 12, from our Heavenly Father that trains us in Godliness? Here's a weapon. What is temptation's power?

[15:46] What is it? Temptation is an offer, right? Do this and you will get that, right?

Maybe it's pleasure. Maybe it's satisfaction. Maybe it's dissatisfied greed. Maybe it's whatever it is. Temptation is an offer. It's offering you something.

Something, presumably, that you want. Otherwise, it wouldn't be tempting to you, right? So, but here is where the hope of the future that God has in store for us, verse 13.

I'm checking to see if we can go live again.

I just fixed it. Hold on. I don't have the options. All right. I think we are back on track. Sorry, guys, for that technical hiccup. I'm not exactly sure where we left off.

[16:59] And so, or where we got our connection interrupted. So, I'm going to try. I'm going to back up just a little bit. What we've said is that, verse 11, the grace of God has appeared offering salvation to the world.

And verse 12, that that same grace, that same grace. I'm sorry, guys. I've lost my train of thought just a little bit. But that same grace trains us to renounce ungodliness and to walk in holiness.

And we've said, and I've been saying this whole time that the how, the how does that training happen from our loving father comes in verse 13. And it's found in the hope we have for the future final redemption that we have.

And that doesn't at first sound as if it's, that doesn't sound like it makes a lot of sense. How does that train us to live godly lives?

And here's the thing. The power of temptation is an offer. Temptation offers us something. Right?

[18:05] Either it offers us pleasure or some sort of advancement or some sort of satisfaction that we, if we do this thing, this sinful thing, we will get some satisfaction out of it.

That's, that's the power of temptation is its offer. But God's grace trains us, not in the sense of that, you know, okay, boys and girls, be nice, not an instruction of just telling you to be good.

That, that item on that third item on the list, Christ's return, trains us in righteousness because it actually empowers us in holiness. Because hoping for the appearing of his glory changes me right now.

It changes my behavior right now. Because I have a better hope than the offer that temptation is, is, is giving me right now. Right? Let's give an example.

Everyone, a pretty simple one. Everyone is spending a lot more time online right now, I suspect. So let's say I see something on a website that, that excites me, but I know it's not God honoring to go click on it.

[19:12] It doesn't live up to the life that I'm called to in chapters one and chapter two. Will I click on it and dive into that temptation? Well, that depends. It depends on what I'm looking forward to.

Right? If I'm looking at this day, at this life, seeing only my normalcy. Well, clicking on that might seem like a pretty big hit, like a pretty big upgrade to my day.

Well, that's a big pleasure bonus right there. But if I'm looking forward to the blessed hope of the appearing of the glory of our great God.

If I have that on the horizon, if I believe that Jesus Christ, who created the cosmos, who bled and died for me, who conquered death, who promised to return and restore the whole earth and me with it.

And he is my portion forever. If that's what I'm looking forward to. Does this feeding temptation move the needle anymore? Does it seem like a big upgrade anymore?

[20:16] Our hope in what God has promised makes us turn to sin and the thrill that it offers and say, you call that pleasure?

You call that fulfillment? You call that advancement? I'm on my way shortly because life is short to glory, to an inheritance, to a home, to adoption, to God himself.

What sin do you offer me? Can you compare? The pleasure, the fulfillment, the satisfaction I'm headed for is infinite.

What do you have for me? Hope guts temptation of its power. And here's what else.

Look, look back at verse 12. Paul doesn't simply say, stop your ungodliness and worldly passions.

What does he say? He says, renounce them. It's the same word for when Peter denied Jesus.

[21 : 22] And that's what we're doing when we say, you call that pleasure? I have a bigger hope than you can offer me. Right? We are renouncing. We are shaming our temptations with the hope of the gospel.

Now, this isn't, you know, the call isn't just stop doing that thing that you'd like to do. The call is, do you see the hope that you have in Christ? Renounce this garbage because infinitude awaits you. Our hope uproots sin's power. Our hope undermines temptation's allure. And it puts it to shame by offering us transcendent blessing with Christ.

Where sin and temptation only offer a cheap high. Right? It's like, you know, hey, do you want this drive-through cheeseburger? We, you know, reheated it in this, you know, this little steam oven. No, I'm on my way to the steakhouse. The great one, right? And I'm really not sure what vegetarians look forward to, but neither here nor there. But, you know, how is this?

[22 : 32] I said this, you know, we were looking at training and God is doing the training. How is that fatherly love like we were talking about? Well, what is the question that parents have to ask the most?

Well, besides, can I have another snack? It's the question, why? Right? A while back, I remember thinking, man, I've gotten in way too deep with, you know, my three-year-olds why questions when my next answer is, well, because that's not how we perceive time.

Right? Three-year-olds are amazing philosophers, it seems. But one of parents' main responsibilities is why? Showing our children how the world works, right?

Our children can obey without understanding, and they ought. But our job as parents is more than to get them to memorize and follow a list of rules. It's to get them to understand, right?

Because parents bring children into maturity, right? For example, you can tell your child, don't touch that. And they ought to obey, right?

[23 : 39] But until you explain, that's a stove, it's very hot, it can hurt you, they won't understand the bigger principle that very hot things hurt and we should avoid them to protect ourselves.

And that's why the parent gave the instruction not to touch it, right? And to parent a child well, to bring them up into maturity requires that we help them understand the world and how it works so that they can live well in every circumstance, not just the ones that we have prescribed rules for. They need to know the why behind the instruction or they won't be able to live more than a list of rules and we can't fabricate enough rules. We need to grow our children into maturity.

And so we can't make enough rules and we need to give them the principles, the why. And lo and behold, here is God giving us, verse 13, the why, right?

Why say no to sin's offer? It's because we have a hope in heaven that passes understanding. And so you're not a bad parent if you say, obey, you know, do it because I said so, right?

[24 : 49] No judgment there. I've said it recently. Children owe their parents obedience in the Lord. But you are a bad parent if all you ever say it is do it because I said so.

We also need to supply that underlying principle for understanding the why. And here's our heavenly father giving us the why.

Why say no to temptation? Well, if all we're living for is this world and this life, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. But understanding the why, right?

Don't dabble in the garbage bin as you're on your way to the king's palace, which, by the way, is also your royal home. See, we serve a good father.

He explains the why to us and what a grounds for hope and what a grounds for great Christian living it is. Because our hope totally overshadows the offer that temptation gives us today or tomorrow or any day.

[25 : 55] And that's why this is the message that we proclaim, right? Verse 15 says, declare these things. Exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you, friends.

This is what it means for the church, right? That the church is a community that builds itself up in holiness in its members, all centered around the hope of the gospel, right?

What no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man imagined. What God has prepared for those who love him. Friend, our hope shines bright in the Father's love.

And so sinful passions and pleasures, well, they lose their luster. Let's pray. Our great God and Father, thank you that we have a hope.

Your grace has appeared once, verse 11, bringing salvation. And Lord, we are so grateful for our salvation.

[27 : 06] But that's not all you've brought. You've brought a promise. And we hope in that second appearing, when Christ comes to bring us to glory that we cannot yet fathom.

Lord, I pray that you would ground all our hearts in that hope. So that the offer that temptation brings to us might look silly, might look vapid and empty, next to the great hope that we have in the gospel.

Lord, I thank you for the opportunity to be together around your word, even though we are physically distant. And I pray that you would root the gospel in our lives in new and incredible ways. So that we do renounce, utterly renounce sin in all its ways. And walk boldly in gospel glory and holiness.

We pray this all in the name of Jesus Christ, who made it all possible through his appearing. Amen.