

What Have You Done With Your Life

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] The passage on which I want to speak to you tonight is from Titus, the epistle that was read for you.

Titus chapter 2, verse 11, and on page 201 of your pew Bible, and I think you will find it helpful to read it and to follow it.

It continues to be an overwhelming experience to preach to you on Christmas Eve.

I think of you as enormously sophisticated, successful people, and I feel very inadequate in standing up to say anything to you.

But I am constantly encouraged by the fact that I have very good news for you, which if by God's grace we as a group could hear that good news, we would be wonderfully rewarded for the time we spend, a few minutes as I trust it may be, looking at this word of God.

[1 : 23] We look at it in a week when part of what happens, what makes it difficult, is our world is so full of tragedy. And for anybody to stand up and say there's good news is a bit of a fool.

We're surrounded by the tragedy. I just listed these. There's the technological tragedy of the 747. And we're a technological society.

We should be able to eliminate tragedies like that. There's the economic tragedy of world deficits so that we've probably mortgaged our children and probably our children's children to pay those debts. There's the global tragedy that in order to get the suntan we appreciate, we have to replace the ozone layer, which isn't going to be easy. There's the people tragedy, like living in a country of 25 million people that probably should have 100 million people living in it.

And I'm not going to stop and argue that one with you. There's the human tragedy that one of the greatest and best gifts of God, our sexuality, is a gift we least understand.

[2 : 47] And the suffering that that creates is enormous. And the thought is that in the face of these tragedies, surely we as a human community can band together to overcome these problems.

But if you've ever tried to organize a community made up of human beings, all of whom are near to gods themselves, I say that in fact, not in derision, you, each of you, is a person of tremendous potential.

You are virtually gods. And how you get gods to work together has been one of the problems of the world. The difficulty that most of us face is it takes 20 or 30 years of nurturing and education to prepare us for 20 or 30 years of taking a slice of the economic pie to guarantee our peace and prosperity, at which time we have 20 or 30 years left for the struggle against aging, decline, and death.

And somewhere in the sequence of those years, we are faced with the agonizing question of what have I done with my life?

And the bitterness of recognizing that I haven't had time to do very much, nor has there been the opportunity, nor have I known quite what to do.

[4 : 25] And if you're like me, you are almost rendered totally impotent in every way by the staggering dimensions of the problems that face humankind.

Now the good news. Because I think what we very desperately need to hear, and what it is my great privilege to share with you, not that I'm sharing with you something you don't know, but sharing with you something that you and I all need very much to be reminded of.

And what I want to share with you is two words from the passage. The first of them is grace, and the second of them is glory.

So in your Christmas meditation, you can hang it all on, grace and glory. God's grace, you begin to be aware of when you recognize that you need to be forgiven.

And the good news is that you are. Far beyond anything you perhaps have ever become aware of. You need to be loved. You need to be loved. And you are.

[5 : 49] No matter how lonely you may feel at times. You need to be known. And you are known. Even though there's much you don't know.

You are hopelessly compromised in the circumstances of your life. So often you get into a marriage counseling situation where a man and a woman are looking at their marriage of 20 years and saying, surely we can make it go.

But secretly one of them is compromised. And that isn't put on the table. And all of us. I mean, that's one of the situations we get into.

We're compromised with situations in our lives from which we need to be redeemed. And Christ has redeemed us.

We need to belong. Prickly as we may be. We do belong.

[6 : 54] Because someone has loved us and laid claim to us. You may feel you're not just good enough. And you excuse yourself from any serious responsibility on the grounds that you really don't qualify.

Well, I'll tell you that it's not for you to say that you're not good enough. It may even be possible that the God who created the whole of the universe could use even you.

But then you may get to more serious levels of questioning and say, well, I simply can't believe. And you would be a true child of our culture and our society if you were to say that because our society says I can't believe.

But again, it is the gift of God that allows you to believe as you open your heart to his word. You can say that the problems are too big and life becomes meaningless.

But they're not too big for the God who has acted towards you. You can say that you've been hurt too badly. And how often I hear that and how often I sense that and how often I feel that.

[8 : 12] Some people just have been hurt too badly. you say that there's too many hypocrites.

And there is. But the difficulty is that you're just another one of them anyway. And you can say that I want to be left alone.

Well, that option is there. But I don't think you'll hold on to it as long as it's there for you. You can say, well, what if grace doesn't convince me?

Turn to this passage. What does it say? It is a most remarkable statement. One that I think should trap your mind and hold it and not let go of it.

It says that the grace of God, which has appeared to all men, teaches us. Now, most of us think that what God has done to teach us is to bring tragedy or illness or circumstances on us which are too big for us.

[9 : 24] But this passage says, no. It is the grace of God that teaches us. Now, where is the grace of God focused? The grace of God is focused in the person of Jesus Christ.

He is the despised and rejected one. He is the scourged and crucified one. He is the scorned and ignored one.

He is the one whom we hold in contempt. He is the one who stands among us whom we don't know. The one whom the Jews reject.

The one whom the Muslims ignore. And alas, the one whom the Christians are ashamed of. This is the one.

The one whom the grace of God has appeared. To train us. And to teach us. You see, that's what happens.

[10 : 37] Is that God has come in Jesus Christ. God has come in Jesus Christ. And revealed his grace. When everybody expects and thinks God ought to come in a terrible cloud of wrath.

To bring justice on the earth. Before which none of us would stand. For a moment. But it's grace. In which he has revealed himself.

And that grace comes into sharp focus. In the person of Jesus Christ. And by that grace. By that grace. We learn.

And I suppose the danger we're under. In our kind of world. Is that we won't allow ourselves.

To be trained by grace. To be taught by grace. And I beg and implore you. To consider this person Jesus Christ.

[11 : 38] To focus your eye on him. As he is portrayed in the humiliation of his birth. In the humiliation of his life.

As one despised and rejected. In the humiliation of his scourging and dying. On a cross. Stripped naked.

That is the revelation of the grace of God. God. And if the grace doesn't utterly convince you. Let me go on to tell you a bit about his glory. Look at how this wonderful passage says. That the grace has appeared to train us.

And then in verse 13 it says. We are awaiting for the glory of God to appear. Now the difference essential.

[12:36] Between grace and glory. Is that in his grace. God has emptied himself. And revealed himself to us. In the man of sorrows.

Acquainted with grief. Suffering the humility of our humanity. Though he was God. But the glory of God.

Will be revealed. And it will. There will be no mistake. You see. Even those who sit here tonight. I am sure. I mean I. I feel for you. I recognize. Because I am part of this society too. Can we believe that God has.

Infinitely humbled himself. In being born of a virgin. In a stable in Bethlehem. To reveal his grace to us. Could this really be God?

[13:39] And century after century. Through the whole of the time. Since that happened. There has been. One movement after another. That has stood and said.

It cannot be God. And yet the testimony. To the person of Jesus Christ. Continues to be made. And people come to the place. Where they can no longer deny. And are compelled to believe. And I read the lovely story.

Of a man. Who ran and ran and ran. From the presence of God. The whole of his life. Until God overtook him.

And if you are such a person. Because I am convinced. That each one of you. Is in that place. Where God is not far from you.

[14:38] You may refuse to recognize. But it is there. But. You can ignore him. You could ignore. The revelation of his grace.

But once you come. To believe in him. You then. Await. The appearing. Of his glory. And you see. The glory of God.

Is such. That there will be no confusion. And there will be no mistake. When he came at Bethlehem. Nobody knew who he was. When he comes again.

Everybody will know who he is. And the position of the Christian. Is that he is. One who awaits. The revealing. Of the glory of God. In the face of Jesus Christ. In fact. For those of you. Who are having questions.

[15:34] About this person of Christ. Look at this text. Do you see what it says? A most surprising thing. It says to us.

We are awaiting. The blessed hope. The appearing. Of the glory. Of our great. God. And savior. Jesus Christ.

And you may not find that. Very surprising. But it is. A very remarkable statement. Our great God. And savior. Is Jesus Christ. And he is appearing.

And we as Christians. Await his appearing. And as we await. His appearing. Then we are. Enabled. By God's grace.

To do those things. Which it is. God's purpose. We should do. So that our life. Instead of being. A picture of futility.

[16:33] Against impossible. And overwhelming. Problems. That surround us. On every side. Is a life. Of faithful obedience. To that great God.

And savior. Jesus Christ. Who will. In due course. Appear. And who has. As Paul writes.

To Titus. Claimed us. To be. A people. Of his own. Through whom. He purposes. To work.

And the problem. That we have. As a people. And I wish. By God's. Holy Spirit. There might be. A great breakthrough. Among all of us.

Even this night. When there's so many. Other things. On our minds. A great breakthrough. In which. We determine. In the quiet.

[17:32] Of this service. That having been. Redeemed by him. And purified. By him. And called. To be. His people. We might be.

Zealous. To do. His work. That is. We would allow him. To do. In us. What it is. His purpose.

To do. In order. That in the life. Of three score. Years. And ten. And then some more. He might do. Through us. What it is.

His purpose. To do. And the fulfillment. Of our life. Would not be. In some goal. Which we. By our own effort. Have achieved.

And few. There be among us. Who will ever. Even approach that. But the goal. Of our life. Will be. The faith.

[18 : 28] That God. Has. In his grace. Accomplished. In us. That which is. His purpose. And accomplished.

Through us. That which is. His purpose. As we. In faith. Wait. For the appearing.

In glory. Of the one. Who has come. In grace. To know. His grace.

Is to await. His glory. And we are to await it. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. Faith. Of patience. And joy.

And in anticipation. Of the appearing. Of our great God. And Savior. Jesus Christ. As we recall. His appearing. In Bethlehem.

[19 : 25] We wait for his. We wait for his. Appearing. In glory. And while we wait. He takes the bread and wine.

And says. To strengthen you. Take this bread. Drink this wine. In remembrance of me.

That you may know my grace. And with faith. May await. My coming in glory. Amen. Amen. 310.

Amen. Amen. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Would you please kneel to pray?

Our gracious God and Father, creator of all that is good, we thank you for the gift of life, for the wonder of the world in which you have placed us, and for all the blessings you so freely lavish upon us.

Forgive us that too often we take your gifts for granted and think so little of the giver. Help us to recognize your hand in the ordinary things of life and never to be ungrateful for food and clothing, work and recreation, health and home, family and friends.

So may we live from day to day in the knowledge of your love and goodness, giving thanks always for all things. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[25 : 17] Amen. We pray for our world. Lord God, we live in a world where things have gone badly wrong because we have forgotten you and left you out of our reckoning.

We have worshipped other gods and have not hallowed your name. We have adopted the world's standards and have not served your kingdom.

We have gone our own way and have not chosen your will. Have mercy upon us, O Lord our God.

Forgive our sin and folly and turn us back to yourself, that we worship you, the Holy One.

Our Father, your Son, taught us that from those to whom much has been given, much will be required.

Thank you, Lord.

[26 : 58] Amen. Amen. We pray for the sick, suffering, and bereaved. Heavenly Father, we commend to your love and care those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, and especially those known to us, whom we hold up to you in silence now.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. We think of the bereaved families of those killed in this past week's air tragedy over Scotland. Grant, O Lord, to all who are bereaved the spirit of faith and courage, that they may have the strength to meet the days to come with steadfastness and patience, not sorrowing as those without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness and in the joyful expectation of eternal life with those they love. And this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Our God and Father, at this Christmas time, let us prepare ourselves to hear anew the good tidings of great joy of God's redeeming love made known to us in the birth of the child of Bethlehem. Let us remember with thanksgiving those who shared our Christmases in the years gone by. We think of

those who are not able to be with us this night and pray that you will bless and keep them. We thank you, our Heavenly Father, for the loveliness of the Christmas story, the child in the manger, the song of the angels, the homage of the shepherds, and the tender love of Mary. But most of all, we thank you for the meaning of the Christmas story, that you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son that all might live through him. All praise and thanks be yours, O God, for so great a love, so great a gift, so great a Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[29 : 48] Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God. Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things and judge of all people, we acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine majesty. We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these are misdoings.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. For give us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins, to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our offertory hymn is 237. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Emeritus 5 kids CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

[32 : 56] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHINA entreten for one hand.

And he kneeleth for our land, and he shepherds with our land.

And the heart ever shall see him, through his own, relieving love.

Born a child so dear and gentle, is the Lord in heaven above.

And he kneeleth till their heart, the love which he is born.

[34 : 54] Born a child, the Lord is still in love, in the waters that he is born.

We shall see him, I will be living, still and light, and the light.

When the heart ever shall be, and the light. And the heart ever shall be, and the light.

Amen. If you be alive and hungry, you shall be, and the lotion yinii wanna admit.

And the bright, be and the light. My love, you'll be living with me! Life coordinated with you! feast.

May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours, for he is Lord now and forever. Amen.

[37 : 00] The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit. Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God. It is very meet, right, and are bound in duty that we should at all times glorify you, O Lord.

Amen.

Blessed use stills the Lord and that with a spot of sin to make us clean from all sin. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, CHOIR SINGS In the name of the Lord, O Sarah in the eye.

Let us pray. Blessing and glory and thanksgiving be unto thee, almighty God, our heavenly Father, for thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son, Jesus Christ, to take our nature upon him and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made thereby his one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

And it institute, and it is holy gospel, command us to continue a perpetual memorial of that his precious death until his coming again.

[39 : 47] Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood, who in the same night that he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he break it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins.

Do this as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. And together, Wherefore, O Father, Lord of the heaven and earth, we, our humble servants, with all thy holy church, remembering the precious death of thy beloved Son, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again in glory, to make it for thee in this sacrament of the holy bread of eternal life, and the cup of everlasting salvation, the memorial which he hath commanded.

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[41 : 55] For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in your righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercy.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table, but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to reap the flesh of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you. All that are wrong, that taketh away the seed of the world, and earth be upon us.

All that are wrong, that taketh away the seed of the world, and earth be upon us.

[43 : 58] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 12] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.