

THE UPWARD LOOK

Tit. 2:11-14

Scripture reading: Titus 2.

Intro: This follows from two messages I brought today at Grace Bible Church downtown:

- 1) The Backward Look, from Deut. 8:2, 3.
- 2) The Forward Look, from 2 Tim. 3:1-4:8.

Tonight I want to take as my subject, The Upward Look -- our expectation as the people of God.

- I. WHAT IS OUR EXPECTATION? (This is the meaning of the word, "Looking.")

There are several answers we could give to that question:

- 1) More growth in our work.
- 2) More money to do more things around the church.
- 3) More influence among Christians and non-Christians alike.

But what is to be our daily expectation? V. 13 gives us our answer. Note the details:

- 1) Why is it called "that . . . hope," or, the "hope"? And then "blessed"?
- 2) What actually is it? Lit., the appearing of the glory of "the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" -- not two Persons, but One described in two ways, speaking of His nature, then His work, and finally His Name.

This is to be our daily expectation. We are looking for Him, not as He came the first time, but as He will come in His glory -- with all that that will mean for us as our "blessed hope," "that blessed hope" -- the only one there is.

The sad fact is that this is not the way that most of us as believers live. We may want the Lord to come to get us out of our difficulties, but there seems very little that is really evident of a desire to see the Lord and to be with the Lord and to see Him in all of His glory -- for all that that will mean to Him!

How can we keep this before us? How could Titus do it?

Paul gives us the answer as we look at the whole passage. So let us ask and answer the question,

- II. HOW CAN WE KEEP THIS IN OUR HEARTS AS OUR DAILY, PRIMARY EXPECTATION?

Paul gives us a twofold answer:

- A. We must understand why the Lord came the first time.

See vv. 11 and 14.

The reason has to do with salvation.

It never has been God's plan to save everyone. This becomes clear as Paul particularizes salvation in v. 14. He willingly, voluntarily "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us . . ." "Peculiar people" means a selected people, a people which He has chosen to be His own possession. So Christ came to redeem a people which He had already chosen for Himself -- to guarantee their salvation.

And note: Those who are saved are both redeemed (delivered from the penalty through a payment, which means forgiven and justified) and purified!

And the evidence: "zealous of good works."

All of this needs to be understood -- clearly!

But what is the other?

- B. We must understand how the Lord wants us to live while we are waiting. See v. 12.

Those who think that "grace" means license need to read this passage. "Grace" becomes our teacher, actually a child-trainer.

1. The first lesson: "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts."

We cannot be saved and go on living like we did before. "Grace" teaches us to renounce,
to forsake,
to separate one's self
from

that which follows:

- 1) "Ungodliness" -- all that displeases God and is contrary to Him. It is the withholding from Him the worship, the praise, the trust, of which He is worthy.
- 2) "Worldly lusts" -- desires that come from the world, which bear the character of the world. They set our hopes on the wrong things and make us dissatisfied with what we have.

All of this has to go -- and it is the grace of God which teaches us this.

2. The second lesson: "we should live soberly,

righteously, and godly" -- where? "In this present world."

Is it possible? It must be, or "grace" would not teach us these things!

What about the three words: "soberly, righteously, and godly"? They have to do with three areas of our lives:

- 1) "Soberly" -- has to do with ourselves. One of the greatest virtues among the ancient Greeks was the ability to control one's self. "Grace" teaches us -- and then does for us what it teaches.
- 2) "Righteously" -- which has to do with the Word. Again "grace" teaches, and "grace" enables.
- 3) "Godly" -- which has to do with God. Contrast with "ungodliness" above.

And it is all possible "in this present world," or age, in spite of the obstacles, because it is all of "grace."

Concl: What will be the result? THE UPWARD LOOK. This prepares us for heaven, makes us long for heaven, makes us look expectantly for heaven -- not idly, but zealously serving Him.

The final word: v. 15.

This last verse is not limited to vv. 11-14, but it certainly includes them. Paul tells Titus to do three things, and not to allow a fourth thing:

- 1) "Speak" -- as opposed to being quiet about it. "Grace" teaches this to the heart, but it must be confirmed by all true believers.
- 2) "Exhort." Don't talk about it as though it did not matter, or were a matter of personal choice. Do all that you can to encourage people to live this way.
- 3) "Rebuke" -- expose, refute, reprove so as to convict everything that is contrary to it.

The one negative:

- 4) "Let no man despise thee." The NASB uses the word, "disregard." It actually means to let someone put his thoughts above the teachings of grace so as to do away with it, and to arrive at a different conclusion.

Do you want to have that upward look? Then there has to be a holy life. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).