

TAUGHT BY THE GRACE OF GOD

Titus 2 11-12

Intro: The epistle from which my text is taken tonight was written by the Apostle Paul to Titus whom Paul identified in the fourth verse of chapter 1 as, “mine own son after the common faith.” This is similar to the way the Apostle Paul addressed Timothy. In 1 Tim. 1:2 he called Timothy, “my own son in the faith.” In 2 Tim. 1:2 Paul called Timothy “my dearly beloved son.”

These three epistles were the last epistles which Paul wrote which were to be a part of the Word of God. His letter to Titus was written between 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. We know that the Apostle Paul never married, and so these two men were not really his sons according to the flesh. But Paul had been used so greatly in the lives of these two men, who were his juniors in age, that they were much closer to him than many sons are to their fathers, especially where fathers and sons do not know the Lord.

In Gal. 2:3 we learn that Titus was not a Jew, but a Gentile, a Greek. In 2 Cor. 2:13 Paul called him, “my brother.” And in 2 Cor. 8:23 Paul called him, “my partner and fellowhelper concerning you.”

Titus is mentioned in only four books of the NT: 2 Cor. (9x), Gal. (2x), 2 Tim (1x), and once here in the epistle which carries his name. He had a very vital part in Paul’s ministry to the church at Corinth, as the references to Titus in 2 Cor. indicate.

A real testimony to the spiritual character of Titus was given by Paul in 2 Cor. 12 when Paul was answering charges against him. This is what we read in 2 Cor. 12:17-19:

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?

19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

So we can see that Titus, like Timothy, was Paul’s very trusted and very much loved fellow servant, and yet, at the same time, one who took directions from the Apostle Paul. Any pastor would be grateful to have two

young men working with him like Titus and Timothy.

When Paul wrote to Timothy it was nearing the end of Paul's ministry. It concerned the work of the Lord in Crete, that island at the southern end of the Aegean Sea, with Greece a short distance to the northwest and Asia about the same short distance to the northeast. The only other times that Crete is mentioned in the NT are in Acts 27 in connection with Paul's journey to Rome. The occasion of Paul's letter to Titus had to be after that. Paul had left Titus in Crete to "set in order the things that are wanting [lacking], and ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5).

So it was Titus' responsibility to go among the cities of Crete where the preaching of the Gospel had been blessed in the salvation of sinner, and he was to see that churches were established according to the plan which God had revealed to the apostles. Obviously this was a big job, and a very important one, but Paul obviously had not hesitation in thinking that under the blessing of the Lord Titus could do what needed to be done. And so one of the first things that Paul did was to review with Titus (in chapter 1) the spiritual qualifications for men who could serve as elders, or bishops, as they were also called.

One reason this was so important was because even then there were false teachers who were busy on the island. (Read about them in 1:10-16.)

We see more about the troubles that were present among the Lord's people in 3:9-11.

A major part of Titus' ministry was to teach the people how they were to live. And so in chapter 2 he addressed the older men (v. 2), the older ladies (vv. 3-5), the younger men (vv. 6-8), and then the servants in vv. 9-10).

So there is no question but that Paul had given Titus a big assignment, one which would have required a lot of diligence in teaching and patience, and much prayer for the blessing of the Lord.

Now it is following those practical exhortations that we come to our text for tonight. I intend to spend two more Sunday nights on this passage, but to begin tonight we verses 11 and 12. They explain what the grace of God teaches us. This is like saying, what God in His grace teaches us. We don't determine what the Christian life and ministry are; that is what God has done. And we need to be careful that we understand the will of

God in these matters, and then that we be obedient to the revealed will of God. The object of learning the truth, is that we obey the truth. And so in our text for tonight Paul gave the preliminary teaching, which Titus was to pass on to the believers in Crete, about how we are the Lord's people are to live. And these teachings need no revision for us in the twentieth century. The world is still the same evil place, and we still have the same evil tendencies and weaknesses that the believers had in those days, and the answer for them is still the answer for us.

Now let us notice what Paul said first with regard to:

I. THE SALVATION OF THE CRETANS (Tit. 2:11-12).

Salvation had come to them by the grace of God. This means that they, like everyone else, needed it, but that they didn't deserve it. It meant that God would have been justified in letting the Cretans go on in their sin, but that He had extended grace to them. And so the Gospel had come to that island just like it had gone everywhere throughout the Empire through the men whom God had sent with the message of salvation. Those who had been saved had been saved from their sins. They had been delivered from the judgment of God, and had been set free from the sinful bondage they had lived under all their lives until they had been saved. *But the grace of God did not leave them there. The grace of God continued to teach them because salvation begins with our deliverance from sin and its penalty, but it continues on transforming us, perfecting us, making us the people that God intends for us to be. Grace is a word that belongs in the vocabulary of every child of God as long as they live.*

If salvation only meant coming to Christ, Paul would never have left Titus in Crete. We can assume that many had been saved. Now they needed to be nurtured. They needed to be taught. They needed to grow, to grow in grace. And it was the same grace of God that brought salvation to them which was to teach them.

Now, of course, when we talk about the grace of God bringing salvation, and then teaching them, we are not saying that grace is a person. What we mean is that the God of grace brought them salvation, and it is the same God of grace that teaches them.

The word that the Apostle Paul used here for "teaching" is the regular Greek word for the teaching of children. And Timothy had on his hand many spiritual children. They needed to be taught what they would not

know unless they were taught, and they needed to be taught so they would learn to live the way the Lord wanted them to live.

— I think that I am correct in saying that basically among the Lord's people there have always been two basic ideas about how the people of God grow. The one way, Paul's way, which was the Lord's way, is that the Lord's people need to understand GRACE, the grace of God. The other way, which sounds very reasonable, but it never did produce a saint, and never will, is the way of LAW. Many feel that the only way you can get people to do the right thing is to put them under the Law, the Law which God gave to Moses. I have heard of people who are afraid of the teaching of grace because they say that grace gives people the liberty to sin. *That simply is not true!* And this passage before us tonight is proof of that statement.

So let us go on to see what the Apostle Paul was saying is:

II. THE FIRST LESSON IN GRACE (Titus 2:12).

— “The grace of God that bringeth salvation” is a powerful, effective grace. The grace of God means that the power of God is in action. If we define the grace of God as weakness, we are misinterpreting grace. Think of what it took to transform us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son. It not only took power, it took omnipotence. God was not exercising weakness when He chose to save us; He was doing what all the combined efforts of every man could never have accomplished.

God interpreted grace as strength when He said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). It took divine grace, divine strength, to deliver us from the penalty of our sins, *and it takes the same grace to deliver us from the power and dominion of our sins.*

All the requirements for a man to become an elder, required grace. And all that the Apostle Paul told Titus to teach to older men and older women, to younger women and younger men, and to servants, could only become realized by the sovereign grace of God. No other power could possibly get the job done.

— But what does the grace of God, or God in His grace, teach us?

It teaches us what we are NOT TO DO, and then it teaches us what we are

TO DO! One or the other is not enough; we must pay attention to both sides of this instruction. Let us see how Paul approached this most important subject.

— He used the word

A. “Denying.”

To deny is to reject something. It is to refuse something that is offered to us, something which is possible for us to do.

Before we were saved we were in hopeless bondage to sin. But by the Grace of God and through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, that bondage has been broken. It is still possible for us to sin, but it not necessary for us to sin. And it is very, very important for all of us to know what sin is, and then steadfastly to reject it, to have nothing to do with it.

But how did Paul describe what we are to deny? He used two terms:

1. “Ungodliness.”

— This is anything that is displeasing to God. It is anything that would keep us from being like God. And the sole authority that we have for what pleases God, and what displeases Him, is the Bible. It is all in this Book. The Apostle Paul was telling Timothy to remember himself, and to teach the Cretan believers, that as new creatures in Christ they had the power by the grace of God to do what they could never have been done before they were saved, *and that is the power to please God!* And so we have to take a firm stand day after day against anything that would be displeasing to God.

But Paul also mentioned:

2. “Worldly lusts.”

These are the cravings, the desires, that reside in all of our hearts, for the things that make up this present, corrupt world in which we live. This is one of the first evidences a person has when he is saved: he know that he can no longer live the way he has been living.

— Now this does not always speak of what we would call *gross sins, wicked outward behavior*, but it has to do with that which is perfectly acceptable

to the people of the world, but that which is never acceptable to God.

— Let me give you two passages, one from the Apostle Paul and the other from the Apostle John which ought to help us understand what Paul had reference to here in our text.

The passage from Paul is a familiar one. It is found in Rom. 12:1-2.
(Quote.)

The world puts pressure on us to conform, but instead we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Our goal is not just what we want (as it was in the past), but it is to please God.

The other passage from John is also a familiar one: 1 John 2:15-17.

So it is the grace of God, or God in His grace, which teaches us that we must continually be “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.” But there is a second part that need equal attention.

B. “We should live.”

— And here the Apostle Paul used three words:

1. “Soberly.”

This means that we need to exercise the utmost of self-control. It means that we must not be deceived by the promise that sin makes to us of a good time, or personal pleasure. This is where we need the help of the Holy Spirit. This word means that we need to think clearly about what we do. And this drives us back to the Word of God. The more we feed upon the Word of God, the more sensitive our consciences will be to warn us of dangers ahead. We need to live soberly. The people of the world take things as they come. We must examine all that we say, all that we think, and all that we do, in the light of the Word of God.

2. “Righteously.”

— Whenever you see this word in any of its forms as it is used in Scripture, always be reminded that there is a standard of right and wrong, an unchangeable standard, what we are to do, and what we are not to do. Or better yet, what we are to be, and what we are not to be. Right and wrong is not a matter of personal preference. There is no such thing for a Chris-

tian as situation ethics, that is, that your ethics can change according to the situation you are in. That sometimes a thing might be wrong, but at other times it would be right. Right is right, and wrong is wrong, and God has set the standard for us in the Word.

When we read as we did in our lesson this morning that for people who are “under sin,” “there is no fear of God before their eyes,” it means that people in the world are not concerned with what pleases God or displeases Him. *But we who know the Lord must be. What pleases God, or displeases Him, is our primary concern.*

Finally, we have the word

3. “Godly.”

We have already considered “ungodliness.” What does it mean to be “godly”?

It means that we are attracted to God. It means that we want to be like Him, and so that is the reason we want to please Him. It means that the course of our lives are in direct conflict with the world and its people. A godly person is a person who has no other desire in life but to please God.

Take people like Joseph, and Daniel, and Mary of Bethany. And that list could be lengthened to include many, many more. We are often turned aside by a person’s sins, like David in the OT and Peter in the NT, but when you look at the whole picture of their lives, you can see that they fit into the category of “godly” people.

One final word:

III. THE PLACE WHERE THIS LIFE IS TO BE LIVED: “In this present world.”

The word which Paul used for world in this verse is the word we could more accurately translated *age*. It is a world which looks at this world from the standpoint of time. And “this present world” is *this world as it is now!* It is the world as it is on January 25, 1998. In Gal. 1:4 the Apostle Paul called it, “this present evil world.”

Regardless of the day, the month, or the year, this world in which we live will always be the same. But it is not the world that helps or hinders us; it

is the grace of God that is our hope that in this present world we don't have to live in an ungodly manner, according to worldly lust, but we can be assured that by the grace of God which will teach us and show us how, we can and must "live soberly, righteously, and godly."

Concl: This was Titus' hope for success in the work that the Apostle Paul had left him to do. Not only did the grace of God assure Titus that he could be an example to the other believers, but it was the grace of God that gave him hope that the believers in Crete could be transformed from the way they used to live into a people whose main concern was to do what was pleasing to the Lord.

May the Lord do the same for us, and may we continually hope that the work that the Lord started in us will one day be completed when we stand in the presence of God transformed to the likeness of Christ. And so as we begin another week, let us purpose in our hearts that by God's grace we will grow in grace and in our desire to live to please God.

THE GRACE OF GOD
and
THE BLESSED HOPE
Titus 2:13

Intro: The Christian is saved by grace, and then he is taught by grace. He never gets away from the grace of God. What the Apostle Paul said about himself, is true of all of us as Christians: “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10). All we are and ever hope to be, we are by the grace of God, and by grace alone. The grace of God, or God in His grace, brought salvation to us, but that is not all that the grace of God will do for us. It *teaches* us. It *trains* us. It *instructs* us. And this teaching goes on as long as we live. The longer we know the Lord, the more we know about the grace of God. We are often slow to learn the lessons, but God the Holy Spirit has ways of leading us on even when we may think that we know all that there is to know about the grace of God.

One of the first lesson, and one that we always need to be learning in a deeper way, is that God in His grace will not let us go on in our sin. He teaches us that we need to be constantly “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,” on the one hand; and on the other, “that we should soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

This verse is just one of many that teach us that those who say that teaching grace encourages sin. It does not encourage sin, and those who say that it does just do not understand grace. In addition, they need to read their Bibles more carefully. Grace is the enemy of sin. God’s grace is at war with sin, and it is only by God’s grace that we can be victorious over sin. Whatever the sins might be which “so easily beset us,” the answer to each one is the grace of God.

But grace teaches us that victory over sin is not just a matter of saying *no* to sin, but it is a matter of growing in grace by living “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,” the world that we face today with all of its temptations and corruptions. Grace teaches us to exercise self-control. It teaches us what is right and what is wrong in God’s sight, and then gives us the desire and the strength to refuse the wrong and to choose the right. And the object of all of this is that we might please God. That is basically what a godly life is, a life pleasing to God. None of us is totally successful at doing this, but as we go on with the Lord, our success rate should increase. That is what God in His grace does for us. How thankful we should be for the grace of God!

But now this is not all that the grace of does for us.

Notice all of the verbs in verse 12 as we move on into verse 13: “Teaching...denying...we should live...LOOKING...” It all ties together. And let me say that the more we live so as to please God, the more we will be “looking” for what is ahead.

What is ahead for us as the people of God? Here Paul called it,

I. “THAT BLESSED HOPE” (Tit. 2:13a).

I find it interesting that at the very time we are considering the Beatitudes of Matthew 5, we run into this text in Titus 2:13. And I say that it is interesting to me because I really didn’t plan it this way. The word that Paul used here for “blessed” is the same word that our Lord used in Matthew 5. It means that this “hope” is *a happy hope*. Here is another indication that the Lord wants us to be *a happy people*. I am not saying that we won’t have our trials because we do. I am not saying that we won’t shed our share of tears, because we do and we will. I am not saying that we won’t have our battles and discouragements, because we have those also. But I am saying that through all of our experiences in “this present world,” God wants us to be happy, but the wonderful part of this is that as we grow, our happiness grows, and God has provided for even greater joy for us beyond this life.

Don’t overlook this important aspect of what it means to be a Christian.

When the Lord was with His disciples shortly before His arrest and His death which followed, He said this to them as He spoke to them about Himself as the Vine and about them as the branches:

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (John 15:11).

And then shortly afterwards He was speaking of prayer, and He said this:

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:24).

Paul did not have his head in the sand when he wrote to the Philippian church, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice (Phil. 4:4).

There are many such Scriptures I could read that have to do with a Christian’s joy, but this should be enough for now. But we need to realize that we have a “blessed hope.”

Now let's look at the word "hope."

As we use the word every day it is a word of expectation. We use it to speak of something that we desire, and which we are inclined to believe is attainable. When we get sick, we hope that we will get well, and soon! In spite of the weather reports for the coming week, we hope that it won't rain all of the week—and it may not because the weather people are frequently wrong. Men work and hope for advancement in their jobs. We have great hopes for our children, and seek to do all that we can to help them achieve their goals.

But the way we use the word, because we do not have control over our circumstances, there is always an element of uncertainty when we use the word, *hope*. And it is easy to bring that idea to our Bibles as we read, for example, of this "blessed hope." But, you see, in the Bible we are dealing with the Word of God, not with the words of men, *and God is in control! In fact, He is sovereign over the whole universe, isn't He?* And so God never makes a promise but what He is able to keep it exactly as He has made it. So when He speaks of a "blessed hope," *a prospect for the future which is going to make us supremely happy*, there is not a note of uncertainty in the promise, but He is speaking of something that is absolutely certain to take place.

"Hope" is a word which is a very integral part of our salvation. Our salvation includes a hope! Paul said that in Rom. 8:24-25. I am sure you will remember these words:

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it (Rom. 8:24-25).

Now if we are "saved by hope," then it means that our salvation will not be completed as far as our experience is concerned until that hope is realized. And the last part of verse 25 tells us where we are today; we are waiting for it, I trust, with patience.

I want to deal with this subject tonight as though you had never heard of the hope about which the grace of God teaches us, our happy hope, the glorious prospect that we as Christians have as far as the future is concerned. And so to go a little farther into our subject, I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to the third chapter of 1 John. There we find these words in the first three verses:

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed

upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

John spoke here of “this hope.” What was he referring to? He was referring to two things:

- 1) That we are going to see the Lord “as He is.”
- 2) That “we shall be like Him” when “we shall see Him as He is.”

The Lord spoke of this in John 14:1-3. He had been telling His disciples that He was going away, and that made them sad. They did not want Him to go. They loved Him dearly, and wanted to keep Him with them. But He said this to them:

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

He told them where He was going. He told them what He was going to be doing. And He told them that *He would come again to take them to be with Him where He was preparing to go. This was their hope.*

And this is our hope! It is not just a dream that someone had in the past. It is a bonafide prospect for the future which is absolutely certain to take place. Count on it! Our Lord is coming back to take us to be with Him forever, and seeing Him will have such a profound effect on each one of us that we will be changed immediately to be like Him.

But how did Paul describe our hope in this verse we have looking into tonight?

II. THE BLESSED HOPE DESCRIBED (Titus 2:13b).

This is how it is described: “THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.”

When we see Him for the first time, it will not be as He was when the disciples were with Him in the Upper Room. Nor will it be as He appeared to them after His resurrection, and as He ascended back to the Father. When He comes for us His appearing will probably be more like it was when He was transfigured before Peter and James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. He will appear in glory. We will see Him as He is, as He really is. He will be the same Jesus, the same wonderful Lord, but He will appear as “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

What a day that will be! We can’t begin to imagine how wonderful it will be to set our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ for the first time. Just to see Him will be far more than we deserve. But to become like Him, and to be forever with Him, is beyond what you and I can now contemplate.

Today we live almost 2,000 years since our Lord spoke of His coming, and since the NT was completed. The Lord has not come yet, and every generation of His people from that day to this has been talking about it and hoping that it might take place in their lifetime. The fact that we still believe this, is proof that it is a living hope, as Peter said that it was in the following verses found in 1 Pet. 1:3-5:

- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
- 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

And later on in that same chapter Peter spoke of this as “the end of our salvation.” Listen to what He said:

- 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:
- 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (1 Pet. 1:8-9).

What did he mean by “the end of your faith”? He meant *the ultimate purpose, the final goal*.

Now let me close by pointing out

III. OUR RESPONSE TO THIS GREAT TRUTH (Titus 2:13a).

Here we go back to the first of the verse: “Looking for that blessed hope.”

The Greek verb means just what the KJV says. We are to be looking expectantly for His coming. We are to be prepared and ready. It should be in our minds every day. We should go to bed at night thinking that the Lord might awaken us out of our sleep by His glorious appearing.

The Lord hasn't forgotten His promise, and let me tell you that some day it is going to be fulfilled. Our Lord is coming. We are going to see Him. And He then will complete the job which He started in us when we were first saved, the task which we could never have undertaken at the beginning—that of making us like Himself!

Concl: And then do you know what life will be like for us? There will be no more “ungodliness” for us to contend with in our hearts or in the world. There will be no more “worldly lusts” to turn us aside in our walk with the Lord. There will be no more sin. There won't even be any more temptation. All of that will be past, and, as the Apostle John said, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

This is why Paul told Titus that he should pay attention to what God in His grace was teaching him, and why he and the believers in Crete should be ready for the coming of the Lord each day by living lives that are pleasing to the Lord.

The message is the same for us. May we be looking and ready each day. It may very well be that we will be the generation that will be living when our Lord Jesus Christ comes to take us to heaven.

THE GRACE OF GOD
and
THE GIFT OF CHRIST
Titus 2:14-15

Intro: In the Christian life we never get away from the Gospel because the Gospel has to do not only with what we are saved *from*, but what we are saved *to*, or *unto*. We learn from Scripture what we have been saved *from*, and this should be the subject of the constant thanksgiving that we offer to the Lord. We also learn from Scripture *why* God has saved us, and this should be the constant burden of our prayers, and our thanksgiving as long as we live.

The importance of the continuing effect of the Gospel in and upon our lives is brought out in this brief passage we have been considering because it is mentioned twice. We have it in verse 12, and then we have it again in verse 14. It has its negative part, and God in His grace keeps us reminded of this, in that, according to verse 12, we are to be “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.” According to verse 14 our Lord “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. But the object of the negative is to lead us to the positive. And in verse 12 the positive is that “we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” In verse 14 it is that He might “purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

In both verses 12 and 13 we are told what the grace of God teaches us that we must do. In verse 14 we see that what we must do is only possibly because of what our Lord has done, and continues to do for us.

So in these few verses the Apostle Paul was showing Titus how interwoven and interdependent are the doctrines of justification and sanctification. And the point of verse 13 is to show the importance of being diligent, or zealous, because of the certainty and ever-increasing nearness of the coming of the Lord.

Let us examine these verses phrase by phrase.

I. “WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US” (Titus 2:14a).

By connecting verse 14 with the latter part of verse 13 we see that Paul here was speaking of the One he called, “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

— The Bible speaks of the sacrifice of Christ in two different ways. First, like we have it in John 3:16, that God gave His Son. Here, it is spoken of as Christ making a gift of Himself. He “gave Himself for us.” This means that while He was surely sent by the Father, and given to us by the Father, yet the Lord Jesus was not a reluctant offering. He gave Himself with the same willingness that the Father gave Him. Either way we should never cease to marvel at what they have done for us—all in grace! And God in His grace will never let us forget it. The fact that many who profess to be Christians can speak of the sacrifice of Christ in a matter-of-fact way, without being moved in their hearts by such a truth, throws some question upon their profession.

And so we need to be aware of the great truth that both the Father and the Son were in perfect agreement in what the Son came to do. And when Paul said, “for us,” he was indicating that there were and are particular people for whom He “gave Himself.”

— For the Lord to give Himself meant humiliation. It meant the worst kind of suffering. And it meant death. But we must also recognize that it meant resurrection and glory. How hopeless our condition had to be for our salvation to required the incarnation of the Son of God in order that He might meet our needs. “God” certainly “commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” But in the same way, Christ, by His death, was giving proof that He loved us just as much as the Father did. It is the grace of God that teaches us this.

But let me be a little more specific about *the gift of Christ*, as specific as Paul was in this passage.

II. OUR LORD’S TWOFOLD PURPOSE IN HIS GIFT (Titus 2:14b).

He stated it very clearly:

- 1) “That He might redeem us from all iniquity.”
- 2) “That He might...purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

— Both of these statements are full of wonderful truth. Let us see what we can learn from them.

A. “That He might redeem us from all iniquity.”

— This word “redeem” tells us what we were before we were saved, or redeemed. This is the word that is used for the purchase of slaves. It gives us one reason why we could not save ourselves. We were hopelessly enslaved to our sins. But the difference between an ordinary slave and a slave to sin, is that most slaves want to be free, whatever the culture might be, but those who are slaves to sin are content to remain as slaves. They may hate the consequences of what they do and the way they live, but they enjoy the sin. In fact, most people without Christ don’t know that they are slaves. So the gift of Christ was not only to pay the price required for their redemption, but to awaken them also to the fact that they were slaves, slaves of sin, without any hope of ever being delivered.

Our Lord stated this in John 8:34 in words indicating how important it was:

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

And this redemption was “from all iniquity.” Not a single sin is excluded. Our Lord did a complete work, a perfect work. His death covered all of the sins of all of the people for whom He died.

— The word “iniquity” brings God immediately into the picture, and shows that those who are sinners are made to see their sin in a different light. They might have excused their sins as mistakes, or failures which they needed to work on, but the word that Paul used for “iniquity” here means *lawlessness*. And the law that has been violated is God’s law, His will, as He has expressed it in His Word. This is how the Apostle John defined sin in 1 John 3:4:

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

In our country some things are legal which are definitely sinful to God. And one of the things the Spirit of God does when awakening people to their need of salvation, is to show them that sin is whatever is a violation of the will of God, sin is everything and anything that displeases God. That is why people don’t like talk about sin, because that brings God into the picture.

— Why some are left in total ignorance of the nature and penalty of their sins, we don’t know. But it is a fact that they are! Men live, and men die, without the slightest concern that they are sinning against God, and that as sinners they are accountable to God. God doesn’t owe any of us anything. He is not obligated to provide salvation for the whole world. He is not

obligated to provide salvation for any of us. It is all of grace. As one writer has said, “It is a vain thing to ascribe any efficacy of Christ’s death to them to whom none of its fruits belong” (Taylor, Thomas, *An Exposition of Titus*, p. 205). Those who are redeemed are those for whom Christ gave Himself, and their freedom is from “all iniquity.” There is not a single sin that has been overlooked. And how thankful we should be for that. No child of God has any excuse for continuing on in sin. One of the ways that you can identify a child of God is by his desire to stay away from anything that is displeasing to God.

But what is the other fruit of the gift of Christ?

B. “That he might...purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

God not only delivers His people from the penalty of their sins, but He purifies them. And this is the work of sanctification that is going on continually in the life of every child of God.

Note the expression, “a peculiar people.” Now there are many non-Christians who consider Christians “peculiar.” And we can never get away from that. A person who truly knows the Lord is going to be different, strange, odd, to many people in the world. “The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not” (1 John 3:1). So we need to be prepared for this. We are strangers and foreigners here on earth because God has made us citizens of heaven, new creatures, saints.

Now, while all that I have been saying is true, that is not the main idea in the word “peculiar.” That word is also tied into the idea of being redeemed. A slave who was redeemed in the slave markets became the property of the one who bought him. And this is what is true of us as the people of God. The Lord has not only redeemed us from our sin, and from slavery to that sin, *but He has redeemed us for Himself. We as the people of God belong to God, and we are to live like we belong to God. We are His own people, His special treasures.* And it is in that sense that we are “peculiar.” Notice the words, “purify unto Himself a peculiar people. I like the way this verse is translated in the NIV. Speaking of Christ, this is the way it reads:

Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:14).

We had been a people who delighted in doing evil; now, by the grace of

God, we delight to do good.” “Good works” are *good living*, doing what is good in God’s sight.

How it must delight the heart of our Savior, and the heart of our God, when, by the work of Their grace in our hearts, we are ceasing to do evil, and we are learning to do well. We as Christians have a whole new set of values, and they are given to us by God. We learn to hate sin and to love righteousness. And it is by our lives that we show what Christ has done for us.

Now what we have seen in these verses tonight and in the previous nights we have considered them, may not be exactly new to us, but they need to be real to us. These verses become a means whereby we can test ourselves as to whether or not we really know the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation. And it was to be that for the believers in Crete when the Apostle Paul first wrote these words. The only way a person can be turned away from doing what is iniquity in God’s sight, to what is good and holy and righteous in His sight, is the grace of God. It is the grace of God by which we are justified, brought into a right relationship with God through the gift of Christ. And it is the grace of God that continually turns us away from sin, and makes us delight in doing God’s will.

But what was Titus to do with all of this truth?

III. TITUS’ RESPONSIBILITY WITH THIS TRUTH (Titus 2:15).

He was to speak it, to exhort with it, and to rebuke people about it when it was necessary. But he was to do it as though it were his own idea. He was to do it with the authority which God had given to Him as a servant of Jesus Christ.

Speaking here means preaching and teaching. This was to be his main ministry. He was not to be an entertainer, nor a debater, nor just an orator who would attract attention to himself. He was to turn the attention of the people of Crete to God through His Word.

And then he was to “exhort.” This speaks of the application of the teaching to the lives of the people. And it would often mean the repetition of things that he had taught before in order to bring the people back to the truth.

And then there was that part of his work which was never pleasant, but

was also necessary. He needed to “rebuke” people who were straying away from the Word either in what they believed, or in the way they were living.

— And then Paul concluded this section by telling Titus, “Let no man despise thee.”

The word “despise” is an interesting word. Titus as a younger servant of the Lord had to be careful in his ministry, especially with those who may have been his senior either in years, or in the time that they had been saved, or both. To “despise” him means that they would claim to be able to go beyond him, to know more than he did, and therefore to reject his teaching.

Now there are people who know more than we do, but when that knowledge draws them away from the Scriptures, that is where we must stand our ground. The youngest Christian who takes his stand on the Word of God, is on good ground, and must never be moved away from it regardless of who may try to belittle his ministry. Those who teach the Word need to be able to support what they teach from Scripture, and then stand firm! Titus would need to do it graciously, but do it nevertheless. And that — which always brings blessing to even the youngest servant of the Lord is when his life backs up what he teaches. We are not just dispensers of truth, but we are, by God’s grace, seeking to preach and teach and live in such a way that our hearers are saved, and if saved, then conformed more and more to the likeness of Christ.

Concl: How indebted we are to God and His grace! God is always teaching us, leading us into a greater understanding of His Word so that we also can live lives that are more pleasing to the God Who has purchased us by the blood of His Son that we might live to please Him and to be instruments in His hand for the blessing of those to whom we minister.