

THE GRACE OF GOD, OUR TEACHER

Titus 2:11-15

Part 2

Intro: (Read the text.)

One criticism which is commonly aimed at the teaching of the grace of God is that it encourages sin, or at least that it does not discourage sin. How anyone can say that after reading the verses which I have just read to you, I do not know. The Apostle Paul not only said that the grace of God teaches us to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts,” but also that “we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” So the grace of God not only forbids “ungodliness” and submitting to “worldly lusts,” but it exhorts us to “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. All of this is in verse 12.

But then when we get down to verse 14 we find the same emphasis. Christ died to “redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” So again we see that there is a negative and positive aspect to the teaching of the grace of God--negative toward “all iniquity”; positive toward “good works.”

Ephesians 2:8-10 gives us the same emphasis. (Quote.) We are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” not bad works. And it has been “ordained” by God that we should do “good works.” It is not just a hope that God has, but a result that has been decreed by God.

So we don't need the Law or anything else but the grace of God to make us the people that God wants us to be. Salvation comes to us by grace alone, and salvation is worked out in our lives by grace alone. Grace saves us, grace teaches us, and we can all say with the Apostle Paul,

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (1 Cor. 15:10).

Now let us look at what the Apostle Paul had to say to Titus in this very familiar passage.

I. THE GRACE OF GOD IS OUR TEACHER (Titus 2:11).

This, of course, is the equivalent of saying that *the God of grace* is our

Teacher. The object of teaching is to help others learn. This is the common Greek word for the teaching of children, and the object, contrary to a lot of our teaching today, was not just to communicate information, but the formation of character. And Paul's statement here indicates that when a person becomes a Christian he has to learn all over again how to live. How blessed is the person who comes to Christ with the realization that his basic need at that moment is to learn how to live as a Christian. Too often people think that they already know, and so they do not appreciate how much they need to learn--and this learning continues all through our lives. Sometimes God has to go back over lessons we have been taught before because living in this world it is easy for us to be pulled away from what it means to live with the Lord and for the Lord. This teaching is actually done by the Holy Spirit, and it is teaching which brings immediately to the Word of God. The word "teaching" also suggests that there may be times when discipline is necessary. Often this takes the form with God of letting us do what we want to do so that we will learn that we must learn in a deeper way to do what God wants us to do. And sometimes the lessons are not very pleasant for us to learn.

Now let us look at:

II. LESSON NUMBER ONE (Titus 2:12a).

The first thing that we have to learn is that we cannot continue to live the way we have been living. And the Apostle Paul described it all with three words which add up to two points: "*ungodliness*" and "*worldly lusts.*" What did Paul have in mind?

When we were studying the Pastoral Epistles in the Tuesday Bible Class, we had to deal with the words *godly* and *ungodly* many times--or *godliness* and *ungodliness*. We have both words in this text. We learned that an ungodly person is one who has no concern about God, is not interested in pleasing God, and surely does not want to be like God. This is what we all were like before we came to Christ. It does not mean that we were the worst that we could be because there are many people whom the world would call *good* who are ungodly. They pay their bills. They are good to their children, and want their children to do the right thing. But they have no place for God in their lives. Their standards are worldly standards, not God's.

A godly person, on the other hand, is a person who has been drawn to God, or better yet, has been attracted to God, who wants to please God, and who wants to be like God. An ungodly person is without God in this

world. A godly person has God, or God has him (or her), and his motive in life is to please God, and wants to be like God.

But Paul did not just mention “ungodliness,” but also “worldly lusts.” A person who is not a Christian not only is ungodly, but he has his life filled with “worldly lusts”--that is, the things that people in this world live for. Perhaps we could understand “worldly lusts” better if we called them *worldly desires* because that is what Paul meant by this word. He, of course, would include improper sexual desires, but he also would include what we see all around us today, the craze for pleasure, and for things. The desire to get ahead in the business world regardless of what the price might be--such as the way a man will neglect his family to get ahead in his chosen profession. It is the way people live all around us every day. They feel, contrary to what the Bible tells us, and what we see illustrated in the lives of people every day, that their lives consist in the abundance of things which they possess. We all need things in order to live, but the tragedy is that people in the world are led to believe that their happiness depends on having all that they want.

Have you seen that license plate frame that says, “I would rather be shopping...”? Now there is nothing wrong with shopping. We all do it. But wouldn't you hate to be a person who is known as finding his greatest joy in shopping and getting things, things, things?

What does Paul say that we must do with our “ungodliness and worldly lusts”? Even as Christians we are susceptible to them. They are a constant threat to us. To live a life that is pleasing to God, Paul said long ago that there are some things that we cannot do. He said that we must *deny* them. What did he mean?

He meant that we must steadfastly refuse to be guided by these desires which are in all of our hearts. We must no longer live under their control. We must renounce that kind of a life. This is what Paul was saying in Romans 12:1, 2 and what John said in 1 John 2:15-17. We live in the world, but we are no longer “of the world”--as we will see again in just a moment. Anything that does not please God is sin, and we must make a break with those things which are displeasing to the God Who has saved us.

But let us remember also that the Christian life is not just a life where there are things that we do not do. There is a very important positive side to living for the Lord. Let me call this:

III. LESSON NUMBER TWO (Titus 2:12b).

Here we have three words to be concerned about: “soberly...righteously...godly.”

To live “soberly” means that we need to exercise self-control in what we do and in what we want. It means that we need to be known for our moderation. We avoid excessiveness even in the necessities of life. We curb our desires. This word means to be in a right mind.

To live “righteously” is to live according to some standard, and we are Christians know that the standard which has been set for us in to be found in the Word of God. A company which produces a product always has its standards which must be maintained--that is, if it is a reliable company. A company is very careful to have a good reputation, that they will stand behind what they make.

The standards for a Christian are not what you will learn from the world and the people who are a part of the world. The only place you will find it is in Scripture. There we learn what we should be, how we should live, and what our objectives should be. We who are in Christ are righteous before God, but the evidence of that will be that we will want to be righteous before men. That is the burden of the epistle of James, but it is really the burden of all of the Bible. Another word for what Paul had in mind which he spoke of living righteously, is the word OBEDIENCE!

The last word in our second lesson is the word “godly” which I have already defined. And this is a very important when we think of the life we are to live.

Let me illustrate it this way. Sometimes people seek to do right because they are afraid of the consequences of doing wrong. Now that is always a good thing to keep in mind--that there are consequences in the world and consequences with God if we fail to do what is right. But the Apostle John made a statement that we all should be familiar with. It is this:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:
because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made
perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

What does this verse tell us? It tells us that the Lord does not want our obedience to Him done in fear--fear because of the consequences of disobedience. He wants us to obey Him because we love Him, and because we want to please Him, and because we want to be like Him, and

like His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. So we are motivated by our love for God. We are motivated because we want to please God. And we are motivated because we want to be like God. This is the only kind of obedience that pleases Him. This is what it means to “live godly.”

But where is all of this to take place? In our homes? Yes! At church? Yes! But what did Paul say? He would include our homes, and our churches, but he said, “in this present world.”

I grant you that it would be easier to live for the Lord if we were in heaven instead of being in this world, but this is where we are, and this is how the Lord wants us to live where we are: “in this present world.” In Gal. 1:4 Paul called it “This present evil world.” In both passages the word “world” is a translation of the Greek word for *age*, which views the world from the standpoint of time. This means that we are to live “soberly, righteously, and godly” in this world the way it is at this present time. As bad as it is, it is still possible, by the grace of God, to live to do God’s will and to please Him the way things are in the world today. The temptations may be fierce which we have to face, but the grace of God is greater. And it magnifies the grace of God for us to live to please the Lord even when things are as bad as they are today.

What a difference it would make in all of our lives if this would be our main purpose for our lives during 1997, and on as long as we live.

But now notice in conclusion:

IV. LESSON NUMBER THREE (Titus 2:13, 14).

Here we come to the text we had earlier today. In context what does it seem to indicate? It indicates that the more we are seeking to live for the Lord, the more intense will be our desire to see the Lord Jesus return.

But why? Because it is was our Lord’s purpose in dying for us to deliver us “from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” He wants us to live holy lives so that people will see that we belong to the Lord, and that we are zealous to do what He wants us to do.

Concl: As my conclusion, let us look at verse 15. (Read.)

The truth of Scripture is eternal and unchanging. And so are the exhortations. The grace of God teaches us what we must not do, what we are to do, and the spirit in which it must be done. But let us remember that this

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will always call for saying the same things again and again, exhorting one another to do what God wants us to do, and we must not allow anyone to keep us from declaring these wonderful truths.

Now as we think about our own lives, where do we stand tonight in our relationship with God, in our relationship with the world, and in our relationship with the Word of God. God in His grace continues to teach us, but this means that there must be daily exposure to the Word of God, and an earnest desire to draw upon God's grace that we might be the people that He has saved us to be.