

Text: Titus 2:11-15, Part 3

Title: Sacrificing Grace – The Death of Christ to Purify Sinners

Truth: God’s grace provided redemption from sin through Jesus Christ.

Date/Location: Sunday August 15, 2021 at FBC

Introduction

I am encouraging you to memorize this section:

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

We saw in 2:11 Christ’s saving grace, and in 2:12-13 His teaching grace. These aspects of the grace of Christ are the underlying reason that we live godly lives (see how the “for” at the beginning of verse 11 ties it to the preceding verses 2:1-10).

God’s grace is such a huge topic, we come to a third facet of it, and that falls under the heading of sacrificing grace.

We should note that the grace of Christ appeared to all men, but it “appears” that Paul is making a distinction between the “all” and the “us/we/our” of verses 12, 13, and 14. Do you see that distinction? The grace of Christ is displayed and operates differently toward all than it does toward “us.” It is displayed and offered freely to all. But when it is experienced and becomes active in one’s life to create salvation and teach us to live godly and sets our eyes heavenward to look for Christ’s second appearance, *then* it is operating at an entirely different level. The believer experiences God’s grace in such a more rich and beautiful fashion than those who reject it. We have not only a Savior, but we have a teacher, a soon-coming King, a great God and Messiah, a sacrificial lamb who redeems and purifies. To that latter idea we turn.

How does God’s grace appear to *you*?

We pick up with the next verse and the prior notes’ section numbers.

VIII. Verse 14 – He Gave Himself for Us

- A. **He gave.** Who is He...? Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ gave Himself for us. This is the foundation of the saving grace and teaching grace that we examined in the past two messages. The Who is very important. You have to have a Savior, the right Savior, if you are to be cleansed from moral filth and be right before God.
- B. He **gave**. To give means to hand over, to transfer possession. The Lord transferred His life away from Himself for the penalty of human sin. This sin He did not commit nor was accomplice to, but he was “given” guilt for it (imputed guilt). It was *human* sin for which Jesus provided—not the sin of angels (now fallen/demons). The mechanics of the “gave” are explained in the final chapters of the gospels with the arrest, beatings, mockings, trials, crucifixion, stabbing, and burial.
- C. He gave **Himself**. This was a completely voluntary self-sacrifice. It was not put upon Him by outside forces. But not only did the initiative come from Himself without compulsion, but also the sacrificed thing *was* Himself. He gave His *life*. He laid down His *own* life. He did not give up something else, or someone else, or a thing less costly. He gave the most that is possible to give.
- D. He gave himself **for us**. He gave everything for those who had nothing and were unworthy, in order that they might have the free gift of everlasting life. He gave Himself for sinners. There is no other kind of people for whom Christ could give Himself, but He did it anyway (Romans 5:6, 8).

The word *for* is rightly emphasized by careful students of Scripture. It means “on behalf of” and “for sake of” us. That is, a reason or cause for Jesus to give Himself was us. We were in need. He could provide for the need. In sacrificial contexts like this one (and Heb. 9:7) the concept extends even farther to the idea of substitution because it is so much on our behalf that Jesus took our place. Remember: He died *on behalf of* and *in place of* sinners.

IX. Verse 14 – To Redeem and to Purify

A two-fold purpose is given for the Lord’s sacrificial grace.

A. To **Redeem**. This means that Christ died in order to liberate His people from the oppression of...SIN and the Devil. No payment was made to the Devil, but rather to God Who had handed humanity over to the Devil and to our own reprobate minds as punishment for rebellion.

Notice that the text does not support at all the notion of liberation theology where the liberation is supposedly from political or economic or racial or other class-based oppression. Biblical liberation is “from every lawless deed.” Jesus died for you to redeem you from every sinful act that you do yourself and to yourself. Before salvation, you are a slave to sin. But it is worse than that. In human slavery, we often think of the evil master and the poor slave who has to put up with this lot in life for a time, or sometimes forever, and the slave is an innocent victim in the whole situation. But with regard to slavery to sin which all humanity faces, there is an evil master (sin and the Devil) *and* there is an evil slave, a willing participant, a person who likes the pleasures of sin, who wants more, who is not an innocent victim. It is this situation from which you are liberated—not only external master, but an internal master!

The word “lawless” does not have a special reference to any kind of law (natural law, Law of Moses, etc.).¹ Rather, it is a general word referring to unrestrained, immoral behavior that arises out of a disposition that does not care about the rule of any law. Sin is anything that violates the will of God, either in act or disposition. That will is specified in Scripture both by application and direct

¹ 1 John 3:4 might come to mind. The KJV incorrectly translates this as “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” This leads some to believe that sin is defined as the break of “the law” which they equate to “the law of Moses.” But this is incorrect. The Greek word in both cases is not “the law” (τὸν νόμον), but rather “lawlessness” (ἀνομία[ν]). See the NKJV, ESV, NAS, NET translations. NIV is inconsistent in its translation, using “the law” *and* “lawlessness.”

teaching. The law could be the law of God, or it could be more specific, as in the law of your government, which in a Judeo-Christian-based society is somewhat in concert with the law of God in areas such as theft, homicide, and the like. Yet in areas of violation not specified in the secular law, such as blaspheming God and worshipping other gods, these are also breaking of God's moral code yet will not be addressed until the final judgment. Some actions particular to the Law of Moses are not encompassed in this teaching—dietary laws, circumcision, Sabbath keeping, etc. These are not matters of sin today for the Christian.

In terms of application to us, we need to sit back and think for a second about just how tremendous this truth is. We have been loosed from lawlessness. We have been delivered from sin and chaos, from rebellion, from self destruction, from ignorance and foolishness.

In a societal “big picture” way, I find that it is very easy for us to fall prey to a “woe is us” because of how bad things are, and “woe to those evil politicians and rioters.” Friends, they are enslaved on the inside and by forces beyond their power. They sin because they are sinners and they cannot do anything other. They are unrestrained and lawless because of their very nature. Either they must be physically restrained by law enforcement, or spiritually constrained by a change in nature due to the gospel. They...what about “we”?

B. To Purify. The redemption of which we have spoken is not the end. We are not only freed from sin's bondage, but we are cleansed from the dirt of sin and made, metaphorically, whiter than snow (Psalm 51:7).

Jesus has worked such a salvation that His people become qualified for every good work (contrary to Titus 1:16) and are in fact zealous for such things. No grumbling about good works, but rather eagerness for them marks the believer's walk with Christ.

Restrain yourself from reading into “His own special people.” This does not mean that Christians replace Israel as a people of God. They are their own distinct group. Furthermore, the point is not to teach Israel → Church replacement theology. It is to teach lawlessness → good works replacement theology!

If you want to do God honor, you have to plan and do good works both inside the home, “inside” the church, and outside of both. There is no way around it. You have been appointed to good works (Ephesians 2:10) and there is no time like the present to rev up the good works engine.

We have been changed from disqualified for good works (1:16) to zealous for good works! We are not zealots for patriotism, or zealots for the political party, or zealots for sports, but zealots for good works!

X. Verse 15 – Speak

- A. Paul tells Titus to not be shy. Rather, speak, exhort, and rebuke. If people need to be told, rebuked, corrected, taught, instructed, admonished, or any other like word, Titus is to do that. His pastoral trainees are to do the same. I understand that I am told to do the same. That is a part of my job, as uncomfortable as it is for me and for you if you are on the receiving end.
- B. Application: If I have said something to you, or repeatedly said something to you, or tried to say something to you—and I am thinking of a few different situations in our church family—and you have responded by making a change, you have done just what God wants. But if you have not responded in accordance with the obvious direction and desire of the exhortation/teaching, then there is a big problem. I do not say something of that nature just “off the cuff” or as a passing comment. Usually it come after much angst of soul and prayer and concern for the best for the people in the church family. Understand that those things are meant to help along the path of godliness. Ignoring that is frankly perilous.
- C. For Titus, he is to take a page from Jesus’s book in Matthew 7:29 where he spoke as one with authority, and not as the scribes. Titus has apostolic authority to do so. In fact, he possesses delegated authority from Jesus. He has “all authority.” Do you remember that phrase—from Matthew 28:18?
- D. Despise? How can I let no one despise me? By not being despicable! One way is by being a great example, as in 2:7-8.

Why would people despise Titus? Perhaps because he is young, but mainly because he was teaching with authority. They also despised Jesus—at least those ones who did not marvel at the teaching and authority with which He taught.

The language about despising and about rebuking is not just for Titus. Paul speaks it to Titus, intending it to go *through* Titus and all the way to the Cretan audience who needs to hear it. The people hearing the man of God should not despise *him*, because in doing so, they despise *Him*—God. They should hear his exhortation and take them to heart.

Conclusion

We have learned about Jesus's gracious appearing and second appearing. About His saving appearing and glorious appearing. We have studied His saving grace, teaching grace, and sacrificing grace.

Let us also have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptable with reverence and godly fear.

MAP