

Titus 2:11-15 The Amazing Grace of God (part 1)

Through the years, we have often sung “Amazing Grace” to our kids and with one another. There is a reason this song is one of the most sung Christian hymns of all time. And our passage today will help us see why we call it “AMAZING.” This text is packed with the most beautiful truths about the God’s grace in this world and in our lives. And for this reason, we need these words of life this week. I would like to highlight 5 truths over the next two weeks about the Grace of God: 1) The Grace of God penetrates the darkness; 2) The Grace of God trains us to live godly; 3) The grace of God prepares us to wait; and 4) The Grace of God redeems us; and 5) The grace of God purifies us. So let’s begin.

1. The Grace of God Penetrates the Darkness. Look at v. 11. For the grace of has appeared. The word for “appear” is “*epiphany*” in the Greek. Have you ever had an epiphany, a time when you didn’t know something, and then all of a sudden, you understand, you get it? Kids, have you ever struggled with a particular type of math problem, a particular concept? You just don’t get it, as much as you try. Then, all of a sudden the math teacher explains it in a way you haven’t heard, and then a “light” goes off in your brain, and you completely understand. We might say, “*the light came on.*” The “light is now shining.”

Well, this is what Paul says about the grace of God in Jesus Christ. In John 8:12 Jesus says, “**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**” Brothers and sisters, the world is DARK; it is dark because of sin. In v. 12 we see that the world is full of “**ungodliness**” and “**worldly passions.**” And the “**wages of sin is death**” (Rom. 6:23). Sin results in physical death, separation from God, and eternal punishment. This is why Jesus says to Nicodemus, “**I didn’t come to condemn the world, but to save the world**” (John 3:17). In vv. 19 -20 He describes the world, saying, “**And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.**” This world is evil. But . . . “**God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life**” (v. 16).

Brothers and sisters, by the grace of God, the Son appeared with “the greatest gift upon those who deserved the greatest punishment” (Hendriksen). This “grace” has penetrated our moral and spiritual darkness, bringing salvation to the world. As sure as the sun rises in the east to bring light, so has the grace of God risen upon those sitting in darkness. I think of the Elizabeth as the baby “leapt” in here womb at thought of Jesus’ appearing. The grace of God appeared in the birth of the Son. It appeared when he cast out the demons. It appeared when he healed the sick. It appeared when he turned the water into wine, and when he raised Lazarus from the dead. It appeared when the woman at the well ran to her village saying, “Come and see the Messiah” (John 4). It appeared when he fed the thousands on the hillside. It appeared when he taught the religious leaders with authority. It appeared when he laid down his life on the cross and the Centurion said, “*Surely, this is the Son of God.*” It appeared in his resurrection, as death could not hold him. It appeared as he ascended back to heaven and gave the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And EVERY day, his appearing is happening; it is happening as sinners behold his beauty until

his will is done on earth as it is in heaven. **“The sun of righteousness has risen with healing in his wings”** (Mal. 4:2).

And, the grace of God in Christ has appeared to “all people.” The context here from cp. 2 is that he came not only for men, but for women, (old and young). And, in that context he came both master and slave. He came for black and white and red and yellow, Jew and Gentile, without distinction. As we read in 1 Tim. 2:1-4 **“for kings, and all who are in high positions . . . this is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”** This is not universalism, otherwise all would be saved. But, the grace of God in Christ has appeared to the WORLD. He has penetrated this world of sin. And in this way, He is the savior of all people.

Simple application: Look unto Christ! This is the ONLY place we will find the answer to . . . not a math problem, with the problem of our sin! God calls everyone everywhere to repent and look unto Christ!

2. The grace of God trains us to live godly. Godliness has been the emphasis throughout the letter. In cp. 1 with elders, cp. 2 with older men, older women, young women, younger men, bondservants, everyone who claims the name of Christ. Now, look at v. 12. The grace of God is **“training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age.”** The word for “train” in the Greek is *“paiduo.”* It is where we get our word pedagogue, which means education. The picture is a teacher giving consistent instruction. In Acts 7:22 we see this word in Stephen’s sermon as he says of Moses, he was **“*instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.*”** In Paul’s defense of the gospel in Jerusalem he says, **“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel.”** In the same kind of way the grace of God “educates” us in this present age to **“renounce ungodliness and worldly passions,”** and **“to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.”**

So, my question is how does the grace of God train us? What does this look like? Well, first, we must know that this “grace” that “appeared” in the Gospel of Christ is made effective through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the person and work of Jesus, we are **“purified”** (v. 14). We may add lots of truths here. We are **“regenerated,”** or **“born again”** (John 3) by the power of the Holy Spirit (3:4). And through the work of the Spirit, we are converted, we are justified, we are sanctified, and one day we will be glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). Turn with me to Eph. 2. In vv. 1-5 we see the power of God in the gospel. **“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—”** And then down in vv. 8-9 we read: **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”**

Brothers and sisters, this is the powerful, sovereign, grace of God. It is the power of God that works in you through the Holy Spirit. And, from this perspective, the grace of God is irresistible . . . However, we must see another truth from another perspective. We are responsible to . . . look back at 12 . . . “renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, godly, and upright lives.” At the same time, we work. We say “NO” to the things of this world. Instead of hating our neighbor, or even our enemies, we love them. As good husbands and fathers, we love our spouses, seeking to serve one another. As parents, we raise our children in different ways than the world, caring about their godliness, praying for them, raising them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. When we see ungodliness on the television, we choose to change the channel or turn it off. When we sin we realize it, we repent, and ask others to forgive us. In all of these things, we work, we choose, we decide to “put off” the things of this world and “put on Christ.” God is sovereign in his work of grace. **“For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure”** (Phil. 2:13). At the same time, we **“work out our salvation with fear and trembling”** (Phil. 2:12), **“lest we received the grace of God in vain”** (2 Cor. 6:1).

Now, let me say also that the Holy Spirit does so much more than what we see here. He not only instructs us, He chastens us (1 Cor. 11:32). He counsels us, comforts us, encourages us, admonishes us, guides us, convicts us, rewards us, restrains us, etc. In these ways, through the Holy Spirit, the grace of God trains us. And also, by way of application, we must not neglect what is called the “means” of grace. Our growth in grace, our sanctification, our school of training, is dependent on means. As a teacher uses books, classrooms, chalkboards, words of instruction, etc, the Holy Spirit also uses means: the Word of God (preaching, teaching, private reading, memorization, meditation), prayer, fellowship with other Christians, the Lord’s Supper, etc. These are means the school of grace uses. Do not neglect them!

Application: If there is no motivation in your life to be godly, you are not a Christian. For, this is what the grace of God does in our lives. It trains us to live according to the commands of Christ.

3. The grace of God prepares us to wait. Look at v. 13: **“waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ . . .”** As we live godly in this present age, we wait . . . We wait for the “appearing” (same word from v. 11). Now, all of us know what it means to wait. We wait at restaurants; we wait in line at the grocery store; we wait for the weekend; we wait for the package from Amazon; We wait for our tax return; During war, we wait for it to end; During recession, we wait for better times, etc. Sometimes the things we wait for are not good, like the call from a friend or family member about the passing of a loved one. We wait in the doctor’s office, knowing bad news is coming. Good or bad, we are a “waiting” people.

So, here, Paul says that the grace of God also prepares us to wait. But, we aren’t just waiting in a line to buy something or waiting for a stimulus check, or any other event in our lives. We wait for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, which is also our “hope.” Let me emphasize 3 truths about our waiting from this text.

i. First, we wait for God to fulfill his promises. The people of God are always those who are waiting for God’s promises, as He ALWAYS does what he says. For example: Simeon waits for

the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25). Anna and others in Jerusalem wait for the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:38). Joseph of Arimathea waits for the kingdom of God (Luke 23:51). Paul and his Jewish opponents seeking his condemnation wait for the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked (Acts 24:15). The recipients of Jude's epistle wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life (Jude 21). Just this week in my Bible reading, in Paul's sermon at Antioch, he speaks of God fulfilling his promises in Christ in reference to his resurrection. He says, **"And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus . . ."** And then he goes on to quote the OT showing their fulfillment in Christ. Here in Titus, we wait for 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, his "appearing," which will bring to a close this present age. For us, this is the next big fulfillment of God's promises.

ii. Second, this promise is the coming of God Himself. Verse 13 is one of the clearest descriptions of the deity of Christ. In this verse, Paul equates God with Jesus. We wait for the **"appearing of the glory of our great God AND savior Jesus Christ."** Jesus is the glory of God! He is not just a representation of his glory. He IS the glory! The stress in this verse is not just his arrival, but on the greatness of the one who arrives. I think of the words of the Apostle John: **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father . . ."** (John 1:14). Brothers and sisters, we aren't merely waiting for good gifts, we are waiting for the ONE who gives the gifts, and all things pale in comparison to his appearing. The "glory" that will appear is not merely the appearance of the invisible transcendent deity, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see (1 Tim. 6:16). Nor is it simply Jesus resurrected showing up again like he did in the weeks following his death (see Acts 1:3). This appearance, one theologian says, will be the "Trinitarian mystery which in the historical and material sphere has never been fully seen." Nothing compares to the glory that will be revealed at his coming.

iii. Third, our waiting is active. This is the application. We are eager. We are anxious (in a good way). We are motivated to live godly (entire context; see also James with the crown of life). We are motivated to endure. We don't want to miss out on what is coming. I can't help but think of Christmas, especially for kids. They wait, and in our culture, our kids are motivated to be "good," not "naughty," but "nice." The world has such motivations. But, our motivation is not of this world. It is altogether different in its glory. This is what the grace of God does. This is what "preaching" the grace of God does. It holds out to the hearer the highest of all desires, goals, expectations, loves, so that the things of this earth fade away. This is why I often say, *"May Christ be more beautiful!"* For there is nothing more lovely, nothing more important, nothing with more worth, nothing with more "glory" than our Great God and savior Jesus Christ! And this truth motivates us to be active, not passive waiters.

1 Pet. 1:13: **"Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."**

2 Pet. 3:11-14: **"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."**

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.”

Brothers and sisters, we wait for his appearing, which is God’s promise. We wait for God himself. And, because of this, our waiting is active. Oh the amazing Grace of God. It penetrates the darkness, it trains us to live godly, and it prepares us to wait.