

Saved by Grace, Trained by Grace | Titus 2:11-14

❖ Introduction

- Good morning church family.
- When we hear the phrase, “Saved by . . .” most of us know how to finish the sentence.
 - We are saved by *grace*.
- And this phrase is familiar to us because it is so foundational to the Christian faith.
 - But what exactly does grace mean?
 - Or more practically, what do we expect the grace of God to do in our lives?
- Most of us naturally think about grace as the way the Christian life begins.
 - We are saved *by grace* through faith.
 - Or in other words, God, in His grace, rescued us from our sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - We did not earn this.
 - We could never deserve this.
 - It is purely by the saving grace of God through the cross of Christ.
- And every bit of that is wonderfully true.
- But here is the question I want us to consider this morning:
 - What does grace do after we’re saved?
 - Is grace simply the doorway into the Christian life?
 - Or does the same grace that saves us continue working in us for the rest of our lives?
- In our passage this morning, Paul tells us that grace does more than pardon us.
 - Grace trains us.
- Think about a rescue.
 - A rescue does not end when someone is pulled out of danger. Often, rescue is followed by recovery and restoration.
 - In a similar way, the grace that saves us also begins transforming us.

❖ Primary Claim and Outline

- In other words, *grace does not leave you where it found you*.
- And in Titus 2:11-14, Paul shows us what the grace of God has come to accomplish.
 - I. Grace Appeared to Save Us (v. 11)
 - II. Grace Trains Us in the Present (v. 12)
 - III. Grace Teaches Us to Await Christ’s Return (v. 13)
 - IV. Grace Claims Us as God’s Own People (v. 14)
- These four acts of grace will be our outline for this morning.

I. Grace Appeared to Save Us (v. 11)

❖ Biblical Text

Titus 2:11

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people”

❖ Explanation

- If you’re looking for a verse to memorize and meditate on this week, this is it.
 - Because here we have the heart of the gospel, the heart of the Christian faith.
- The world is fallen. Life is not the way it was meant to be.
 - But grace *appeared*.
- And that word, “appeared” in the original language is rare.
 - And it carries the sense of giving light or shining.
 - This world has been darkened by sin, but the grace of God has dawned upon it.
 - And Paul’s colleague, Luke, used that same word in his gospel when he described the birth of Jesus as giving light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.
- So, this verse is showing us that grace is more than just a mood within God.
 - It is grace breaking in on our moral darkness like the rising sun.
 - And that dawn has a name—the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who came into this world.
- And this appearing of grace was redemptive.
 - That is why v. 11 adds, “*bring salvation for all people.*”
 - At its core, sin is humanity’s rebellion against God, and the wage of that rebellion is death.
 - But because God so loved the world, the grace of God has appeared, and Christ took our death sentence upon the cross.
- This means that our salvation rests on nothing we have done, but on everything God has graciously done for us in Christ.
- And this salvation is available for all people.
 - Earlier in this chapter, Paul gives instruction to a wide range of believers.
 - From the oldest to the youngest, from the free to the enslaved, the grace of God has appeared like the rising sun upon them all.
 - And, again, not because of anything they have done, but in light of what God has done for them in Christ.

❖ Application

- So, for the believer hearing this today,
do not lose sight of the brilliance of what God has done.
 - Whether you are new to the faith or have walked with Christ for decades,
never take for granted what it cost the Son of God to bring light into our darkness.
 - And do not grow so accustomed to going through the motions of the Christian life
that you forget the wonder and the beauty of God's saving grace.
- And to the unbeliever hearing this today,
if you sense the dawning of the grace of God in your own life,
do not turn away from its brilliance.
 - I don't need to convince you that this world is dark.
 - But I do hope you hear from God's Word that there is a brighter future for you.
 - The grace of God appeared in the person of Jesus Christ,
and the salvation He brings is for all who believe.
 - Do not turn away from Him.

❖ Transition

- But moving on to verse 12,
Paul explains that the grace of God does not stop at our salvation;
it continues to work in us in the present.
- That leads us to our second point.

II. Grace Trains Us in the Present (v. 12)

❖ Biblical Text

Titus 2:12

“. . . training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age”

❖ Explanation

- So the sentence continues in v. 12.
 - Grace appeared, bringing salvation.
 - And now Paul adds that for those who receive that salvation, grace is “training us.”
- And again, Paul picks his words carefully to paint a picture for us.
 - This word for “training” refers to discipline and education, like training up a child.
- And that is a striking thing to say about grace.
 - Grace does not only pardon our past, it trains our present.
 - The same grace that broke sin’s guilt also broke sin’s power, so grace now trains us to renounce it.
- And training is different than merely telling us what to do.
 - It teaches us how to live.
 - If you are a parent, grandparent, or someone who works with children, you know there is a massive difference between telling a child something and taking the time to train a child.
 - Grace does the latter.
 - It takes the time to train us.
 - Grace does not simply give us a standard; it trains us to live by it.
- And what does that look like to live rightly as those trained by grace?
 - Paul gives us the two lessons grace teaches us.
- First, grace teaches us what to say no to.
 - V. 12 says grace trains us to “renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.”
 - In short, since the grace of God brought you salvation through the cross of Christ:
 - you are no longer characterized by your unsaved life.
 - And those cravings no longer define or rule your new life in Christ.
- Second, grace teaches us what to say yes to.
 - We renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, but on the positive side of things, we end up living “self-controlled, upright, and godly lives.”

- And these three words cover the whole of life:
 - Self-controlled—how you handle yourself.
 - Upright—how you treat your neighbor.
 - And godly—how you live before God.
- And looking at the end of the verse, all of this takes place “*in the present age.*”
 - That is an important detail, because we do not live in a neutral territory.
 - Elsewhere, Paul calls this the “present evil age.”
 - The world is fallen, and the gravity of sin will pull you towards ungodliness.
- And that is precisely why grace must train us.
 - Legalism says, “resist the present age so that God will accept you.”
 - Cheap grace says, “God already accepts you, so worldliness doesn’t really matter.”
 - But biblical grace says, “God has accepted you in Christ, and that is precisely what is training you to be more like Him.”

❖ Application

- Now, some of you might be sitting here this morning discouraged by ongoing sin.
- You have walked with Christ for years, yet sin has weighed you down from going further.
- If that is you, hear this before we move on.
 - There is a world of difference between a person who excuses their sin and a person who grieves their sin.
 - Grief over sin is not evidence that grace has abandoned you.
 - In fact, that grief and desire to turn from sin can be evidence that grace is still at work training you to abandon it.
- You notice the darkness of sin because the light of God’s grace is still there, so do not give up.
- The One who began this good work in you will be the One who finishes it.

❖ Transition

- So the grace of God trains us to live in the present.
- But then Paul lifts our eyes from the present to the future.
- That brings us to our third point.

III. Grace Teaches Us to Await Christ's Return (v. 13)

❖ Biblical Text

Titus 2:13

“. . . waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”

❖ Explanation

- One thing that is so important for the Christian to remember is that we live between two appearances.
 - As we saw in v. 11, grace has appeared, bringing salvation through Christ's first coming.
 - Now here in v. 13, glory will appear, bringing the fulfillment of our hope at Christ's second coming.
 - ← Grace has appeared at Christ's first coming.
 - → Glory will appear when He returns.
 - ◆ And we live in between—trained, waiting, watching.
- And though life in the middle isn't easy, we can press on with confident expectation because glory is coming.
 - And notice, our hope is not merely wishful thinking about happier days.
 - We are not ultimately waiting for something to happen.
 - We are waiting *for Someone* to arrive: our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- The grace that appeared at His first coming teaches us to wait with confident expectation for His second coming.
 - And Paul—a man who knew suffering, struggle, and loss—calls this our blessed hope.
- Many years ago, I worked in Los Angeles as an audio engineer, while my wife, who was my fiancée at the time, worked in Tokyo.
 - I worked long hours under a lot of pressure.
 - But even during the hardest weeks, I found joy in counting down the days until Takana would fly in.
 - The difficulty of the present felt different because I knew who was coming.
- And to an infinitely greater degree, everyone who is in Christ is waiting for our blessed hope: the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - The Lord Jesus Christ broke through the darkness of our hearts in grace at His first coming.
 - And He will make all things new in glory at His second coming.

- On that day, as Revelation 21 tells us,
He will wipe away every tear.
Death, mourning, crying, and pain will be no more.
- That is what awaits us
at the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

❖ **Application**

- Church family, we live between these two appearances.
- And there are many good things in this life that bring us joy:
family, friends, health, work, and countless other gifts from God.
- But our ultimate hope, our blessed hope, is Jesus Christ Himself.
 - Christ is Lord.
 - Christ is King.
 - And Christ is coming again.
- And when He comes:
 - suffering will not have the final word.
 - Sin will not have the final word.
 - Death will not have the final word.
 - Jesus will.
- So if life in the middle is difficult for you right now,
if you are weary, hurting, or simply struggling to press on,
remember: the middle is not the end.
- The grace that saved you
teaches you to lift your eyes forward to the glory that is coming.
- Grace has appeared.
- Glory will appear.
- And until then, we wait with hope.

❖ **Transition**

- But how can we know that we belong to this blessed hope?
- That brings us to our fourth and final point.

IV. Grace Claims Us as God's Own People (v. 14)

❖ Biblical Text

Titus 2:14

"... who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

❖ Explanation

- After pointing our eyes forward to Christ our returning Savior, Paul reminds us of the work of Christ that made Him our Savior in the first place.
- And he describes that work in four parts.
- First, Jesus "gave Himself for us"
 - It's easy to overlook those words, but Christ giving Himself is the greatest of all gifts.
 - Jesus did not merely give us advice.
 - Jesus did not merely provide an example.
 - *Jesus gave Himself for us.*
 - We sinned and fell short of the glory of God, but Christ took our place upon the cross for our sake.
 - So, the grace that trains us was not cheap—it cost Him His life.
- Second, Jesus redeemed us from all lawlessness.
 - In other words, He not only frees us from the guilt of our rebellion, He delivers us from our bondage to sin.
 - The word "redeem" carried with it the idea of purchasing freedom from slavery.
 - And that is the picture here: upon the cross, Christ paid the price to deliver us from the penalty and power of sin.
- Third, Jesus purified for Himself a people for His own possession.
 - After giving Himself for us and redeeming us from sin, He claimed us as His own.
 - There are people who buy things simply to fix them up and sell them again for profit.
 - Christ does not do that with us.
 - He did not redeem you to resell you. He redeemed you to make you His own.
 - You may not always feel like it, but if you are in Christ, you belong to Him.
 - And saving grace trains us to become more like Christ because ultimately we are His.

- And that leads to the fourth thing Paul says:
Jesus makes us zealous for good works.
- Scripture is clear that we are not saved by good works,
but we are saved to do the good works God has purposed for us.
 - And while those good works will look different in each of our lives,
the point is simple:
the grace of God gives purpose to the life He has redeemed.
 - Knowing what Christ has done for us
should make us eager to live for Him.
 - He gave His life for us,
so we now live this redeemed life for Him.

Conclusion

❖ Summary

- So as we close, let's return to the question we started with:
What do we expect the grace of God to do in our lives?
- Titus 2:11–14 gives us the answer:
 - Grace appeared to save us.
 - Grace trains us in the present.
 - Grace teaches us to await Christ's return.
 - And grace claims us as God's own people.
- In short, the grace that saves us is the grace that changes us.
 - Not to earn God's love or maintain His acceptance,
but because through the cross of Christ, we have already received both.
- Grace does not say, "Change, and then God will love you."
- Grace says, "In Christ, God has loved you—
and now His grace is training you to live like someone who belongs to Him."

❖ Final Application

- So let me leave you with one simple question:
Where is the grace of God training you right now?
 - Is grace teaching you to say no to a sin you have tolerated
and yes to greater self-control, righteousness, or godliness?
 - Is grace teaching you to lift your eyes beyond a difficult season
and wait with hope for Christ's return?
 - Is grace reminding you that your life belongs to Christ,
and calling you to live eagerly for Him?
 - Wherever that training is happening, do not resist the grace of God.
- And if you are discouraged by how slowly you seem to be changing, remember this:
 - The hand that reached down to save you from sin has not let go of you.
 - Grace has appeared.
 - Glory will appear.
 - And until that day, the grace of God is still at work in you.