

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## TITUS STUDY

*“Tough Grace in a Difficult Place”*

### HOW GRACE WORKS

*Titus 2:11-14*

*“<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> 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.”-Titus 2:11-14 (NKJV)*



### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TITUS:**

(1) **Author: Apostle Paul** - Authorship by the Apostle Paul (Titus 1:1) is essentially uncontested.

- (2) **Date: A.D. 62-64** - Titus was written between A.D. 62–64, while Paul ministered to Macedonian churches between his first and second Roman imprisonments,
- (3) **Literary Type: Pastoral Letter** - Along with 1, 2 Timothy, these letters to Paul’s sons in the faith are traditionally called “The Pastoral Epistles.”
- (4) **Place of Origin: Nicopolis** – Paul wrote this letter most likely from Nicopolis in Macedonia (some have suggested that the letter might possibly have been written from Corinth. (cf Titus 3:12).
- (5) **Recipient: Titus** - This epistle is named for its recipient, Titus, who is mentioned by name 13 times in the New Testament. The title in the Greek New Testament literally reads “To Titus.” Titus, like Timothy, had become a beloved disciple and fellow worker in the gospel. Most likely, Titus served with Paul on both the second and third missionary journeys. Paul’s last mention of Titus (in 2 Timothy 4:10) reports that he had gone for ministry in Dalmatia—modern Yugoslavia. The letter probably was delivered by Zenas and Apollos. Although Luke did not mention Titus by name in the book of Acts, it seems probable that Titus, a Gentile, met and may have been led to faith in Christ by Paul before or during the apostle’s first missionary journey. **Later, Titus ministered for a period of time with Paul on the Island of Crete and was left behind to continue and strengthen the work.** After Artemas or Tychicus arrived to direct the ministry there, Paul wanted Titus to join him in the city of Nicopolis, in the province of Achaia in Greece, and stay through the winter. Because of his involvement with the church at Corinth during Paul’s third missionary journey, Titus is mentioned 9 times in 2 Corinthians, where Paul refers to him as “my brother” (in 2 Corinthians 2:13) and “my partner and fellow worker” (in 2 Corinthians 8:23) The young elder was already familiar with Judaizers, false teachers in the church, who among other things insisted that all Christians, Gentile as well as Jew, were bound by the Mosaic law. Titus had accompanied Paul and Barnabas years earlier to the Council of Jerusalem where that heresy was the subject.
- (6) **Setting: Crete** - Crete, one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea, measuring 160 miles long by 35 miles at its widest, lying south of the Aegean Sea, had been briefly visited by Paul on his voyage to Rome (see Acts 27:7-9, 12, 13, 21).+ He returned there for ministry and later left Titus to continue the work, much as he left Timothy at Ephesus, while he went on to Macedonia. He most likely wrote to Titus in response to a letter from Titus or a report from Crete.
- (7) **Occasion: Pastoral encouragement and counsel** - Like Paul’s two letters to Timothy, the apostle gives personal encouragement and counsel to a young pastor who, though well-trained and faithful, faced continuing opposition from ungodly men within the churches where he ministered. Titus was to pass on that encouragement and counsel to the leaders he was to appoint in the Cretan churches.
- (8) **Theological Themes:** In contrast to several of Paul’s other letters, such as those to the churches in Rome and Galatia, the book of Titus does not focus on explaining or defending doctrine. Paul had full confidence in Titus’ theological understanding and convictions, evidenced by the fact that he entrusted him with such a demanding ministry. Except for the warning about false teachers and Judaizers, the letter gives no theological

correction, strongly suggesting that Paul also had confidence in the doctrinal grounding of most church members there, despite the fact that the majority of them were new believers.

### **Theological/Doctrinal Themes Affirmed in Titus:**

1. God's **sovereign election** of believers (Titus 1:1-2)
2. His **saving grace** (Titus 2:11, 3:5)
3. Christ's **deity** and **second coming** (Titus 2:13)
4. Christ's **substitutionary atonement** (Titus 2:14)
5. The **regeneration** and **renewing** of believers by the **Holy Spirit** (Titus 3:5)

God and Christ are regularly referred to as Savior in Titus, and the saving plan is so emphasized in that it indicates the major thrust of the epistle is that of equipping the churches of Crete for effective evangelism. This preparation required godly leaders who not only would shepherd believers under their care, but also would equip those Christians for evangelizing their pagan neighbors, who had been characterized by one of their own famous natives as liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. In order to gain a hearing for the gospel among such people, the believers' primary preparation for evangelization was to live among themselves with the unarguable testimony of righteous, loving, selfless, and godly lives in marked contrast to the debauched lives of the false teachers. How they behaved with reference to governmental authorities and unbelievers was also crucial to their testimony

Our subject for today, the grace of God and how it works in our lives, is arguably the most important concept for you to understand and live by in the battle to be godly. Because it is so important, the enemy of our souls has created much confusion and controversy on this topic. But if you can fight your way clear in understanding and applying God's grace, you will experience a close relationship with God and consistent victory over sin. Paul said in Romans 6:14, *"<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."*

God's grace permeated Paul's thinking. One scholar writes, *"Paul could not think of Christian truth and conduct apart from God's grace"* (D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. by Frank Gaebelin [Zondervan], 11:439). Another writes, *"The expression, the grace of God, may fairly be said to be the key word of Paul's theology.... He cannot think of Christian salvation apart from the grace of God..."* (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* [Eerdmans], p. 198, italics his).

### **A DEFINITION OF GRACE**

Paul writes in Romans 5:1-2, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* Listening to Paul's

words, what is grace? Grace is a “standing.” I hope you see it! Grace is not a standing we get for ourselves. We have peace with God through Jesus. Grace is a standing we are given with God by what Jesus did for us on the cross. Grace is a right standing with God through Christ Jesus.

**What is grace?** In your own words write your own definition of grace without using the word “unmerited favor of God” \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

**Listen as the following verses of Scripture are read and answer the corresponding question:**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** – *“For by grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.”*

- **Who is grace from?**
- **What is grace?**

**Romans 6:23** – *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

- **What is the free gift of God or the grace of God?**
- **True or (False) (circle one) – Christians are constantly moving in and out of a state of God’s grace. \*Answer: False, Christians are “standing in grace and not constantly moving in and out of a state of grace according to Romans 5:1-2a.**

**Understanding grace** – Some good definition of grace for our own understanding.

- **Webster’s Dictionary** – *“Unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration and sanctification.”*
- **Dr. John MacArthur** – *“Grace is God’s unmerited favor by which he saves us and makes us righteous. It is based solely on His sovereign love, which is manifested in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sin. It is not the result of any worthiness on our part. Once we are saved we stand in grace.”*
- **Grace Acrostic** – Each letter of the word “GRACE” stands for a part of the definition and understanding of what grace is.
  - G** = *God’s*
  - R** = *Righteousness*
  - A** = *At*
  - C** = *Christ’s*
  - E** = *Expense*

**Why grace? Why is grace necessary at all?** – A very apparent answer to that question would be that apart from grace man could not be saved, because we can't save ourselves. By the way, but a thorough investigation of the question (Why grace?) reveals an even deeper understanding of grace itself. If it is the free and undeserved favor/salvation of God, and we can't do anything to earn or deserve it, but it is freely give to us... then it can't be lost... just a side note.

**The classic definition of “grace” is the best:**

- God's grace is His unmerited favor
- Grace means that God showered favor and blessing on those who did not in any way deserve or earn it
- They deserved His judgment and wrath, but He showed them favor

Listen, God's pure grace gets polluted from two sides...

**How God's grace get polluted (distorted, warped, twisted, misshapen)?:**

- (1) **It is counter to the world's way** - On the one side, grace runs counter to the way the world works, so it's difficult for us to grasp it and get used to it. **The world works on the merit system**. If you do well in school, you get good grades and win awards. If you do well in sports, you make the team and get a lot of applause. If you get into college, the merit system continues to reward excellence. This carries over into the business world after college. Exceptional performance earns promotions and raises. Sloppy performance will get you fired. In the spiritual realm, all of the world's religions, except for biblical Christianity, work on the merit system. Even the major branches of Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, teach a system of merit-salvation, where you have to add your works to what Christ did on the cross in order to go to heaven. Most believers who die go to purgatory, where after suffering for a while, eventually you will have enough of your sins purged away and enough merit to qualify for heaven. This merit system of salvation permeates the public mind. Ask anyone on the street his opinion of how a person gets into heaven and you will hear something about being a good person. It was at the heart of pharisaic, legalistic religion in the times of Jesus and Paul.
- (2) **Viewing God's grace as opportunity for license** - But God's grace also gets distorted from another side, which mistakes the grace of God for licentiousness (Jude 4). Many professing Christians wrongly think that God's grace means that He gives out free passes that allow us to sin, with no consequences for disobedience. If you emphasize the need to obey God's commandments or do good works, they call you a legalist. If you warn them that their sloppy view of sin will result in God's discipline, they don't want to hear it. Their mantra is, "I'm not into your rules kind of religion. I'm under grace, not law." For them, grace means permission for sloppy living.

Our text corrects both of these serious misconceptions of God's grace. Notice our passage in Titus 2:11-14... **(READ: Titus 2:11-14)**

*<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> 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.”-Titus 2:11-14 (NKJV)*

Paul shows that...

***God’s grace first saves and then trains His people for godliness and good deeds.***

The word “for” that opens verse 11 links these verses to what he has just said in the previous verses. In Titus 2:1-10, where we were last week, Paul has shown that various groups of believers should beautify their lives with godliness and good deeds so as to attract others to the Savior. Paul’s mention of *“God our Savior”* (2:10) causes him to elaborate on the theological basis for our salvation and how understanding that inevitably leads to a life of godliness and good deeds. At the heart of everything is this crucial concept of God’s grace. Gives us three way God’s grace works...

### **3 Ways God’s Grace Works:**

- (1) God’s grace brings salvation to all people (Titus 2:11)**
- (2) God’s grace trains the saved in godliness (Titus 2:12-14a)**
- (3) God’s grace trains the saved to be zealous for good deeds (2:14b)**

Let’s look at each of these individually...

### **GOD’S GRACE BRINGS SALVATION TO ALL PEOPLE (Titus 2:11)**

And I might add to that only God’s grace brings salvation. You can’t be saved any other way. It is the only way to be saved according to Scripture...

***What are some of the other ways people sometimes think they are saved, made right with God, and go to heaven? \_\_\_\_\_***

---

**Listen as the following Bible verses are read and answer the questions that follow.**

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** – *“For by grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.”*
  - *I know this is a common verse we have hard many times, but think about these words. What does this verse say does not save us? Why?*
  - *How does this verse say we are saved?*
- **Acts 15:11** – *“<sup>11</sup> But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”*

- How does this verse say we are saved?
- How does this verse indicated a person in the Old Testament were saved?
- Why might this be important? How do some often perceived those of the Old Testament being saved?
- **Romans 3:23-24** – *“<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*
  - What does it mean to be “justified?”
  - What do you think Paul means when we says we are “justified freely” and what might this have to do with grace?
  - According to this passage how is God’s grace pictured?
- **Titus 3:4-7** – *“<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*
  - How does this verse say we are saved?
  - What has God graciously given us? What does that mean?
  - What pictures of salvation do you hear/read in these verses?
- **2 Timothy 1:8-9** – *“<sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”*
  - How does this passage say we are not saved?
  - How does this passage say we are saved?
  - Paul mentions “purpose” and “grace” together, what might these two words have to do with each other? How do they relate? What might this tell us about grace?

Notice verse 11 of our passage. Paul writes, *“<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”* When Paul writes, *“For the grace of God... has appeared,”* he is referring to the embodiment of grace in the person of Jesus Christ, who was “full of grace and truth.” John 1:14 says, *“<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

- It is not that God’s grace is missing from the Old Testament. No one was saved in the Old Testament apart from God’s grace.
- But as John 1:17 states the contrast, *“<sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”*
- God rightly could have sent His Son to condemn us and judge us.
- But instead John 3:17 says, *“For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”*

Zecharias uses the verb *appear* to refer to the coming of Messiah, whom he calls the Sunrise from on high, who will “*shine [appear] upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*” (Luke 1:79). The coming of Jesus Christ was the light of the grace of God’s salvation dawning upon this sin-darkened world.

Paul says in our passage that the appearance of God’s grace brought “*salvation to all men.*” Paul means that God’s grace that appeared in the person of Christ offers salvation to all that hear of it. In the context, Paul has just spoken of various groups: older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves. So when he goes on to say that God’s grace brings salvation to *all* men, he means, “to all types of people, including those whom the world despises, even to slaves.” No one is beyond the reach of God’s grace.

This does not mean that all people are saved or will be saved. The Bible is uniformly clear that there are two separate, final destinations for all people. Those who by God’s grace believe in Jesus Christ as Savior will go to heaven. Those who do not believe in Christ will pay the penalty of eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news of God’s grace is that no sinner is beyond the reach of God’s grace. The apostle Paul was a persecutor of the church. He called himself the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13, 15). But he experienced God’s grace through the cross. If the chief of sinners found mercy, so can you!

But, there is a major hindrance that will keep you from experiencing God’s grace in salvation, namely, your propensity to self-righteousness. Paul says that God’s grace brings *salvation* to all people. You don’t need salvation unless you are lost and you know that you’re lost. If you think that you’re doing just fine on your own or that you’re going to be able to make it on your own with a little more effort, you won’t cry out for a Savior to deliver you. As Jesus said (Luke 5:32), “*I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*” By “*the righteous,*” Jesus meant, “the self-righteous.” The self-righteous Pharisees did not see their need for a Savior. Those who knew that they were sinners did.

Suppose that you were standing in a long line at the bank, waiting to deposit your paycheck. Suddenly, I grab you by the arm, jerk you out of line, and forcibly drag you out of the building. You probably wouldn’t be very happy with me. You’d say, “What do you think you’re doing? You hurt my arm, you tore my shirt, you made me lose my place in line, and you made me look like a fool in front of everyone in the bank!” But, one simple fact would change your attitude to one of complete gratitude for the rest of your life: the bank had just been taken over by terrorists that threatened to kill everyone inside. In the first scenario, you didn’t yet know the danger that you were in. In the second scenario, you had become aware of the danger and you knew that you were doomed unless someone rescued you.



Before you can appreciate God's grace, you need to know that you are justly under His wrath and condemnation. You are headed for eternal judgment unless someone intervenes. To use Spurgeon's phrase, you know that the rope is around your neck. God's grace cuts the rope, even though you are guilty as charged and deserve to die. Have you experienced God's grace that brings salvation? If so, you are a changed person. How?

### **GOD'S GRACE TRAINS US WHO ARE SAVED IN GODLINESS (Titus 2:12-14a)**

Let's go back to our passage... look at verses 12-14, "<sup>12</sup> *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,* <sup>13</sup> *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* <sup>14</sup> *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.*" The word "*teaching*" (maybe "instructing") means, "child-training."

- It includes teaching, but also, correcting and disciplining.
- It is a process that begins at salvation and continues until we stand before the Lord.
- But, note that grace does not mean, "hang loose and live as sloppily as you please." Rather, grace trains, disciplines, and instructs us in godly living.

Paul mentions three ways that grace trains us:

### **3 Ways Grace Trains Us:**

**(1) Grace trains us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires (Titus 2:12a)** – The first part of verse 12 says that grace is "<sup>12</sup> *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts...*" When you experience God's unmerited favor in Jesus Christ, it motivates you to want to please Him in everything that you do. As you read God's Word, you begin to realize that there is much in your life that displeases the Lord, who gave Himself on the cross to save you from God's judgment. So, you begin walking on the path that Jesus described as denying yourself daily, taking up your cross, and following Him (Luke 9:23).

This includes saying no to *ungodliness*. This refers to a person who does not reverence God and thus lives by ignoring God. It obviously refers to the person who is openly immoral or evil, but it also includes the outwardly nice person who simply has no place for God in his life. His everyday life is organized, motivated, and run by self, with no place for God. The person who has tasted God's grace will say no to such godless living.

Also, you must say no to *worldly lusts*. This refers to desires that are characteristic of this world system that is opposed to God. John describes them as "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life" (1 John 2:16). They include selfishness, pride, seeking after status and power, greed, lust, and living for sinful pleasure rather than finding pleasure in God above all else. Grace trains you to say no to these things, because God and His grace are far sweeter than anything the world can offer.

- (2) **Grace trains us to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age (Titus 2:12b)** – Notice verse 12 again, “<sup>12</sup> *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*” It is not enough to say *no* to ungodliness and worldly desires. You must also say *yes* to sensible, righteous, godly living.

*In the present age* emphasizes that we do not need to isolate ourselves from this evil world in monasteries or Christian communes. Rather, in the midst of this present evil age, we are to live sensible, righteous, godly lives, so that those in the world will be drawn to our Savior. Many commentators have pointed out that *sensibly* refers to how you are to control yourself; *righteously* has reference to your relationships with others; and, *godly* refers to your relationship toward God. Let’s look at each of these.

### **How Grace Trains Us to Live:**

1. **Grace trains us to live sensibly** - This is the word that we have repeatedly encountered in Titus (1:8; 2:2, 4, 5, 6), which means, living in a self-controlled manner, not yielding to various passions and impulses. It is synonymous with the last of the fruits of the Spirit, which is self control.
2. **Grace trains us to live righteously** - This refers to a life of integrity and uprightness in your dealings with others. It means conforming to God’s standards of conduct, as revealed in the commandments of His Word.
3. **Grace trains us to live godly** - This refers to holiness and devotion to God, beginning on the heart level. It means to live a God-ward life, knowing that He examines your heart. You confess sinful thoughts to Him and live in the love and fear of God. As Paul expressed his concern (2 Cor. 11:3), “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” If you live in the way that Paul describes in our text, denying ungodliness and worldly desires and living sensibly, righteously, and godly in the midst of this corrupt age, other Christians will call you a legalist. Many in the world will think that you’re weird because you don’t strive for the same things that they seek. But you will experience the joy of close fellowship with the God who rescued you from sin and judgment. His grace motivates you to live differently than the world, and differently than those who profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him (Titus 1:16).

**But there’s a third way that grace trains us:**

- (3) **Grace trains us to live in godliness by looking ahead and behind (Titus 2:13-14a)** – Notice Paul’s words in **verses 13-14** of our passage, “<sup>13</sup> *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* <sup>14</sup> *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.*” The forward look is toward the second coming of Jesus Christ. The backward look is toward the cross and its implications on our lives.

### **What We Are to Look To:**

#### **1. We are to look ahead to the blessed hope of Christ’s second coming (Titus 2:13)**

- God’s grace instructs us to look *“for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”* (Some Greek manuscripts read, “Jesus Christ.”) Christ’s first appearing was in grace, bringing salvation. During His first coming, His glory was mostly veiled. But His second appearing will be in glory, bringing salvation to His people, but terrifying judgment to those who have not believed in Him. His second coming is a *“blessed hope”* for those who know Him, because then we will fully experience all of the blessings of His salvation. If your focus is set on the hope of Christ’s return, you will purify your life from every known sin (1 John 3:2-3).

During his time in the White House, President Carter did something that no other President (that I know of) has done: on several occasions, he stayed in the homes of common Americans. I don’t know how he picked them, but he wanted to convey that he was in tune with the needs of average Americans. If you got a call this week from the White House, announcing that the President would like to stay in your home sometime next month (meaning that your living room and kitchen would be on national television), I predict that you would do some housecleaning! Your home would sparkle because you knew that the President was coming. I’d probably say, “Well, we are never at home anyway, so just make yourself at home, we’ll leave a key under the mat for your!” Anyway...

Someone far greater than the President is coming! Paul calls Him, *“our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”* Scholars debate whether this refers to both the Father and the Son (as in the KJV), or to the Son alone (NASB). Either view affirms Jesus’ deity, in that He could not reveal the greatness of God’s glory if He were not God. But the Greek grammar, has one article governing both God and Savior, which is best understood to refer to one person, not to two. Also, every other time the New Testament refers to “the appearing,” it refers to Christ, not to God the Father. The adjective “great” is often applied to God in the Old Testament, but it is reserved for the Son in the New Testament (Luke 1:32; Heb. 10:21; 13:20). So this verse is a strong statement of Christ’s deity. “Looking for” implies eager anticipation. Just as a young bride whose husband is away in the military eagerly looks forward to his return, so believers who have tasted God’s grace look forward to the coming of our Bridegroom. That hope motivates us to clean house on any sins in our lives.

#### **2. We are to look back to the supreme demonstration of His love, which redeemed us from sin and made us His own possession (Titus 2:14a) - “Who” refers back to “our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” None other than He “gave Himself for us”!**

If that thought doesn't grip your heart, you're in deep spiritual trouble. Paul shows that this past grace that was shown to us produces godliness in us.

First, Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might *redeem us from every lawless deed*" (2:14a). The word *redeem* would have gotten the attention of any slaves. It was the word used of buying a slave out of the market so as to give him his freedom. Before we met Christ, we all were slaves of sin. He paid the redemption price in His own blood to free us from bondage to sin. How, then, can a believer go back into slavery to sin?

Second, Christ gave Himself for us that He might "*purify for Himself a people for His own possession.*" Verse 12 focused on our need to purify ourselves, but verse 14 focuses on Christ's purifying us through His blood. He bought us from the slave market of sin and washed off our filth. Now we belong to Him as His personal possession. He prizes us more than anyone prizes a valuable treasure, because He paid for us with His blood. Again, what a motivation to live to please Him! One reason that we partake often of the Lord's Supper is that it reminds us of these precious truths. Before we partake, we are to examine ourselves and confess any known sins. As we think on the great sacrifice that our God and Savior made by giving Himself for us, it will draw our hearts toward Him in love and devotion. It will make us long for the day of His appearing in glory, when we will be caught up to be with Him forever.

Thus God's grace in Christ brings salvation to us. Then it trains us to live in godliness. Finally,

### **GOD'S GRACE TRAINS US WHO ARE SAVED TO BE ZEALOUS FOR GOOD DEEDS (Titus 2:14b)**

Look at verse 14 of our passage, "<sup>14</sup> (Jesus Christ) 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.*" "Good works" there refer to deeds that are done out of sincere love for God and others in obedience to His Word. "Zealous" is a word that Paul used to describe his fanatical zeal for Judaism prior to his conversion (Gal. 1:14). It was also used to describe the fanatical Jewish sect that was devoted to ridding Israel of Roman domination. The Zealots were totally devoted to their cause, even to the point of risking their own lives to achieve their goals. You would not call them lukewarm!

Could you rightly describe yourself as a fanatic for good deeds? It seems to me that the vast majority of Christians dabble at good deeds when it is convenient, when they don't have anything else that they'd rather do. But if we have been bought out of the slave market of sin by the blood of our great God and Savior, we should be fanatics for good deeds. We ought to be totally devoted to serving our new Master.

## CONCLUSION

A book that has often convicted me of my own lack of love for the Lord and zeal for His work is Elisabeth Elliot's, *Shadow of the Almighty* [Zondervan], subtitled, "The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot." My copy is falling apart because I have thumbed back through it so many times. Elisabeth's husband, Jim, was only 28 when he and four other young men were speared to death in their attempt to take the gospel to the fierce Auca Indians of Ecuador.

Here are some quotes from his diary that show how he exemplified our text. God's grace motivated him.

### **4 Jim Elliot Quotes on the Motivation of Grace:**

- (1) At age 22, he wrote (p. 110), "I see clearly now that anything, whatever it is, if it be not on the principle of grace, it is not of God."
- (2) Regarding living in light of the second coming, at age 20 he wrote to his 15-year-old sister (p. 53), "Fix your eyes on the rising Morning Star.... Live every day as if the Son of Man were at the door, and gear your thinking to the fleeting moment.... Walk as if the next step would carry you across the threshold of Heaven."
- (3) Or, again at 22 (p. 115), "How poorly will appear anything but a consuming operative faith in the person of Christ when He comes. How lost, alas, a life lived in any other light!"
- (4) His entire life portrayed intense zeal for the Lord and His work. He wrote (*Through Gates of Splendor* [Spire Books], pp. 19-20), "Wherever you are, *be all there*. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God."

That's how God's grace works. It saves us and then it trains and motivates us to be godly people in this present age, zealous for good deeds, as we look for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us.