

Why Has the Grace of God Appeared?

Introduction

In the Lord's presence today, as we are considering the Word this morning, I have a question for us: Why has the grace of God appeared? We are all familiar with the grace of God. Why has it appeared?

Let us have a word of prayer:

Lord, we are thankful for the wonderful blessing of gathering in Your name, the wonderful privilege of gathering around Your table with saints here and throughout this world to remember You. We are thankful for Your loving kindness. Lord, we are thankful for Your continued presence with us. You have not left us; Your Holy Spirit has not left. By faith, we continue to stand in the full provision that You have made for us. We are thankful that we have no lack in You. We are thankful that we do not have to look at ourselves; we can look off unto You. We commit this into Your hand. In Your wonderful name. Amen.

Salvation, Sanctification, and Blessed Hope

The question we are considering is: Why has the grace of God appeared? I get this little question from Titus 2:11-13, which says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,"

Thank the Lord for the testimony in these verses. As we start to answer this question, we can see that these verses give us some hints about why He has appeared. The grace of God has appeared; it brings salvation, praise God, but it does not stop there. It is instructing us, discipling us, and teaching us, bringing us into sanctification. Praise God, it does not stop there. The grace of God also appears because it causes us to have within our hearts a hope, an expectation of looking for the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you continue reading in this section of Titus, verse 14 summarizes these first three verses. It says, "Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." This verse summarizes the other verses and shows that God has a purpose in view. The grace of God always has its end and purpose in view.

The Precious Lord Jesus is the Grace of God

As we look at this compilation of verses in Titus, we see that these verses are the very heart of this letter and the very heart of the Gospel. It is the message of God. They show the full working of the grace of God. This is what we want to consider this morning. We are familiar with the grace of God, but what is the grace of God? We should probably be asking more correctly, Who is the grace of God?

One of the best ways to interpret Scripture is by using Scripture itself. In verse 11, it says, “The grace of God has appeared.” We might think of that as a thing, but if you go down to verse 14, it says, “Who gave Himself for us to redeem us.” The grace of God is not a thing; the grace of God is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the full personification of the grace of God. He is the very key to all of this. It is through Christ that we have been saved, through Christ that we are sanctified, and through Christ that we have a glorious future. It is not about us.

One of my favorite choruses begins with the lines, “Yet not I, but through Christ in me.” The first two lines in that song are precious to me: “What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer?” What a great gift. “There is no more for heaven now to give.” Christ has been given; there is no more for heaven now to give; He has given us everything. He has given us the treasure of His heart. God has given us everything in Christ Jesus. There is no more for Him to give. That is why it is so precious. When we think of this matter of keeping the grace of God and the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ together, it is that Person of Himself. I really appreciated how Titus 2:14 summarizes this. If you like to remember things through letters and alliteration, you might find it helpful to note that it says, He redeemed us, which means He purchased us, then He purified us, and then we are His possession. It is a possession with purpose—purchased, purified, possession, purpose. There is always an end in view.

The Bride Is Made Ready

These verses show us what He has done, what He is doing, and what He is going to do. They demonstrate that all of it is with an end in view. Whenever God does anything, it is always with the end in view. Our Lord Jesus was on the cross, and we saw the joy set before Him. The joy was not in going through the cross; that was agonizing and painful. He saw the end in view. He knew what was going on and what the outcome would be. It is all about Him; it is not about us. It is about His heart and His purpose.

We are often self-centered. We think the grace of God has appeared so we will not have to go to hell. We think the grace of God has appeared so that now we can have our ministry, we can do our thing, we can work, we can help Him. While all those things are aspects of it, there is a fuller, much grander picture. Let us not make the grace of God too small a thing. It is probably the greatest thing that God has ever done. He caused the grace of God to appear in human form to mankind, revealing it to each of our hearts. What a treasure!

That is the treasure of this table each Sunday. God is doing a great work. When God is doing a great work, God gets the glory. When grace is manifest, God gets the glory. You do not see man because man does not get the glory. When grace is manifest in lives, God gets that glory, all with the end of having that bride, His wife, ready to rule and reign with Him. That is the end. We have touched on that before.

Living Each Day for Him

As we look at this comprehensive verse, everything that God does has this in view. That is why these other verses are so important to us. He desires for us to live godly in this present age, as we just read. Why does He desire us to live godly in this present age? Is it just so that He can look from heaven and say, "Oh, look at those people living godly. Look at them denying themselves, saying no to evil and yes to My ways"? Is that all He is after?

No! The way we live today will determine our condition in the future when we are with Him. The condition of our lives will be based upon how much we have responded to the grace of God and what He has called us to do: faithfulness. We all desire to finish well; we all want to finish this race well and be prepared. It is really about living each day for Him. That is why I like this little phrase, "in this present age." It means today. We love to put things off until tomorrow, but He is saying, "No, today is the day of salvation. Today is when I want to work within you. Today is when I want to purify you. Today is when I want to cause you to leave these other things behind and come to Me so that you will be that vessel fit for the Master's use." Not only in this age, praise God; He does use us in this age, but also in the age to come.

What I would like to do this morning is to look at who Titus is and then consider this matter of the grace of God. Why was it sent? Why has the grace of God appeared?

Next time, Lord willing, we can look at how we can make this real in our lives. It is one thing to know about this; it is one thing to be able to say, "Oh, the grace of God is wonderful," and we can go on and on with many wonderful hymns. But is it made real in our lives? Is the life of Christ a reality to us? That is what we will consider next time together.

Background of Titus

I would like to start by noting that many of us may not be that familiar with Titus. When you look at it, it is probably not one of the most popular books that we turn to all the time. Do we even know that much about Titus? I sent out some verses yesterday, and hopefully, some will have looked at them.

Young Co-worker of Paul with a Hidden Ministry

If you look at Titus, we see that he was a co-worker with Paul, similar to Timothy. They were both young. Most people think Titus was probably a little bit older than Timothy, but we do not really know a lot about him. In fact, it is interesting that he is a co-worker with Paul, but he is never mentioned in the book of Acts. To me, this is a powerful testimony of one who had a hidden ministry, hidden from man's eyes but not from God's. We often want to be seen and made prominent in everything, but we really appreciate this one who has a hidden life with the Lord because he was serving the Lord. He was not out to seek the praises of man; he was there for the praises of God, to be faithful to Him and to really receive that grace known and used by God.

Chronologically, the first time we see Titus is in Galatians 2:1,3 which says, "Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. ... But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." There is a great debate among the commentators about whether this is 14 years from his date of conversion or 14 years from when he references going to Jerusalem in the first chapter of Galatians, verse 18. However, it is irrelevant which one it was. We know he is going there now, and he is going to an event that is recorded in Acts 15.

They were having a conversation in Jerusalem about whether Gentiles needed to be circumcised. We know how that worked out, and we are thankful for that. Paul took Titus, who was a Gentile, along almost as an example to say, "Does this one who serves the Lord need to be circumcised?" They determined, "No, all the grace of God has appeared; we do not need to bring them back under the law."

We do not know how Titus was saved either. We believe from the Scriptures that he was saved through Paul's ministry because Paul, at the beginning of Titus, says, "My true child in the faith." So, people say, "Aha! That means he was saved through Paul's ministry." We cannot be absolute on any of these points. He is not mentioned again until II Corinthians. We can assume that he continued in his ministry.

In II Corinthians, Paul refers to him. We knew Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote I Corinthians. He wrote a very strong and severe letter, and Paul was concerned about how this letter would be received. He had not heard any reports, and he did not know if the ones at Corinth were angry with him, if they had excommunicated him, or if they were ready to chop his head off.

Paul Sent Titus to Corinth

Paul was disturbed by it. Titus was with him. While he was in Troas, he sent Titus on to Corinth to check on things and get a report for him. Paul was actually disturbed at that point in time in Troas. He did not have any rest in his spirit, so he went over to Macedonia. Corinth, Thessalonica, and Philippi were all parts of Macedonia, Corinth being the capital of Macedonia.

Titus showed up in Macedonia in II Corinthians 7, and he came and encouraged Paul to know how well they had received the letter and responded. It was great comfort to Paul. As an aside, one thing I really appreciated about that little interaction between Titus and Paul is that it shows Paul's humanity. Here is this great apostle, but he was out of rest. He could not even share the Gospel in Troas. He said, "My spirit is so disturbed," that he had to leave until he got over into Macedonia, waiting for Titus to come. Finally, Titus came to him, and he was comforted and back in a place of rest.

Next, we see Titus in II Corinthians 8, where he is traveling around Macedonia because they were taking a love gift over to the ones in Jerusalem.

Paul Left Titus in Crete to Minister unto the Saints

We do not hear anything of Titus again until after the Book of Acts ends. Paul gets out of prison at the end of the Book of Acts and heads back. It is believed that it was probably in Macedonia that Paul and Titus met up again. At that point, they traveled down to Crete, that island in the middle of the Mediterranean, and they started ministering there.

Paul leaves Titus in Crete and says, "When you finish here, come back up to this area and meet me in Nicopolis." After Nicopolis, the last we hear of Titus is in II Timothy, where Paul says that Titus is serving in Dalmatia. Dalmatia is right up in the area above Macedonia. It is also referred to in Scripture as Lycaonia in Acts.

Titus Was Faithful

All of this shows how Titus had a hidden ministry in the eyes of man but was very faithful. He had a willingness to serve anywhere. He was over in Antioch, going to Jerusalem, traveling through Ephesus, going to Macedonia, and then to Crete. Wherever the Lord was using him, he had a willingness to go.

Sometimes we can think, "Oh, Lord, I feel I am supposed to serve here." Many of us have prayed with our brother throughout this matter of where he would get his residency. I appreciate how he may have had his preferences, but he left it in God's hands. "Where does the Lord want me?" Not, "Where do I want to be?" but "Where does God want me?" We are thankful that God got him into Duke for that.

We can handicap God at times with our desires instead of just letting go. Some are looking for a job. We want our brother to have a job here in Richmond, but maybe he will get a job somewhere else. Where does God want him? Where does God have need? That is the desire of all our hearts for one another. We do not let our natural emotions and love for one another hinder that.

What I appreciated so much about Titus is that he was willing to go anywhere, serve anywhere, and even be in some difficult situations. As you look at Timothy and Titus, there is a tremendous contrast between these two. There is a contrast between Timothy and Titus. Titus was a thoroughbred Gentile, and I did not know how to describe Timothy in one word, so I said he was Jewish. His mother was Jewish, and his father was a Gentile. He had to get circumcised.

Look at where the Lord sent them. Titus went to Corinth and Crete, which are not the highest spiritual places. They fell into a category of the flesh. Timothy went over to Ephesus, which was a spiritual church. There is a contrast between where they went. Titus was a little more extroverted, while we know from Paul's writings to Timothy that he was shy and introverted. Titus was probably more of a troubleshooter. Paul did not know if there would be trouble in Corinth, so he sent Titus to find out.

Just Be Yourself in Christ Under the Holy Spirit

We know from reading the letter of Titus there was a lot of trouble going on there. If they had sent Timothy to Crete, they would have probably eaten him alive and spit him out, but the Lord knows. Titus was a little more tough-skinned, while Timothy was a little more sensitive. The point is that the Lord uses different ones in different situations. There is not one temperament that is the perfect Christian temperament. We are all different kinds of temperaments.

There are many different ways people measure temperaments today, but they all agree that we are all different. The one thing they agree upon is that we are all different temperaments. It does not make one better than the other; it is just different. Timothy could be used in this way under the control of the Spirit, and Titus could be used in another way.

So often we can forget how God has fearfully and wonderfully made each one of us so different and so wonderful. Do not try to be like someone else. Be yourself in Christ. Be yourself in the Holy Spirit. Just because you admire somebody does not mean you have to be like them. Just because you want to impress somebody does not mean you have to act like them.

I remember in high school, I tried to be someone I was not just to impress a girl. It did not work. It did not take long for her to see through that. We can do that spiritually too, trying to impress people. We can learn the Christian vocabulary, learn how to act, and learn how to respond. But just be yourself in Christ under the Holy Spirit. That is the key: in Christ, under the control of the Spirit, not just being yourself in your natural flesh. That is an abomination to all.

We see how the Lord uses different ones in different places. The Lord is using Titus in Crete. As we come over to Crete, we can briefly look at these ones here. We know that the ones from Crete were there on the day of Pentecost, visiting Jerusalem at that time.

The Charge to Titus

If you look at Acts 2:11, Cretans and Arabs were there. "We hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." So, they were there at Pentecost. Most people believe that Titus was written in about 62 A.D. It was written between I Timothy and II Timothy, so Titus was right in the middle. So that makes these assemblies, these ones in Crete, more or less 30 years old, if you look from Pentecost to the early 60s, roughly. But what were they like? If you read it, you saw what they were like.

The Characters of Cretans

Just for a couple of examples of what these ones in Crete were like, if we look at Titus 1:16, how would you like this as your testimony? "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." What a testimony! Also, in verse 12, it says, "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'" How would you like to be called

to go serve among them? You would say, “No, no, I want to go to Ephesus. They are so much sweeter, so much nicer.” You know, these ones had been saved, but they maybe just had not had a lot of teaching. We are not sure what they were exposed to beforehand, but they professed and knew God. They could say, yes, I am a Christian. But then their actions spoke otherwise.

Warning for Today’s Believers

Sadly, that is the testimony of believers at the end of the ages. II Timothy 3:5 says, “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; ...” That is a warning to us. Again, we want reality, but we are thankful. As we look at these ones, do we look down upon them and say, “oh, man, I cannot believe that?” And that is why I appreciate Paul. He knew who would be reading this letter sometime. He said, “Those folks in Richmond, Virginia, will be reading this letter 2,000 years from now. And I want to put a warning in there for them, and say, “Remember Titus 3:3: ‘For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.’” That is how we all start without the Lord. That is who we are.

Set In Order What Remains

If you think about the condition of these dear ones in Crete who Paul was writing to, it causes these theme verses that we are using to become more and more amazing to us. How to these ones has the grace of God appeared? The grace of God has appeared to all men. When Paul left Titus there, he gave him a charge. In the midst of everything that was going on he said in Titus 1:5, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains ...” Now, what is this charge? To set in order simply means to set straight, to bring it back to its original place. It is really a recovering process of bringing something back to its original place, its original function, and its original purpose. That is what God did when He saved us, what He has done for mankind. We were far away, but He created us with a purpose, with a function in view. When we fell because we were born of Adam, He redeemed us. God has redeemed us back to His original place that He wants us to be. He has brought us back to that original function with an original purpose that He has in view.

The Pain of Recovery

Medically, he says to set a broken bone. Now, they did not have great anesthesiologists back in those days. When you were setting a broken bone, you got pain. Sometimes when things are off the path and we have to get straightened out, there can be a little pain through the working of the cross, which is the discipline and we can see that it is with purpose. You know, if you break your arm, various things are broken, but you get them fixed and they hurt. But after a little bit of therapy, they are working again the way they are supposed to. So, the pain is worth it. I hate that little phrase, “No pain, no gain.” But sometimes that is true.

The Grace of God Has Physically Appeared

With this in view, let us look at these verses a little more specifically. In these three verses that have been our theme verses, Titus 2:11 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.” This little phrase, “The grace of God has appeared,” is an epiphany. It has physically appeared, manifested, made real in a person. It is not just a vision, but the actual physical person. The grace of God has physically appeared. It is like a great light shining in the midst of darkness at that point in time. Now, we use grace a lot, the word grace, quite often. But let us just refresh ourselves for what it really is. Much of what we are going through today is very fundamental and very basic. Most of us know it. But sometimes we just need little refresher courses at times. We know the grace of God in the Greek is the word “charis.” Looking at it from a Greek point of view, it means a favor freely bestowed without claim or expectation of any return. Nothing was done for this; it was just freely bestowed. Aristotle talks about it being bountiful. He uses those nice words; “a bountiful motive is the free heartedness of the giver.” He has such a bounty and loving heart that freely gives to one.

Grace Bestowed on Enemies

In the Greek culture and throughout that history, it was always conferred on a friend. How precious that that grace came forth to a friend. It is actually that last little phrase that causes the greatest controversy, because for us the grace of God was displayed to an enemy, and we were His enemies. The grace of God came forth and was displayed which was revolutionary at that time. The word “grace” was a normal word that they used back then, and there was nothing religious about it, nor was it special.

But all of a sudden, when grace was bestowed, it was bestowed upon their enemies. It shook the world and turned it upside down—this thought of loving your enemies, this grace of God has appeared to us who were His enemies, alienated against Him! It is hard, I think, for us to really appreciate the profoundness of this. Something was done through our Lord Jesus Christ when He came upon this earth that was totally contrary to history and to the culture of the whole world at that point in time. They were used to grace being shown to their friends, but to your enemies! It was just, again, I will use the word revolutionary; it was just so astonishing.

Salvation for All

He brings salvation to all men. Jesus Christ was the justifier. He brought salvation to all men throughout. It did not matter. There was a great diversity of people that were there, and He brought that grace to all men, whether race, religion, nationality, slave or free. Again, this was revolutionary, because slaves were not even considered people; they were just property. But the grace of God was shown to these ones that they were to become children of the living God. He died for them. There was an equality that came forth from Him.

He did not care; there was no respecter of persons, whether you were male or female, young or old. Again, this was revolutionary. The thought of the grace of God appearing to

a woman, they just could not accept it. People would accept it appearing to a man, but to a woman at that point in time, they were barely, you could say, second-class citizens. I do not want to say there was no use for them because they made babies. But there were not many uses for the women at that time other than serving their homes and families. For one to come in and say, “No, I died for them too; there is an equality between the male and the female. Yes, I created them with a diversity of functions; but in life, there is equality there.” Revolutionary!

This was just sweeping through what occurred at that time because there was an inclusiveness to Christ. Everyone that was born of Him was called into this fellowship with God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This point in time was the Jesus revolution. Now, there have been many Jesus revolutions throughout history. We talk about one in the 60s and 70s that was, we could say, a Jesus revolution. But this is the Jesus revolution that took place that turned the world upside down.

The Manifestation of Grace in Our Lives

We are thankful how that grace was manifested as recorded in John: “The Word became flesh, and He was full of grace and truth.” Praise God for our Lord Jesus Christ. As we have said before, grace was manifested through Him and it comes out in love. Grace in a life manifests itself in love. Truth in life manifests itself in light, and we can go on. There was reality there; not just a thought, not just a concept, but a reality came forth that was seen. This is what He is jealous for us today. He wants His life to be seen through us, to be lived through us. We talked during worship time, even opened up about how we are in Christ, and that is wonderful. But Christ is in us, and He is desiring to break forth out of us, to be seen as a testimony unto Him.

We are thankful that when this grace was manifested, it was far more than just to save us. He had far more in view. Even though that is so great a salvation we have, it is far more than just saving us. He also wanted to do that work of sanctification. That is why Titus 2:12 speaks of “instructing.” Now, it depends on what translation you have. Some say instructing, some say teaching, some say training, some say discipling. It is all the same. But there is a discipling of the positives against the negative. The negative is denying ungodliness and worldly desires, and the positive is living sensibly, righteously, godly, in the present age. And Grace has appeared to teach us, and to work holiness within us. The one thing about whether you are thinking about instructing, teaching, training, discipling, means you are under somebody, you are teachable, you are learning from a master, you are learning from a tutor, you are learning from your teacher. There is an acknowledgment that it is not about you.

Holy Spirit Is Our Teacher

The Holy Spirit knows it all, and He is going to convey it to us; He is our teacher. And because He lives within us He brings things to life within us. Thank the Lord, He does that work of sanctification when He came; He sanctifies us and teaches us. Now one thing

about our precious Lord and the Holy Spirit Who is within us, He never forces Himself upon us. He is a perfect southern gentleman. He never forces Himself upon us at all.

But He says, “Behold my love, Behold my mercies.” He is looking for us to have that free will response, to give Him permission. It is amazing how if we do not give God permission to work within us, He will not work, no matter that He is so powerful. We can stop the power of God from working in us by saying, “No!” We will touch more on that the next time. But we see how that grace teaches us. By His grace, we learn to say from our hearts, “Yes, to living sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age. When everything around us and everything within us wants to say, “No, I cannot do that! I am not going to do that!” There is the grace of God sufficient to say, “Yes!”

Sadly, today, most people, when we consider the grace of God, we think that, yes, yes, we are free to do anything. “Oh, the grace of God, we can do this, we can do that.” It is so misused and misapplied. But there is within the grace of God a time to say, “Yes.” It is saying yes to Him and no to ourselves. There is that freedom, the blessedness we have no matter how powerful that “no” is within us that says, “I cannot do it!” Yes, you can, by the grace of God. Not I, but Christ. Yet not I, but Christ who lives within me. He teaches us the grace of God. We learn how to say “no” in our hearts. It is no to the ungodliness, the worldly desires, to self, the world, the sin, the enemy; no to all of that.

Now to the opposite. When everything around us is saying, “Say yes; just go along with this. Give in to this. Give in to your emotions that want to get out of control. Give in to your vain thoughts. You know you have a right for those thoughts. Your circumstances are so against you. Your temptations are so much. Oh, look, you do not have. You can say no. You cannot continue on because you are such a victim. There is such a victimization within society today, but you can say, “No; I am not a victim.” I can say, “Yes to Him.” The temptation would be for us to give in and say “yes” to our victimization. Every one of us is a victim. It would be the temptation to give in to that. Oh, my circumstances, you do not understand my family, the history, this, and that. Oh, and we can give in and use them as excuses. But praise God, the grace of God is greater than our victimization. We can say by His grace, “No to that and yes to Him.” Praise God for that.

He Compels Us

Our grace teaches us it is not a legalistic way of doing it, but it is by His life and His love, as we have talked about; He compels us. When we really understand and can get the right concept of grace, there is a compelling within us. There is a desire within us for this holy life, a sanctified life. It is coming from within that there is this desire, “Lord, I want to be like You, and I cannot. But there is a life within me that if I will allow it to come forth by Your grace, it could do a transforming work in that yes or no that we share.” It is constrained by the love of God, constrained by His love. Even in the tough times, I always remember this prayer of many who have prayed it. I know Margaret Barber uses it. F.B. Meyer uses it very much for situations that we are wrestling with, wrestling through. We might not want to do something, but Lord, make me willing to be willing. It is a

surrendering all to Him. All of this shows us the yes and the no of His grace, of how to live in this present age. There is a purpose for that.

Living in the Present Age

Live Sensibly, Righteously, and Godly

As we see this grace of God and how to live in this present age, it also shows us on this positive side of how we live with various relationships within our lives. It said He wanted us to live sensibly, righteously, and godly. Now as we look at these words, I am going to make some definitions here, some application, but I am not making them absolutely because there are great crossovers between these.

But living sensibly in a sound mind really just speaks of our own personal relationship within ourselves. Sometimes our minds can get so wound up, and we have no peace within ourselves. But the grace of God can give us, it can teach us and strengthen us to not allow our minds, our emotions, just to go crazy. To live righteously is really to do the right thing. It really speaks of our relationship with our brothers and sisters, fellow man, how do we relate with one another. Living Godly? Just to me, it speaks of living in our relationship with Him. Are we going to live that life that He calls us to live?

Living Today for Him

That is where He wants us to be living in this present age. It is all about today, living today for Him in that training. Because it is by His grace that we live in this present age. I love that little word. I do not even know what it is “in” this present age—not become like it or live for it. But in this we are in this present age, in the world, but not of the world. That is where the grace of God is there to allow us to do that. He does this great conforming work of transforming us out of the midst of an evil world. The present age is an evil world, but God is not limited by the condition of the world. God can do this great transforming work.

Looking For Blessed Hope

And just as we have said, the grace of God was not there just for our salvation. It was not there just for our sanctification. There is so much more. This is where we come into Titus 2:13 where we can see the grace of God that puts that hope and expectation within us where we are looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus, looking with expectation. You know, hope, expectation is a great motivator, a great, (I will use a modern term) influencer. There are many influencers in the world today. Hope and expectation in Him are a great influencer. We want to be those that are looking for that glorious appearance. There is an expectation, there is a grace that causes that to become real within our heart. Something that is unimaginable to the natural man. God is coming back. By the grace of God, He can cause that to become reality in our hearts, even though we might not fully understand, it can become reality in our hearts and press us into Him in such a way that we can be those that are anxiously waiting

for His return, expecting it, living for it, allowing it to impact the decisions we make in life and all that we have there.

A People for His Own Possession

As we look at these verses in Titus 2:14, it really sums up everything in that redeeming, purifying, and possessing. How the Lord, through His grace, calls us according to His purpose, and that is His end in view. His end is a people for His own possession, that corporate expression of His life upon this earth and in the eternity to come, in the kingdom to come, His possession. Some translations use throughout the Scripture, that little phrase, His possession. It is called a special treasure. We are His special treasure with that end being His bride, that eternal helpmate, ruling and reigning with Him. This is what He has been looking for from the very beginning. In Genesis, Adam looked upon Eve; “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.” Our Lord Jesus, in a spiritual way, wants to look upon us and say, “Oh, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. That is my character, that is my nature in them.” The bride has made herself ready. Praise God for that!

Zealous For Good Deeds

The thing that keeps touching my heart about grace is that we sing so much about how amazing it is. But has the magnitude and the amazing nature of grace really captured our hearts? And does it? Is it there to answer the, “But, Lord, no, I cannot do this, I cannot do that. Look at me, who am I?” God is not surprised by who we are. There is an amazing testimony here as we just think about how amazing grace is. Because if we go back to the end of Titus 1:16b that says, “... worthless for any good deed.” If you look at other translations, it says they were unfit. They were reprobate, disqualified, worthless. This is the one. This is what he said. This is who these ones in Crete were. And yet, what does the grace of God want to do to these dear ones as He has appeared to them? He wants them to become zealous for good deeds because they were useless for good deeds. They were worthless in themselves. But by the powerful working of the grace of God in their lives, they were then ready as His own possession, zealous for good deeds. What a transformation! What a miracle! And He wants to do the same thing within each one of us because that is who we were without Him. He wants to do this work within us, that we too could be zealous for all of the things that He has for us, all of the precious, magnificent promises that there are in Him, as long as we will allow Him to do that.

Conclusion

How are we transformed? That is the big question. Okay. How do you get from verse 1:16 to 2:14? How does that work? Well, that is what we are going to touch on next time. I will give you three keys. Christ in us, the cross, and the Holy Spirit. If that is too simple for you, I am sorry, but it is not that complicated. Christ in us, the cross, and the Holy Spirit, each of them working together. The Lord willing, we will touch on this next time.

Thank the Lord, the grace of God has appeared to us, saving us, instructing us, sanctifying us, giving us hope, making us His own possession. He has appeared to all mankind. He is out there, all of it. That person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the precious grace

of God, is wanting to work within each one of us. He is simply looking to us to say, "Yes, Lord." There is a little song, "I Surrender All." There are various songs about giving ourselves to the Lord and wanting Him to work. But are they just songs? Or are we those that say, as that little chorus I referred to earlier, "Yet not I, but through Christ in me." That is our testimony. That is what it comes down to: "Yet not I, but through Christ in me." May we all have that desire.

We know we have been so bountifully blessed with the grace of God appearing and being made manifest to each one of us, but we do not want to stop partially along the way. We want to be those that are allowing that grace of God to motivate us to be that hope, be that influencer, to keep us pressing on all the way through to the end. This is what I believe happened in Titus's life. He had a hidden life, but through it all it seems like he ended well. The last we heard of him was in Dalmatia. Only the Lord knows what he was doing there and how he was pressing on, learning more. That is our desire that we too could finish well, giving Him permission to work within us.

So let us end here for this morning.

Lord, we do thank You for Your great grace. We thank You for Your wonderful loving kindness. We are thankful Lord, for the life that You have implanted within us. We are thankful we have this table that reminds us of the price that was paid for You to show forth the grace of God to Your enemies. We are thankful, Lord, that You have drawn us unto Yourself. You call us friends and You have made that place for us to live and to dwell. We have again a simple desire that You could continue to have a great freedom in each one of our hearts and lives, conforming us to Your image and setting us free from this world. We confess in this day and time it is a challenge to live in this present age. But we are thankful for the amazing grace that makes that possible. Not just to live in this present age, but to overcome in the midst of it. We give our hearts to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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