

Why Has the Grace of God Appeared #2

Lord, I think we are captured this morning by this privilege, we have been brought into a place of fellowship with You. We who were far off have been brought nigh. You purchased us, You brought us into this, the fellowship of the Godhead. And Lord, we are thankful. It is because of that place we have in You: the place of fellowship, the place of an open heaven, the place of nothing between us; that we can continue in Your presence, for Your word to speak to us, to strengthen us, and to encourage us for the days we find ourselves living in. In Your wonderful name. Amen.

Introduction

Today is part two of “Why the Grace of God has Appeared.” If you remember last month, as we considered some verses out of Titus, we looked at this: why the grace of God appeared. And just to read these verses to refresh our memory in Titus 2:11-13:

“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. When the grace of God appeared, our Lord Jesus Christ, the personification of the grace of God, brought us salvation. But it did not stop there. He wanted to instruct us, to teach us, to disciple us, conforming us into His image; that we would be those who, because of Christ in us, would have a desire, would have a hope set before us, looking for that blessed appearing of our Lord with His second return.

These are very comprehensive verses, they capture the heart of this epistle, and they capture the very heart and essence of the entire gospel. They show us the full working of the grace of God. And as we said, that grace of God is Jesus Christ: the very person, the personification of this grace. And it has appeared to us, saving us. It is instructing us, disciplining us; it is giving us hope; and it is making us His own possession with a purpose. I thank the Lord how it says the grace of God appeared to all mankind. It was not a selective appearance.

He came because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He made His whole presence known to the entire world. His desire is that all mankind would be saved, would respond to this grace in the same way. By His grace, Christ in us, He wants each one of us to be conformed into His image; not just saved, but to become His disciples, to have that hope set before us that we have in Him.

The Purpose of God's Grace

And then also there was verse 14, which followed those three. In many ways, it sums up what those three were saying. It says, “Who (speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ) gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify (to sanctify, to

set us apart) for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds (works).”

What I appreciated about these verses, particularly this one, is that whatever God does, He always has His end in view. We look about, we look at what we get out of it, and we are so blessed. But when He is doing something, He always has an end in view. He has His possession, and He calls us His own possession. And at the end, it is a possession that reflects the very character and nature of His Son.

The beautiful thing about the grace of God is that when the grace of God works, God gets the glory. When man works, man gets the glory. In actuality, the same events can occur, the same words can be used; but when it is the grace of God coming forth, He gets the glory. We see many men using very religious words, Christian words, quoting scriptures, etc. Who is getting the glory?

Tragically, in the days we are living in, and it has been this way throughout history, man often is getting the glory because he is doing it for himself, for his little kingdom, for his self-interest. But when the grace of God is working, we are thankful for how it is God who gets the glory. And what He is looking for is that there would be ones that answer to His heart.

You know, we started this morning in Genesis. And we remember in Genesis God created man, and He brought forth Eve. What did Adam say about Eve? “Ah, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.”

And that is what the Lord Jesus is looking for in all of us. Not so much in the physical aspect, but a life within us. He would say, “Oh, that is my character. That is my nature. That is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh,” spiritually, there is that expression.

He is looking for that corporate expression, the fullness of His expression. It says here, “a people for His own possession.” This gets translated in different ways. This little phrase, “own possession,” some people call it a special treasure.

God Brought the Israelites to Himself

And it is interesting when you look at this phrase, “His own possession, special treasure.” Where is it first used? Is this a New Testament term? Praise God, it is not. We see it from the very beginning, back in Exodus.

We see how God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, after they had come through the Red Sea, they had seen all the miraculous works of God. They were there at Mount Sinai. This is right before the Ten Commandments were first given. God calls Moses aside to tell him what He wants to say to His people. And the Lord declares in Exodus 19:4, “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.” I love that phrase. He brought them out of Egypt. He could have said, “look how I brought you out of Egypt.” Sometimes we can leave something, but do we know where we are going? Do we have a destination? God said, “I brought you out.” Why? For this, for that? “I brought you to Myself.”

He Brings Us to Himself to be His Treasured Possession

What a price He paid to bring us to Himself. The call to Israel was to come to Him. He had paid a price that they would come to Him. And then He continues with this little phrase. He says, "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice, keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples. For all the earth is Mine, and you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." We know Peter uses these verses when he is describing the Church. So often we focus on being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation and how great that is. But what caught my attention in this verse was what did He first call His people? "My special treasure, My treasured possession."

And then He continued, how He had brought them into this relationship, brought them into the fellowship that we have been hearing about this morning. And the calling here, as you look, it is not just an individual calling: but each one of these, the treasured possession, the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, they are a corporate expression of His life among His people.

Individually, we can each manifest the life of Christ in a marvelous, wonderful way. But thank the Lord when there is that corporate expression of His life. We are studying that now as we are going through the Book of Acts on Friday night times. As there is that corporate expression of His life, there is something that is fuller; there is something that is higher and deeper, there is a richness to it. We see more of a completeness of all that God is doing.

When we see the manifestation of this corporate expression, God's amazing grace really touches us. We touched also last time about the amazing grace of how, through that grace, He transforms us.

As we mentioned in Titus 1, he says of these people, talking about the same people here now, remember, these ones are described as, "worthless for any good deed." And really that is a picture of ourselves. Before we knew Christ, we were worthless.

But praise God, He came in, He transformed us. He puts His life in us with the desire that we would be those that are zealous for His good deeds, zealous for what He is doing. What a miracle. How He is desiring to do this in us. We ended last time with the question of how are we transformed? And this is not an exhaustive list, but it was just three keys that have touched my heart.

It is Christ in us. We have that precious life within us. And we have the Cross and the Holy Spirit. I had, in my great wisdom and plan, thought I would just do this in one more message. Well, it has evolved into two more.

Christ Is in Us

We are going to look at Christ in us today. Now, for many, that can sound so simplistic. And it is very fundamental and very foundational.

Sometimes it is good to go back and review the foundation, review the basic truths. We can use something and say something so much it can lose the preciousness and the value of it. And as we go through life, we can actually start neglecting it, taking it for granted. But it is a precious treasure we have, Christ in us.

Because we have Christ in us, as we look back at verse 12, Christ in us is instructing us. Christ in us is instructing us to deny those evil things and to live sensibly in this present age. Praise God.

How is He doing this work? He has taken us: He has purchased us, He has redeemed us, now He is discipling us. He is instructing us on how to live in this age, but also in that age to come. Praise God for that.

When we think of Christ in us, there are many scriptures we could use. I picked two of them, a couple of familiar verses.

We look in the letter to the Church in Colossae. Colossians 1:27 reads, "To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ in you, the hope of glory. Then Colossians 3:3-4 reads, "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." What a foundational truth. Not only has He saved us, but now He is our life. Praise God, Christ in us.

We have heard how, yes, we are in Christ. Praise God for that. But also, Christ is in us. And we have this wonderful life within us. And I love how it is Christ in us. We sang a song last time, "it is not I, but Christ in me." It is not our efforts, but it is simply allowing that life to come forth, allowing that life to work in us.

I like these verses here. I picked these two, in particular, because there is not only just the present tense, "is," the little phrase, "which is Christ in you." Speaking of us presently, now, who is our life?

But it also speaks of the future glory that there is when He is revealed. By the grace of God, by that love of God, the work of God: not only are we in Christ, but Christ is in us. He has become our life. Again, this can become so familiar to us that we lose the preciousness of it. But it actually is one of the very keys to our life with Him.

I am always hesitant to say there is one key because we see the fullness of Christ. But it is one of the keys, it is one of the secrets of this life that we have been called into. He has purchased us, redeemed us, taken us out of this fallen world. And His life is now in us, desiring to come forth in a fuller and greater way.

And not just for right now; but as His life is in us, that life in us is also touching us and saying, "there is something else." There is something else ahead. There is a glory. There is a whisper from the glory. We start to hear that life whispering, there is a glory.

The King is coming. The King is coming soon. I love that hymn. His life is in us to prepare us, redeeming us, transforming us. But sadly, as you look at so much in Christianity; you look at your own life, I look at my life, oftentimes it can be Christ plus something else.

Warning: Christ Plus Something Else

Like at the church in Colossae, it was Christ plus Gnosticism. It can be Christ plus something. It could be Christ plus knowledge. Oh, the focus on the doctrine and the teaching, but it is without His life.

Remember in the Gospel of John, what did the Lord Jesus say? And it sounds like a strange verse. If you look at the context, though, you understand it. It says, "You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life." Now obviously, the Scriptures are there to lead us to Him. They will bring us into that eternal life. That was the purpose. But they were just looking with their minds, gaining knowledge.

Oh, they could quote all the Scriptures. They knew exactly where the Messiah was going to be born. They knew the prophecies. They knew the various things, but they missed the very heart, the very essence of what God was saying in the Scripture. They had the written word, but they did not have the spirit of that word. And how we can, in the same way, be so content about gaining knowledge. That is what we inherited from Adam and Eve. They chose that tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead of that tree of life.

There is still a battle over that within each one of us today. Sometimes we can do Christ plus works. There can be so much activity going on. And what did the Lord say at the end of the Sermon on the Mount? They once came to Him and they said, "Lord, we did such and such in Your name." He said, "I never knew you. You did it all out of your own strength. I never asked you to do that. You did it."

And then we can also have Christ plus certain experiences. We can have highs that we want to worship, that make us so high it feels good. Miracles, all the outward manifestations; or Christ plus the second blessing, Christ plus this and that.

Oh, but Lord Jesus, is Christ enough for us? We see that life. Because if you look at this matter of Christ plus, what is the very origin of it? The very origin of Christ plus is our own self, it is our soul. Out of knowledge, it is the mind searching for something. It is our will to search for something. It is our emotion searching for something. The origin is not His life, it is our own self.

It could be very good intentions; but our good intentions, the best of ourselves, are as filthy rags. Our brother mentioned this morning in the opening how the best righteousness we can come up with in ourselves is simply still as filthy rags. And it does not qualify us to be called the righteousness of God. Only He is our righteousness.

Christ Our Life

He calls us, Lord, on this day, to simply be returning to Him. And sometimes that can be too simple for us, but He wants to be Lord and King of our life. And as we return to Him, as we come back to Him, He starts this amazing work of the salvation of our soul, that is what Peter calls it.

Intimate Relationship with Christ

We are not going to go into the salvation of our soul extensively today, we will do that later. But it is simply our soul coming under the government of Him as our new master; and not our old master, our self-life. That transforming, transferring of power over our soul to come under His headship in a living way: that is where our minds are renewed, our will, our emotion has a new master. And His life is lived out within us.

And it comes about as we come into that personal, intimate relationship with Him. Praise God for that. So, when we talk about this matter of Christ our life, a couple of questions came up as I was preparing. I do not have the full answer for them, but I just want us to consider these.

When we speak of Christ our life, what are we really saying? What does that mean to us? Do we just use this phrase? It is a beautiful phrase that we can roll off our tongues in such eloquent ways. What does it really mean?

And then do our lives reflect it? Do our lives reflect Christ being our life? And how do you even start to explain His life? You say, "Oh, Christ is our life." What does that mean? How do you start to explain Christ our life?

The Immensity of Christ's Life

When you really stop and consider Christ our life, you are overwhelmed. You see the immensity of it, the unsearchableness of it, the indescribable nature of it. And you run out of words trying to show how vast it is; and really, you do not know, because it is infinite. There is an infinite life there. There are many characteristics of it: it is undefiled, unfading, incorruptible, on and on and on, we can keep going.

The sisters on Tuesday are studying the "I am." When Jesus says, "I am this and I am that. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the good shepherd." Beautiful testimonies, but hear what I am trying to say clearly: the "I am's" that He shares in the Gospel of John are not exhaustive, there is more to all the fullness of who He is. That is why, when the Lord said to Moses: "go back to Pharaoh," Moses says, "Who will I say has sent me?" He simply says, "I am that I am." The "I am" has sent you.

And to help us understand this, many people have illustrated over the years, you can put a little blank after that "I am." Because whoever you need Him to be in that moment, "I am: I am your redeemer, I am your comforter, I am your refuge, I am your strength." On and on and on, you cannot reach the end of it.

Comprehending the Life of Christ

I love these posters that you see with all the names of Christ. We want to be able to comprehend it in our own minds. When we start to think we comprehend, then I think God, in His mercy, shows us another aspect just to keep us humble. We cannot fully comprehend in ourselves, in our natural minds, the fullness of the life of Christ. It is an overwhelming fact. I will show you that I am from the 60s and 70s, it should “blow your mind.” We do not use that term nowadays, but most of the people here would understand that phrase. It would blow your minds, because of all that it is.

But thank the Lord, it is an altogether other life, divine. It is not natural; it is altogether other. And it is an uncreated life, not created like us. It has existed throughout eternity. It is a life with a whole different purpose than our natural life.

And there is a quality of this life, not the quantity. Sometimes we think eternal life is a quantity, to live forever, which is true. But the eternal is really, I think, speaking of the quality there, the divineness of it. There is something of it so other than what we have, it is an overwhelming fact.

So, as we touch on Christ our life today, and aspects of it, we are going to use a phrase from Job. In Job 26: 14, as he was responding one time, Job says he just touches the edges of His ways, the borders, the fringe of His ways. We cannot touch the fullness of it, but we can touch the borders of it

Amy Carmichael has a wonderful devotional, *Edges of His Ways*, it is like touching the hem of His garment. When you touch the hem of His garment, that one receives the full power. She knew that she had touched Him. And often we just get a little touch of Him, but how even that little touch overwhelms us in such a wonderful way. And we desire just to touch the edge of the garments of His life today.

By Divine Intervention Christ Become Our Life

We talked about foundational things. We asked the question, so how did Christ become our life? This is not in any way trying to be exhaustive of how He became our life. But He became our life by a divine intervention. It was not of ourselves, purely a divine intervention. Life came from another kingdom and invaded this fallen world. Life came from another.

He was a citizen of another kingdom. And He came into this kingdom, into this fallen world. He invaded this fallen world and praise God, out of all that He did, He transferred us out of that domain of darkness; out of that fallen world, into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Now we are citizens of that new kingdom. Strangers and aliens here, this earth is not our home.

Again, those words can flow from our tongue, but do our lives reflect it? Sometimes we battle more over the things of this earth than we do the things of the kingdom of God. May our focus, may our desire, may the drive within us be for His kingdom to come, not only upon earth, but in heaven. His kingdom to come and His will being done.

So Great Salvation

Consider all that He did to redeem us. And again, we cannot cover the fullness of that today. But as we see it, we see what in Hebrews is called “so great a salvation.” That miracle, which has occurred within each one of us, what a great salvation. What a miracle He wrought within us and what a costly price was paid. Every Lord's Day when we have this table, we try again to somehow grasp the reality of the price that He paid to redeem us out of this fallen world and out of our nature. And again, it is one of those things where we are just touching the very edge of it because that price was so great. It was far beyond what we can comprehend.

Power That Overcame

With Him coming and dying for us, we can talk about it and it can touch our hearts, but there is a fullness there that somehow is yet to be revealed. We see the magnitude of it, we see His great love. Praise God, it is so great a salvation. It was that power when He came, tremendous power that was able to overcome the world.

A power that overcame sin, a power that overcame the enemy, and a power that overcame self, our own self, to save us. What a tremendous power that is. Praise God. May we realize that in a fuller and greater way. And we are thankful too, how we have this otherness of a new life.

We Have Received the Fullness of His Life

Each of us, as we have been saved in this “so great a salvation,” has received the fullness of His life. We now have Christ in us. Not just me getting a part or portion of Him; but each one of us, we have Him. Christ is in us.

Sometimes we can look around at what we might call spiritual giants, and we say, “Oh, look at Bakht Singh, look at Watchman Nee, look at T. Austin Sparks. Wow. They have so much of His life, I can never be like that; I am just a little one talent person.”

Bakht Singh, Watchman Nee, T. Austin Sparks, and each one of us, at the moment that we were saved, received Christ in us. By the grace of God, the life that we all received was the same measure. We have Christ in us.

Now, yes, there are different gifts, diversities of gift there. But when it comes to life, the very essence of life, we all received that same amount. There is a grace of God that we received and how do we respond to that? Oftentimes ones that we may call giants, maybe they just responded in a fuller and greater and deeper way than we responded to the grace of God.

And that is what He is calling us to in this hour, to respond. But it is the very foundation of our life, that life is the same. And He is wanting that life to be manifest within us. Thank the Lord for that.

Allowing Him to Work

When we think about His life: the all-powerful nature of it, the almighty nature of it, the divine nature of it; that life is within us, desiring to break forth. We have One living within us is that trying to break forth from us.

He is simply looking for us to say, “Yes, go ahead, I am not going to stand in your way. Break forth within me.” As we think of that life, as we consider all that Christ did by His death and resurrection, we start to get a fuller sense of this “so great a salvation.” Praise God, brothers, and sisters.

When we are thinking about being prepared, getting ready, transforming: Christ in us, that is the hope we have. That is how He is working within us.

Salvation of Spirit, Soul, and Body

Again, a very fundamental issue, what occurred when we were born again? Now this is just a very simple overview. But when we were born again, one aspect of it is our spirit, which was dead or asleep, depending on how you want to look at it; it was born again, it was awakened, it was made alive, and we received His life in our spirit. Our spirit is where we have our conscience, our intuition, our place of communion. That consciousness of: this is of Him, this is not; that intuition of knowing His heart; that place of communion, of fellowship with Him. Oh, how that has been quickened.

Our spirit was under the dominion of our own self, our own life. But He is wanting us to come into really experiencing His life in our spirit in a fuller and greater way. We see how this foundational issue really gets to the very heart of all that occurred.

Because when we were born again, we still had our same old body. Nothing changed. You might have changed with a smile on your face instead of a grumpy old growl. But you have the same body. Praise God, one day we will get a new one. I think the older we get, the more we appreciate that. We are looking forward to not having to have knee replacements or cancer things removed, etc. But praise God, there will be that new body. Thank the Lord.

But also, when we were born again, we had that same soul. It was there. We might have started changing a little bit. But really the soul is the Lord’s starting point. As we mentioned earlier, Peter refers to it as the salvation of our soul. How He starts transforming, conforming us into His image.

Our spirit has been saved. As many say: our spirit has been saved, our soul is being saved, and our body will be saved. Oh, this is the “so great a salvation” that we all have been brought into. Again, I am preaching to the choir. This is a very fundamental thing that we know, but it is good for us to really come into reflecting upon it periodically. Thank the Lord how Kenny has been going through Romans, which deals with each of these matters in such a full way, an extensive way. Great letter there, as we consider Romans.

Living in the Good of His Life

The question we asked earlier, do we live in the good of His life? As we mentioned, He desires this opportunity to express Himself, His life. One of the beauties of His life: His life has stood every test throughout the ages and has proven itself to be victorious every time. Whatever His life came up against while He was upon this earth; while He is in His people; as ones have called upon His life throughout the ages; He has proven Himself to be faithful.

That is why we can sing, "Great is Thy Faithfulness, O God, my Father." Truly we have tasted and seen how good He is. But do we live in the good of it? Because many of the problems, the challenges, the issues we face every day are simply because we do not have a clear understanding of all that Christ has done for us at Calvary. Many of our problems and issues come back to our foundation.

It is not the complicated things. The basic foundation of all that Christ did for us at Calvary really gets to the core and root of most of the problems that we face in our life. We are not talking about understanding with our minds, but in our hearts knowing the reality of it. Because if we do not, it can make us susceptible to the temptations, accusations of the enemy, sin, and self in the world, influencing our life.

But praise God, what He did at Calvary allows us to live in the good of His life. To reflect a very basic truth, what happened at Calvary? We share about this every Lord's Day. Again, this is not exhaustive or extensive. He took our sins upon Himself. He canceled that certificate of death, set that prisoner free, concluded the past, and set us free from tyranny of the accusations. He set us free from the bondage of the kingdom of darkness that we were under for so long. He set us free from the bondages that we were not even aware of. And He became our life, a new life within us. Any of us could have made this list up because I know we are familiar with it.

But have we settled this in our hearts? Have we really come to know this? Or do we at times feel like we are in a bondage under guilt, past unworthy failures? Do we listen to the accusations of the enemy, the accuser? The enemy is always accusing us, and we are never exempt from this.

Accusations of the Enemy

I think I can speak probably for every person who has ever stood up here to share God's word, that sometime before you were getting ready to share, the enemy said, "you are unworthy." And that actually shows us one of the ways that the enemy works. One of the ways the enemy works is accusing us with the truth. Now, that sounds kind of funny when I say it. But when the enemy says, "Mac, you are unworthy to share," what is the answer? "Yes, that is true; but God, but I have a new life."

Now the enemy will lie to us, too, at times, but oftentimes there is something in our past. "Mac, remember when you did that? Remember you said this? remember that?"

And those things are true, but they are under the blood of the Lamb. They are settled, they are concluded, and that shuts the mouth of the enemy.

You never win an argument with the accuser of the brethren. You just have to say, “Nope, that was settled at Calvary. You accuse me of being a weak Christian, of this and that, all my failures, unfaithfulness, yada, yada. Yes, that is true. But they are under the blood of the Lamb, and we are new creatures in Him.” Thank the Lord for that.

We do not try to argue about it or try to justify ourselves. We just stand in all that He has done. It is under the blood of the Lamb. And we find out that with his accusations, the accuser is simply trying to get our eyes off the Lord and onto ourself. And when we do that, it is wrong.

David Response After He Was Shown His Sins

Now at times he does not even have to accuse us. We know we did something wrong. But if we have done something wrong, even if he accused, “look at what you did,” and you said, “that is true;” if we have sinned, accept responsibility for it. Say, “Yes, Lord, I did that; I repent, I confess my sins, and I accept Your forgiveness.” One of the greatest testimonies of that is with the life of David and Bathsheba. Nathan the prophet said, “David, you are the one that sinned.” David said, “I have sinned before God.”

But that did not stop David. He allowed the Lord to meet him, to cleanse him, and to continue on. That is the man after God's own heart. A man after God's own heart knows the preciousness of the blood of the Lamb in a far greater way than many others. David became a man after God's own heart because he recognized the “so great a salvation,” if I could use that term for an Old Testament person, that the Lord had done for David. It was not David, “it was not I; it was Christ” would be David's testimony. David was a mortal man. Failure is very blatant and open. But he had that heart for God.

He accepted responsibility for his actions. And when he sinned again, he says, “I fall into the hands of the living God.” He repented and he continued on. There were consequences obviously to some of David's sins, yes; but it did not hinder the Lord from fulfilling all that He wanted to do through David to bring in the kingdom, and to have that son that would carry on that testimony and build that tabernacle.

Christ the Solid and Sure Foundation

Thank the Lord, there is a solid and sure foundation. The great foundation we have of Christ our life; that objective, very fundamental truth that we are in Christ and Christ is in us, our life. And He is the very foundation, the foundation we have of being able to live in this present age.

By the grace of God, we can live with all the chaos in this world. Why? Because we have a solid and sure foundation. Now, speaking of solid and sure foundations, here is an accountant speaking about foundations. You have the wrong person up here. But the solid and sure foundation withstands the natural disasters, everything that comes upon it. I think you have probably seen pictures of natural disasters, how some buildings

stand, others collapse. It is a foundational issue. The home in this picture stood through the midst of this hurricane because of its foundation.

Now this home could have had the perfect storm-proof roof which they make for Floridians. You can have a roof that will withstand a hurricane. Okay, I act like I know what I am talking about, but I just read this in an article, so I can stand to be corrected. But they have a roof that can withstand a hurricane. They have siding that can withstand tremendous storms. They have windows that are hurricane proof. You can have all that superstructure that can withstand the hurricane. But if you do not have one thing, eventually none of those other things will help you. If you do not have the solid and sure foundation. A lot of this foundation is hidden.

One of the keys of these foundations: they take you off the ground, and separate you from the earth, so that you are lifted up above some of the things of life. The foundation we have in Christ lifts us up from touching, walking on this earth; it actually lifts us up off the earth, gets us into the heavenlies.

Praise God, this foundation was able to stand when all the others failed. This is just a simple picture of the solid and sure foundation we have. No weapon formed against us can stand because of the blood of the Lamb. No storms that come upon us can destroy us. It might do some damage: we might lose a few shingles, we might suffer a little bit, but He holds us.

He holds us steady. We are thankful for the foundation we have. Many will say, "it will not hold," but yes, it will. He is there to hold us whatever we face. And that is why I appreciate being part of the body of Christ. Because I hear of the solid and sure foundation; many of you so often at testimony times tell of how He held you through the midst of the storm and it encourages all of us. We are ever thankful for that.

Set Free to be Bondslave to Him

Praise God. Not only has He brought us, but He also gave us this solid and sure foundation. When we reflect upon this, "so great a salvation," all that He set us free from, Romans describes it as the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Praise God for that.

We have been brought in; we have been set free; coming into this glorious liberty of the sons of God. But the question we have now is, how are we using this newfound freedom? Are we using it for ourselves or are we using it for Him? What have we been set free from and what have we been set free to be? Praise God. Sometimes we hear ones talk about, "Oh, the great freedom that I have in Christ. I am so free now I do not have any bounds. I can meet over here; I can worship there; I can serve here. I can wear this and not care what people think about it. The clothing of today, I do not care if I as a woman wear this and it tempts men. I can watch anything, it can be a movie, a TV show, the Internet, or a video game. I am free. I am a Christian. I can do what I want to do because I have Christ."

Is that really the way He set us free? Now if you really look at the way He set us free, we see how He set us free from sin and the world and the corruption to be bond slaves to Him, serving one another. I pulled up a few verses with the word freedom in it to give us a great picture.

And one of the things you notice in the New Testament is that there is no scripture that says we are free to do our own thing. No scripture that says He set us free to do what we want to do. No, He set us free with a purpose. What a great salvation, this is Christ in us desiring to break forth.

Romans 6:18 says, "And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Oh, there is that righteousness our brother spoke of this morning. He is our righteousness, He is our master, and we are slaves to His righteousness.

Praise God for that. What freedom we have, not having to rely upon ourself, our own righteousness. Free from sin. I Peter 2:16 says, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil but use it as bondslaves of God."

Again, use this freedom as bondslaves of Him. A bond slave is a slave that loves his master too much to be set free; who says, "No, I want to stay in your house. I will love you forever. Me and my family, we are going to stay here." And he gets that ear pierced.

Praise God. Set free from all of this to live in harmony, to live together as brothers and sisters according to what He has done. You can look at Galatians 5:13, just two other verses, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh (we were talking about that a minute ago), but through love serve one another." That is, we are set free to serve one another. Eyes off ourselves, loving one another, serving one another.

And finally, in I Corinthians 8:9, "But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak." We know how Paul addresses this. You might be free to do something, but are you aware that what you are doing might cause someone else to stumble? There is a consciousness there of your brethren, not a bondage of "Oh, I cannot do this." Rather, out of love, you do not want to do this. You say, "I deny myself."

Truth Becomes Spiritual Reality

I always like to look for quotes from A.W. Tozer because he speaks the truth pretty bluntly. Christ our life is a precious truth. And when speaking of truth, Tozer said, "If truth does not impact our lives, what value is it? It simply puffs you up." The truth, Christ our life, is it impacting our life?

It is so vital to allow Christ in us, that objective truth, to become spiritual reality in our lives. Now, how does He do this? How does He make this truth of Christ our life reality in us? It is through this process we call transformation. There are many technical terms for transformation; but transformation is simply that process of transferring

control, or the influence of our natural spirit; from its previous master, our soul or self-life, to its new master: His life, Christ the Holy Spirit in us.

As we said, before we were saved our self-life controlled our spirit. Now we have a new master living in us. That spirit is born again, it goes through a transformation. It is a progressive process, through our whole life, of coming under the headship and lordship of our new master.

We know that in the Godhead we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They have three separate, different functions, but there is one life in each of those. It is not that the Father has a life, Christ has a life, and the Holy Spirit has a life. There is one divine life in all of them. And sometimes the way we speak, it comes out like, "Oh, we have Christ in us, yes, but the Holy Spirit has to do it." It is like we separate the life of Christ from the life of the Holy Spirit.

Now there is distinction at times, yes, but let us be careful. Let us be aware that it is one life within us. The Holy Spirit at times is called the Spirit of Christ. So, when we are speaking of this work being done, we do not get hung up whether it is the life of Christ, or the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of Christ. It is His life that is working in us. That is who is doing the work within us. There is a life, a divine life that lives within us, that is doing this work.

Desire for Fuller Revelation of Christ

So how does this process start? Does it start with a desire? Maybe there is a desire: Lord, I want to have this desire. Because the Lord actually encourages us, if we want to be His disciple, Luke 9:23 says, "And He was saying to them all, if anyone wishes to come after Me (to learn of Me, to be My disciple), he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Praise God. This is where this instructing, the discipling comes, there is that desire.

But where does desire come from? And we are going to use John the Baptist as an example. Because we are familiar with John the Baptist's declaration. We use it quite often. John 3:30 says, "He must increase, but I must decrease." We know this phrase. We say it all the time.

Where does this emphatic desire within John's heart come from? What is it that touched John, which made John make this tremendous emphatic statement? "He must increase and I must decrease." What an emphatic statement. Where does it come from? We will look at the context from where John makes this statement. Look at the very verse before this, John 3:29. Desire to be conformed to the image of Christ and to be about His will comes from vision and revelation of who He is. John 3:29 says, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So, this joy of mine has been made full."

John first saw our Lord Jesus, and he declared Him as the Lamb of God. "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." What a revelation that was. Everybody else was around, they saw the physical person of Jesus. John saw through that and saw more.

As John kept his eyes, his heart, upon our Lord Jesus, he saw more. He saw beyond Jesus simply as his Savior, more than simply the Lamb of God. John now declares Jesus Christ as the bridegroom. He had seen the bridegroom, he heard the bridegroom's voice, and he uttered those words. He knew once he had seen the bridegroom; once he had seen God's heart, God's purpose; he knew what he had to do: "I must decrease, He must increase." He could not hold back. He knew what had to happen to enter into the fullness of that joy. And so, he makes this observation.

Praise God. John the Baptist's heart had seen the Lord: he saw God's heart; he saw God's purpose; he saw God's end. And it allowed him to continue going on. What a great revelation. To use a phrase the Lord used with Peter, it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to John the Baptist, it was the Father in heaven.

As John had a heart towards the Lord Jesus, he saw Jesus as the Lamb of God, he saw more, he saw beyond. And he said, "Wow, this is the bridegroom, this is the one who is looking for that bride. We are simply friends of the bridegroom." Praise God for that.

Brothers and sisters, if we have this desire to go on, to follow the Lord in that fuller and greater way, it comes from knowing Him in a fuller and greater way. May we desire for His life to do that transforming work in us.

Because when we have this desire, when He has shown us something of, "this is what I want to do with this end in view." When He shows us that and we surrender and say, "Yes, Lord, do this, You must increase in my life, and I must decrease." What that is doing is giving the Lord permission for the cross and the Holy Spirit to start the transforming work. The Lord is a perfect southern gentleman. He never forces Himself upon you. He says, "Here I am. Behold me."

Romans 12:1 and consecration: "Consider the mercies of God, behold the mercies of God." He does not say, "You must present yourself a living sacrifice." No, it is a freewill offering, a transformation. We want to be conformed to the image of Christ. It is a freewill offering of ourselves to Him as we see Him.

John saw Him and he could not resist. Brethren, can we resist the transforming work? How we need, each of us, to have that fuller and greater revelation of Him, that He could conform us into the image of the one who first loved us and died for us.

Conclusion

Next time we will consider more of this practical working of the Cross and the Holy Spirit transforming us. But today, to reiterate, that the Lord would make very real to us this truth of the Christ in us. And as we conclude, I was struck with some matters to be

praying, a concluding prayer. May our prayer be that the Lord would give us greater revelation of Christ in us.

Who is He? And all that involves. And Lord, we would know Your purpose for us as Your special treasure. We are a special treasure. Do we know His purpose for us?

Lord, we would know the reality of our solid and sure foundation. When we face all the temptations of life, would we know that we have a solid and sure foundation that holds us against all the accusations of the enemy, the temptations of the flesh, temptations of the world, the issues of life?

When we get a notice one day that we lose our job, we get the notice another day a wedding is postponed. Do we keep going on? You get notice of an illness in your body. You get notice of something happening to one that you love. Do we know that solid and sure foundation? It has been tested and proven. May we know more of the reality of it.

And may we know more of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What we have really been set free from, what we have been set free to do. To be those servants of the living God. And that we would be willing for Him to transform us into His image.

As we said, He does not force us, but praise God, the grace of God has appeared to mankind, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us how to live in this present age and giving us a living hope for His glorious return. May the Lord continue to work in a real way in each of our hearts and lives in the days that we are living in.

Let us pray.

Lord, we do come with worshipful hearts unto You. Lord, as we said earlier, when we touch Christ our life, we feel like we are just touching the edges of Your ways, the fringe of Your garment. But Lord, would You come in and meet each one of us in very specific ways; in the very things that we are going through in life. I am thankful how You meet us right where we are.

By the all-sufficiency of Your grace, would You meet each one of us by revealing more of Your Son to us, getting our eyes off ourselves and onto You. You alone have those words of eternal life. And that is who we look to, Lord.

Lord, we have a desire to be transformed into Your image. As that starts touching us in certain ways, Lord, we want a greater revelation of You to keep that desire burning within us, so that we could go on through and not pull back. But Lord, we are thankful for Your love, Your mercy that has redeemed and called each one of us with a glorious purpose. And it is an amazing thing to think that we are Your own possession, Your special treasure. We worship You, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Why Has the Grace of God Appeared #2	1
Introduction	1
The Purpose of God's Grace	1
God Brought the Israelites to Himself	2
He Brings Us to Himself to be His Treasured Possession	3
Christ Is in Us	3
Warning: Christ Plus Something Else	5
Christ Our Life	6
Intimate Relationship with Christ	6
The Immensity of Christ's Life	6
Comprehending the Life of Christ	7
By Divine Intervention Christ Become Our Life	7
So Great Salvation	8
Power That Overcame	8
We Have Received the Fullness of His Life	8
Allowing Him to Work	9
Salvation of Spirit, Soul, and Body	9
Living in the Good of His Life	10
Accusations of the Enemy	10
David Response After He Was Shown His Sins	11
Christ the Solid and Sure Foundation	11
Set Free to be Bondslave to Him	12
Truth Becomes Spiritual Reality	13
Desire for Fuller Revelation of Christ	14
Conclusion	15

Speaker	Graham, Mac
Venue	Richmond, Virginia, US
Date	April 27 th , 2025
Link	https://christiantestimonyministry.com/item/why-has-the-grace-of-god-appeared---2