By Letting Grace Be Our Teacher

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Bible Text: Titus 2:11-15

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This year our church has taken on several different building projects to help us be in a better position to do ministry to our community. We are finally in the Northend Community Center doing ministry there on a daily basis. I have been able to have some fascinating conversations with some of our new neighbors there.

Just as we want to make sure that we are careful with the building projects we take on. Just as we want to make sure that we are careful to execute the building documents in the construction process, we want to make sure that we are being careful about the spiritual growth of our church as well. For this reason, we have chosen our yearly theme to be **Being Careful How we Build!**

As part of the study on Being Careful How we Build we have chosen to study through the book of Titus. Titus is a small epistle in the New Testament, but it is centered around the topic of Grace. We have named this study on Titus, **Building on a Foundation of Grace.**

The last couple of weeks we have discussed the importance of:

1. Valuing those who are Older (Pastor Viars)
2. Mentoring those who are younger (Greiner/Aucoin)
3. 3 truths to help us have an excellent testimony at work. (Green)

Today we are going to be discussing how we can build on a foundation of Grace by **Letting Grace Be Our Teacher.** Today we will learn 6 lessons to change our lives, 3 from the Grace of God that has appeared to us and 3 from the Glory of God that will appear.

We live in a town in which education is a very important thing. Solid education on the High School level is a common theme. Solid education at the college and university level is an expectation that can easily be taken for granted with the options available here.

In education, it is expected that there will be a teacher who will help you learn the basic lessons needed to advance in your educational studies. Sometimes that teacher is kind of boring and just gives you basics. Sometimes that teacher is engaging and wants to make learning fun, so they stretch you so you learn things well.

What makes a great teacher though? Is it their personality, humor, intelligence, or communication skills? I believe what makes a teacher great is their ability to not only teach you the material that is required to pass the class but can help you love to learn. This kind of teacher will teach you things that go beyond the end of the school year and affect the rest of your life.

I had a high school math teacher that taught me lessons that I now teach my children and teens.

Sometimes he would get frustrated with me because I did not seem to love math as much as he wanted me to.

If you can only use your imagination then you could understand that possibility existed that I was a bit goofy in school. In fact maybe distracting might be the right word. On one particular day when I was being especially difficult (we will just call it a typical Tuesday). He walked right up to my desk and leaned down and began whispering to me in a voice that slowly grew louder, Johnny Kjaer if you do not straighten up right now then I will squash you like a bug! Of course that got my attention for the next 3 minutes or so.

However, one of the biggest lessons I would ever learn from school came in the next few minutes. He apologized for losing his cool with me. Then he talked with me through the importance of respect, math, and shared with me how behaving in class is more important than just making it easy for him to teach.

From that day on I loved his math class!

I do not know if it was his constant repeating of the phrase, math is fun. Or the kind manner in which he presented the lessons to the class. For whatever reason, the lessons that have impacted me the most in my education have come from the teaching of Mr. Cofer my High School math teacher.

The book of Titus so far has talked a lot about the practical uses of grace-based living in our lives. Today we get to look at 2 glorious appearings. Join me as we look at what the grace of God and glory of God teach us.

With that in mind, please turn with me to Titus 2:11-15 (page 167 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you.)

Let’s read Titus 2:11-15.

Titus 2:11–15 (NASB95)

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 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. 15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Just a couple of quick notes before we dive into the text.

1. Did you notice that verses 11-14 are all one sentence? This is written in a typical Pauline way.
	1. So if you were to diagram this sentence you would have all sorts of phrases flying everywhere.
2. Did you notice that there are 2 different appearings that are being focused on?
	1. The first is the appearing of the grace of God.
		1. From this appearing we can learn 3 lessons about the change the grace of God gives us.
	2. The second is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.
		1. From this appearing we can learn 3 lessons about the change of our perspective

## What Grace teaches us!

What is grace? We need to define grace if we are going to understand it is our teacher.

**Grace is unmerited favor!**

**Grace is receiving something I do not deserve!**

**Grace is God treating sinners, even though they are guilty, as if they never sinned!**

Grace is something I could never deserve. How could I a sinner who is completely in opposition to the purpose God intended for my life ever be able to deserve God’s love and restoration to Him?

Here is the first lesson!

### Grace teaches us about our need for a Savior!

Verse 11 says, “The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men.”

Or we could say God in His grace has made a way for all men to be saved or restored to God.

Let’s expound on this for a minute.

1. It is easy to recognize the fact that we all sin. If you do not believe me just think about your spouse, sibling, roommate or classmate. Do they sin? (Remember they are probably thinking about you.) We are all sinners.
2. God is holy and as result of His holiness He cannot tolerate sin. Holiness means that He is not even influenced by sin. So this means we are not able to be in fellowship with Him as a sinner.
3. We can never on our own do enough good deeds to earn our own righteousness. Remember we are stuck because of our sin. Even one sin is enough to separate us from a holy God who cannot tolerate sin.
4. This leaves us in a hopeless position. I could never be made right with God on my own strength.

This is where grace comes in.

**Romans 5:8 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

While you and I were still actively in sin God sent His Son to die for us so we can be restored to Him.

**Romans 6:23 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

I believe the passage that best illustrates the grace of God is found in Ephesians 2:1-10

**Ephesians 2:1–10**

**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,** 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 **But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.** 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Notice the state of the person without the grace of God!

* Dead in our trespasses and sins.
* When you are dead, you are hopeless to change yourself.
	+ Nobody dies and thinks, “You know what, I am going to lose a few pounds now. That doctor is right I ought to eat better.”
		- You will lose weight, but that is a natural process, not anything you cause to happen.
	+ Nobody dies and thinks, “Now is the time to stop smoking.”
		- You will stop smoking, but it is not because you decided to change.
* We are described as dead.
* Dead people cannot change.
* The picture of being dead in our sins is a hopeless situation.
	+ I am naturally a sinner, and on my own, I cannot change.
	+ I am stuck there.

Aren’t you glad that the passage does not end there?

* But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us.
* For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
* Notice 3 key words here.
	+ Mercy – Not receiving what I deserve (those who are saved do not receive the punishment they deserve because Christ took their punishment on the cross).
	+ Love – The inexplainable love of God that would cause Him to want to be allow those who actively rebelled against Him to be restored to a relationship with Him.
	+ Grace – receiving what we could never deserve.
* God intervened because we were hopeless.
* God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to take our sins upon Himself on the cross.
* He paid the punishment we could never pay.
* He gave us life!
* The grace of God makes Christianity unique from all other religions.
	+ Mountain top example from David Platt
		- Other religions require you to climb the mountain of righteousness to be made right with their god.
		- In Christianity, God recognized that is not possible and sent His Son here to make the way for us to be made righteous.

Two take-aways for us from the lesson on salvation.

1. There is a seriousness to the message of salvation.
	1. To those who have never placed their trust in Christ finished work on the cross it is a matter of eternal life and death.
		1. There is hope for you to be changed from dead in your trespasses and sins to alive in Christ.
	2. To those who have placed their trust in Christ there is an urgency to share the Gospel with others.
		1. We are surrounded by folks who are still dead in their trespasses and sins and we must tell them about the life that Christ offers them.
2. There is great rejoicing in the life that Christ gives.
	1. We can rejoice because we have life.
	2. Our lips should never cease to sing His praise because He has redeemed us.
	3. Our lives should be daily worship services to Him for our salvation.

### Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires!

What does it mean for us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires?

Because of the grace of God, we have the ability to say no to the temptations that try to lead us away from our purpose of glorifying God.

The idea of rejecting our desires is quickly becoming a foreign idea even in our society. There are slogans like, Have it your way right away. The whole point is that if you want something go get it.

Unfortunately, the idea that society is teaching is something more along the lines of don’t repent of your sin be open in your sin, because if people can’t accept you for who you are then they are the ones who have the issues. Our society is teaching this junk all over the place.

Saying no to our desires is a habit we are not used to practicing. We must identify the sinful desires that are trying to take control of our lives and refuse to follow them.

**1 John 2:16**

**16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

How do I deny ungodliness and worldly desires?

An example of this is found in the story of Joseph from Genesis 39.

* Joseph was his dad’s favorite.
* Joseph had a couple of dreams.
* Joseph’s brothers hated him.
* Joseph wore his fancy coat of many colors to go see his brothers.
* Joseph’s brothers were initially going to kill him, but instead decided to sell him into slavery.
* Joseph was bought by a man name Potiphar to be a servant in his house.
* Joseph grew in favor in Potiphar’s eyes and was made the head of the servants in the house.
* Joseph was over everything in the house except for Potiphar’s wife.
* She saw Joseph and thought he was pleasing to the eyes.
* So she went to him and tempted him to sin with her.
	+ Joseph said no.
* She went the next day and tempted him to sin with her.
	+ Joseph said no.
* This continued for a while.
* Finally, she reached out and grabbed him by the coat and tried to tempt him again.
	+ Joseph twisted away and ran from her.
	+ He left his coat in her hands.
* When I was a kid I used to listen to Patch the Pirate (on a cassette tape) and one of the songs surrounding this story was called “Put On Your Running Shoes Mate”

When temptation comes you must deny it. You need to put on your running shoes and get out of there.

**1 Corinthians 10:13**

**13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.**

A few simple truths about the temptations that we are often distracted by.

1. You are not the only one going through this temptation.
	1. There are others who are being tempted with the same thing you are being tempted with.
2. God is faithful!
	1. This is the key to the whole process of denying ungodliness.
3. He will not let you be tempted with more than you can handle.
4. He will always provide the way of escape.
	1. So look for the way you can deny temptation.
	2. Use the way of escape.

What if I am stuck in worldly desires already?

Maybe your life is wrapped up in one of the sins from the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the boastful pride of life and you are finding it difficult to deny it in your life. How can you win victory over it in your life?

Just as you could not overcome your sin before the grace of God in salvation in your life, you cannot on your own overcome your sin in your life. You must rely on the same finished work of Christ on the cross. You must repent for the sin that you have allowed to replace God and made an idol in your life.

**“So we should never say: Lord, I have a problem with anger. Please remove it by your power! Give me the power to forgive. Rather, we should apply the gospel to ourselves at that point” – Timothy Keller**

It will never be about your power to overcome sin by your own effort. You can never will yourself out sin. It will always be about turning to Christ and repenting of your sin. It is always about running to the cross to realize you are forgiven and to change because He alone can help you change.

So a few questions for you:

1. Are you actively on guard for temptations that are trying to distract you from your calling to glorify God?
2. When you identify temptation are you fleeing from it or are you letting that temptation linger and distract you from the beauty of the Gospel?
3. When you have fallen into the temptation and are wrapped up in sin are you just trying to power your own way out of sin or are you quick to repent?

### Grace Teaches us to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age!

This really is the positive side of the change from rejecting the worldly desires and ungodliness.

We are given 3 main words here that we need to define.

**Sensibly means to have self-control.**

**Righteously means live upright, or above reproach.**

**Godly means to live a life that is honoring to God.**

Notice that each of these words points to our relationship with our self (sensibly), with others righteously, and to God (godly).

How does grace cause us to live life in a different way?

* Because of the grace of God redeem me when I was unworthy, my thinking begins to change.
* I want to be less like the world and sinful system I was saved from and more like the one who saved me.
* I want my life to more like Christ who saved me so others will see Him.

**Romans 12:1–2**

**1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

There ought to be a clear difference between the way that we live our lives as followers of Christ.

We ought to be intentional in not being like the world around us.

We ought to be constantly changing our thinking which will shape the way we live our lives because we have been rescued by Christ.

When I see the cross as the place where Christ took my sins on Himself and made a way for me to be made right with Him, then I will live differently out of love for Him and what He has done.

So a few questions for you.

1. Do I look different in the way I live than those around me?
2. Is my thinking constantly changing to be more like Christ?

## What the Appearing of the Glory of Our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ teaches us.

Now we have the second appearing that is being described. The appearing of the glory of God. The appearing of our Savior. The appearing of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament there was a fear that went into the appearing of the glory of God. (i.e. Moses hiding in the rock as the glory of God passed by, the holy of holies and the proper way of entering)

Here we are told in verse 13 that we should be looking to the appearing of the glory of God. There is an excitement we have about the future with God because the grace of God has already appeared.

### We have a new hope found in Christ!

We recognize the grace of God in the work of salvation, and our hope is linked to Christ.

Through Christ we have hope in life with Christ for all eternity.

Through Christ we have the hope of heaven.

Through Christ we look forward to the far better things that await us after we leave this present world.

The hope of the glory of God gives us strength to say no to sin.

The hope of the glory of God gives strength to not be conformed to the world, but rather transformed by the renewing of our minds.

We often are distracted by the rewards of now. We see the things around them and consider them to be more valuable than they actually are. So we build our treasure here.

We rarely live with our focus on the hope we have because of Christ.

**Matthew 6:19–21**

**19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

My kids rarely understand the importance of saying no to something today in order to get something better tomorrow. So when you walk through the grocery store and your child says can I have that toy it is difficult to explain to them that the money saved from not buying that toy can eventually go to pay for their college education.

Now that may seem like an over the top argument, yet how many times do we decide to live for today at the cost of laying up treasure in heaven. How many times do we forget about the eternal part of life while accruing all the temporal things of life.

Our hope to endure the trials of life come through the finished work of Christ on the cross.

So we live life not for today. We live life not for the things of this world. We live life not swayed by the trials of this life.

We live in confidence because of the hope found in the appearing of the glory of God.

If the Gospel is true, and it is, then I have nothing to be afraid of because of the grace of God I have been given eternal life.

### We have a new love in Christ.

Christ gave Himself for us. He did not need to do that, but He chose to do die for us.

**“He gave Himself for us…” (14)**

I do not serve Christ because I have to win his love over to me.

*I spent far too much of my life trying to earn the favor of God.*

*I was doing things that should have been motivated out of my love for him instead as an act of trying to make God love me more.*

*I could never earn the love of God. I could never earn righteousness.*

*I instead need to obey because I love Him because He first loved me.*

**1 John 4:19**

**19 We love, because He first loved us.**

So I now I serve not to earn God’s favor but because I love God.

At the Northend Community Center there is a small plaque that hangs outside of the N-Zone (which is our space for teens).

The plaque reads this way: “Provided with generous support to honor Jason and Nicole Hume for their decades of youth ministry.”

* + I think that plaque is pretty cool because Jason and Nicole have been in Junior High for 20 years.
	+ Can you imagine week after week, year after year, and decade after decade being faithful to show up and do the same ministry over and over again?
	+ Think of the changes you would see in that time. People used to pass notes now they Snapchat while you teach.
	+ Think of the number of students they have impacted with their life.
	+ In fact some of our current youth leaders used to be in the Junior High ministry being taught by Jason and Nicole Hume.
	+ Now here is the cool part.
	+ Jason and Nicole do not do this for some sort of pay.
	+ Jason and Nicole do not do this for some kind of recognition.
	+ Jason and Nicole do not do this to earn the favor of Christ.
	+ Jason and Nicole do not do this because they are earning righteousness.
	+ Jason and Nicole started doing this ministries while in grad school at Purdue and have never stopped doing it for one reason.
	+ Because Christ loved them. Because Christ changed them.
	+ Because Christ loves them they love Him and they serve the teens who need to be loved.

How about you? Do you serve your Savior out of duty or out of love for what He has done for you?

### We have a new identity in Christ.

**“… to redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession.” (14)**

Remember we talked earlier about our need to reject the things of the world and all ungodliness. We are motivated to do that because of the grace of God.

However, we are also motivated to do so because Christ saved us to make us a new creation in Him. We have a new purpose.

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

**17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

Once I am in Christ I no longer live for myself, I live for the one who rescued me. I am completely changed.

In his commentary on Titus, Tim Chester illustrates it this way:

“There is a story told of the late Queen Mother of the British royal family. When her children, Princess Elizabeth (now Queen Elizabeth II) and Princess Margaret, were young and were going to a party or on a visit, she would remind them before they left: ‘Royal children have royal manners’. It was a reminder that their behavior needed to match their status. Their status came first; their behavior should follow. These verses are teaching the same thing to Christians. He has made us part of his people. In Christ, we are members of the royal family of the universe. That is our status, and we cannot lose it. And our behavior should match who we are. Royal children have royal manners.”

## Conclusion:

All of the theology of the book of Titus hangs on the grace of God. In fact all of theology hangs on the grace of God.

In verse 15 we are told:

**Titus 2:15 (NASB95)**

**15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.**

This is the message we need to be boldly proclaiming. That grace has been given to save us, to help us say no to ungodliness and to live lives that are sensible, righteous, and godly in this age.

We need to be proclaiming that we have hope because of the glory of God. We have a new hope, we have a new love, and we have a new identity.

We can boldly proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God because it is our only hope!