

Main Reading **Titus** 2:11-15

v. 11 — “For the grace of God has appeared...”

Grace is *fundamental* to the Christian faith.

While the rest of the world’s belief systems tell you to earn your spot in Heaven,
Christianity reveals that forgiveness comes *only* because of God’s grace.

It’s not about how many **doors** you knock on (*Jehovah’s Witness*),
how many rules and **customs** you obey (*Judaism*),
how many **missionaries** you feed (*Mormonism*),
how much time you spend **meditating** (*Buddhism*),
or how many hours you spend doing **yoga** (*Hinduism*).

Instead, forgiveness is *only* possible because of God’s kindness and grace.

Then, we do good works as a response.

Let’s read some Bible verses about God’s grace to get a better understanding:

Ephesians 2:8-9—Salvation is a gift from God. As soon as you pay for something, it is no longer a gift.

Therefore, salvation is not earned, it is *freely* given to us by God.

2 **Corinthians** 9:8—God isn’t begrudgingly gracious. His grace *abounds*—it overflows and rushes to us.

But verse 11 isn’t *just* talking about God’s attribute called grace, but the **appearance** of God’s grace.

What do you think that might be? Jesus’ arrival and ministry! 2 **Timothy** 1:8-10

John 1:14-16 — “...*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and [He was] full of grace and truth.*”

The Greek word for “appeared” gives us our English word “epiphany” — a sudden or striking realization.

Up until that point, God’s grace had never been so *clearly* realized as it was once Jesus appeared.

And when He appeared, according to Paul, He was “...**bringing salvation for all people...**”

[A couple of years ago, I was listening to Christian radio and a man was interviewing seminary students at a rather liberal college. He would walk up to them and ask "Help! I've got a knife in my back, there's 30 seconds before I bleed out. I know that there's a God, and I want to be right with Him. What must I do? Every one of them replied with something similar to this: You don't have to do anything. Everyone is going to Heaven no matter what. It doesn't matter what you do or what you believe...]

Some people use the end of verse 11 to support what's called universalism...

But Paul doesn't mean that *literally* every single person will be saved.

The Greek word for all here means "as many as, whosoever, all types of, etc."

In other words, Jesus provides salvation for whosoever—as many—that would believe in Him.

And this salvation is for all *types* of people. **Revelation** 7:9–10

Young people, old people, men, women, people on Crete, people in America—there is no limit.

Jesus did *enough* to cover the sins of everyone *if* they repented, and that's what God desires.

1 Timothy 2:3–6

That being said, we know that this will not be the case.

Jesus said in **Matthew** 7:13–14, "...*the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*"

After providing us with salvation from sin and its consequences, Jesus begins...

v. 12 — "*training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions...*"

When Jesus saves us, it's not *just* that we repent from our sins...

although that *is* a HUGE part of our new life.

Acts 17:30 says "...[God] commands all people everywhere to repent"

It's not just that we stop doing the sinful things we used to,

but that we *start* doing things we should be doing.

The next part of the verse is “...*live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,*”

Here we see this key pattern in the Christian life—put down, pick up...put off put on. **Ephesians** 4:22-24

Notice that there are 3 different areas of discipleship listed here:

self (self-control), **others** (upright), **God** (righteous/godly lives)

It matters to God that you are self-controlled, a good neighbor/citizen, and devoted to Him.

QUESTION : In what area of life do you think you need the most work (self, others, God)?

Verse 11 discussed a salvation from the **punishment** of sin.

Verse 12 discussed a salvation from the **power** of sin.

And verse 13 discusses a salvation from the **presence** of sin.

See, until Jesus saved you, the **punishment** of sin was still looming over your life.

And until Jesus sanctifies you, the **power** of sin may still have a hold on your life.

But, as a Christian, it is God’s plan to rescue you—not only from the punishment—
but also from the power, the hold, of sin.

At one point in our lives sin had *total* **control** of us.

But now, as Christians, we fight against the power of sin with the power of the Holy Spirit,
who supplied to power to raise Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11).

So, if there is a particular sin in your life that you continue to struggle with, *don’t give up!*

Here’s one thing you can look forward to, that might give you motivation in your battles against sin:

One day, sin itself won’t be an issue anymore.

v. 13 — “*waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*”

One day, Jesus will remove us from the **presence** of sin.

You won't wake up and have to hear about *another* mass **shooting**,

You won't have to deal with **broken** relationships,

And you won't have those personal **struggles** any more!

And notice that this verse refers to Jesus as our God *and* Savior.

And it's actually Jesus' power over sin that proves He is no less than God Himself.

Only God can forgive sins. **Isaiah** 43:25 — "...I, *am he who takes away your sins...*"

And yet, Jesus forgave *many* people of their sins throughout His ministry. **Mark** 2:1-7

v. 14 — "*who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*"

"Redeemed how I love to proclaim it. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;

Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child and forever I am." **[Play song?]**

God has made us His children. His own, special people—the Greek actually says **peculiar** people!

This isn't a bad thing, even though we use the word in negative way nowadays...

So, Jesus redeemed us to be His *own* people, but I've got news for you...

You **aren't** saved to **sit**—you are saved to **serve**. **Ephesians** 2:10

We are God's **masterpiece** (**ποίημα** *poiema*)—His handiwork.

Never before did an artist have such raw materials to work with...According to Ephesians 2, we were...

spiritually **dead**,

acting like children of **Satan**,

and following the ways of the **flesh** before God redeemed us.

And, even though that was the case, God saves us and turns us into workers.

And God not only cares **that** you do good works, but He also cares about **how** you do them.

So, when *you* do your works...

(*serving at church, raising children, loving your spouse, working your job, honoring your parents, etc.*)

You need to do them with **passion**, with fervor, and with *zeal*—as this verse says...

Now, we don't use this word **zeal** all to often, so let me give you a picture of what it might look like:

Imagine a pot of water sitting over a piping-**hot** stove.

Eventually, the water begins to **boil** and bubble until it actually spills over the edges of the pot.

In the same way, we need to have our hearts and minds *so centered* on God and His Word, that our beliefs spill-out into *every* aspect of our lives. *That* is zeal.

Or, think about it like this: a fire 🔥 *always* spreads.

When you light a piece of paper 📄 on one end, soon enough the entire thing will be consumed.

So, if you and I are *truly* set on God. Before long, our entire lifestyle will show it.

And here's the real reason why we need to be zealous like this:

God ***never*** does ***anything half-heartedly***. *He is zealous...*

In **Zechariah** 1:14 God says: "***...I am exceedingly jealous...***" [same Hebrew word for zealous]

Isaiah 9:6-7 — It was God's zeal that inspired Jesus' coming to earth.

Isaiah 59:17 — And it will be God's zeal that inspires Jesus' second coming too.

There's even a story where we get to see Jesus' passion here on earth. **John** 2:13-17

Now, Jesus *never* acted like this when *He* was insulted...

He never did anything *this* extreme when *other* people were disrespected...

But, when God was being dishonored by the religious leaders of His day, Jesus had this *extremely zealous* response—and it was the *exact right* response.

So, if God is zealous for His own work, and Jesus was zealous here on earth, what makes you think He wouldn't want *us* to be zealous while we carry out our works?

So, in everything we do—we must be all in. If you're gonna be some where be all there.

If you come to church... 🏛️

Pray for/with the people there, volunteer, and get plugged-in.

If you give to a church or ministry... 🌐

Don't do it with a bad attitude, be generous and cheerful, and don't do it because you feel forced.

If you get married and have kids... 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Raise your kids to love the Lord and pray with them as you cook them dinner or tuck them in at night.

If you work a job... 🧑‍🏭

You should put lots of effort into it and perform to the best of your ability.

So, do you see that good works won't get you into Heaven, but they should **follow** you there?

v. 15 — “Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

Here, Titus is told how *he* can do *his* good works with zeal.

His role in all of this was to preach God's word with boldness and authority.

This was another difficult task for Titus...

Good preaching is rarely popular, but it is *always* necessary.

And he had a great example to follow—not only in Paul—but also in Jesus.

Listen to what people said about Jesus after His Sermon on the Mount: **Matthew** 7:28–29

Jesus spoke with *much* more authority than any other preacher of His day...you wanna know why?

For one, He was **God** in Human flesh...

But also, while other teachers were caught up in myths and their own ideas,
Jesus preached from the Old Testament. He was a Bible preacher!

The Sermon on the Mount has 9 direct references to the OT—and *every* verse is tied to it in some way.

In the 1,800 NT verses where Jesus is speaking, 180 (10%) of them are reciting Scripture.

That'd be like if you quoted a Bible verse every 10 sentences...

I also think it's very relevant for us today to hear that Titus was told to teach this letter to his church.

Today, the pastors in the Church *still* have this responsibility.

1 **Peter** 4:11 — *"Whoever speaks, let it be with God's words..."*

The things that are taught in Titus—and *the rest of the Bible*—need to be at the center of our studies today.