

# Stimulated to Full Confidence in Salvation

By Joel Wood

**Bible Text:** Titus 2:11-15

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Titus 2 is our chapter today and our verses are 11 through 15. 11 through 15 of Titus 2. Give heed as God's word is read. "*[Titus 2:11-15] For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world, as we await the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous of good works. Teach these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*" The grass withers and the flower fades but the word of our God stands forever.

As Paul wraps up this chapter (again, he didn't know he was wrapping up a chapter, that's something that we have imposed on the text for our own study and focus) but as this chapter draws to a close, Paul as he does so often in his letters, begins weaving together the various thoughts that he has laid down thus far. And here, after he has encouraged Titus in his ministry to particular segments of the congregation, he reminds him of why that ministry must take place and what that ministry must do for God's people and he brings together a lot of these words that we have talked about in previous weeks: the ungodliness, the soberness, the righteousness, the godliness. We've talked about these things, we've heard what they mean. And he brings them together in such a way that it does this: (and I want to encourage you in this, this morning) that the resurrection and Christ's return should stimulate us to full confidence in salvation and fresh commitment to sanctification. The resurrection and Christ's return should stimulate us to full confidence in salvation and fresh commitment to sanctification.

Firstly, brothers and sisters, I want to encourage you to remember the fullness of the history of redemption. To remember the fullness of the history of redemption. [vs 11] "*[Titus 2:11] For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.*" If we take our minds way back to Genesis 3 and in that moment immediately after the fall of mankind when God walks in and Adam and Eve are exposed for what they had done, in all those moments that we, as earthly parents, begin to lecture and chastise and remind what the rules were to keep something like this from happening, in that moment God grabs Adam and Eve and pushes them behind Himself and stands between them and the enemy and declares the gospel. That the seed of the woman would deal with the seed of the serpent. And in that moment, the grace of God that brings salvation was preached to all men. It was preached to all men. Every human being on earth heard the gospel preached that day. But now, now the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Ephesians 2:8-9, "*[Ephesians 2:8-9] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast.*" That's the-- that's what this verse reminds us, that it is of grace. The faith, the salvation, all-- the whole complex is of grace as it saves us. And that grace is what we see as history

unfolds. From Adam to Seth to Enoch to Noah to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph to David and to Jesus, all of it is of God's grace. In Genesis 3 God gave His word. In Jesus God gave THE Word. He appeared and, as soon as the day of Pentecost, men and women and boys and girls from all parts of the known world heard the gospel in their own language. Remember, the miracle of tongues is not that I'm speaking in some language that I don't understand, the miracle of tongues is that I'm speaking in a language I understand and you're hearing it in a different language that YOU understand. And in that moment, the gospel was again preached to the whole world. In Galatians 4 we read, "[\[Galatians 4:1-7\]](#) *Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ from a servant though he is lord of all. But he is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father. So when we were children, we were in bondage to the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born from a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*" Brothers and sisters, that is grace. That is grace that is revealed time and time again in all of the fullness of redemptive history. From the moment God gave His word until the moment that THE Word appeared, we see grace upon grace. Remember the fullness of the history of redemption.

Secondly, rehearse your training in sanctification. Rehearse your training in sanctification. "[\[Titus 2:12\]](#) *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world.*" This word that is translated "teaching" in so many of our versions-- English versions of the scriptures involves more than a simple transfer of information. There are-- there are two types of classes in our education. There are those that we get to take and there are those that we have to take, right? Remember this as you went through your education? There were those that you know were going to prepare you for what you were confident God was going to use you for in this world and then there were all the other classes. It really postured us in a different way to receive the information. In the classes that we HAD to take (or students have and have yet to take) in those classes we'd-- "Just give me the information I need, let me regurgitate it back on the scantron or in the essay or whatever the means of testing is, and let me get on with my life. I will take the information in, I will spit the information out, and then I will get on with my life." But oh the difference in those courses where you knew that you were going-- "I'm actually going to use this in the real world." You would take it in and you would-- you would chew on it, you would think about it. And you'd be thinking, "How does this apply in a-- in a-- in a work team? How does this apply in the office? How does this apply in-- in my work with people? How does this apply in my business or in my research? How does--" I mean, you would just mull it over and dream of the ways that this might be used. Brothers and sisters, this teaching here is not regarding something that we HAVE to take, it's regarding something that we GET to take. This isn't information that God bestows upon us and we take it in and we spit it out and we get on with our life. This is information that should change how we live. And this word that is translated "teaching" throughout its biblical uses has positive and negative aspects to it. There's even sometimes that it's dealing with punishment. So we see that is dealing with discipline, with discipleship, it is training. It isn't just teaching or conveying information, it is training us for this sanctified living. We see this in Second Timothy 1 where we- we recognize that Paul is making a cultural reference to the way that we learn to write letters and write words. You remember the little lines with the little house at the end and you would learn how to-- that- that an H goes up into the second story but not all the way to the roof, right? That a G dips down into the basement but doesn't touch the basement floor necessarily. Back in the-- in biblical times they'd have wax tablets and the teacher would draw the letter on the tablet and then they would take a stylus and they would-- they've had styluses for a long time, kids. They would take a stylus and they would follow that letter, they would follow that letter, they would follow that letter. As paper got easier to make they'd print letters

with a starting point and dotted lines and you follow that letter, you followed that letter. Paul says to Timothy in Second Timothy 1 "[[2 Timothy 1:13](#)] *Follow the pattern of sound teaching which you have heard from me in the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus.*" Rehearse it again and again and again. Go over it and go over it. Those of you who have learned a language or learned a new vocabulary for a specific task, a role that you needed to fulfill, you know the joy-- say, "I just do this." And- and you think flash cards. You get that ring and you get all the flash cards on the ring and you just-- you're sitting on the Metro or you're sitting in a cab or you're sitting at dinner, you're sitting in a different class and you're working, working, working getting that down. That is how we are to be in our life of sanctification. We're- we're to be learned a thing or two by scripture and also by the practice of those around us. We learn what it is to put off ungodliness and worldly desires and to put on godliness in the life Christ Jesus. We're reminded of the words of Christ in the first gospel where He says, "[[Matthew 16:24-26](#)] *Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'*" These words were recently invoked on the death of Hugh Hefner, who didn't bring vulgarity to our culture but he sure helped to promote it and to make money off of it and to build a very flash in the pan empire off of it. Brothers and sisters, as easy as it would be to focus on him, let us turn our attention to our own hearts and minds, in all the ways that we seek to gain the world and, in so doing, lose our souls. How does this happen, how does this- how does this work? It can even work when- when we desire good things but when those good things become the ultimate end rather than sanctified living in Jesus Christ. So that having obedient children, having right theology, having a good marriage, having a proper job and employment, having \*insert fill in the blank\*, when those things become the ends and not the means to an end of bringing glory to Jesus Christ and living in this sanctified way that we are called to, when we-- when we deny ungodliness in blatant ways but not in subtle ways, when we deny worldly desires in blatant ways but not in those teeny tiny ways that creep in to the cracks of our hearts and bring destruction. Dare I even say, when we begin living what looks like soberly and righteously and godly but in inflated pride because we are doing it on our own. Brothers and sisters, we need to rehearse our training in sanctification, review again and again the flash cards of holiness and godliness that He has given us in the scriptures and that have been passed down to us in the confession and catechisms and that we can even observe in godly saints around us in this life. Rehearse your training in sanctification.

Thirdly, regard your hope to be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Regard your hope to be the coming the Lord Jesus. "[[Titus 2:11-13](#)] *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world, as we await the blessed hope and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*" Brothers and sisters, when you analyze this paragraph of Paul's, you find that this is the centerpiece of it. He talks about salvation, then he talks about sanctification, then he talks about the return of Christ. And then he talks about salvation again, then he talks about sanctification again. The verbal focal point of this text is the return Jesus. In each of the groups that Paul has addressed, and indeed has instructed Titus to continue to instruct, and as we look at verse 15 where he tells him, "[[Titus 2:15](#)] *Teach these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*" That maybe gave Titus a glimpse into what would follow after he exhorted and rebuked. But as Paul has- has instructed Titus to continue this ministry, in each of these groups there are hopes that can quickly be substituted for the full and final hope of the believer, which is seeing the face of our Lord. In each of these, whether it be the older men or the older women or the young men or servants, in each of those categories of people there can be hopes in this life. There can be things that we say, "if only THIS would be true. If only THIS would line up. If only THIS would happen, then I could sleep easy at night, I would know that all is right with the world, I would know

that Jesus is at work, I would know these things" and we begin to substitute our FINAL hope with good but counterfeit hope. Things that, again, are along the way but are not the destination for the believer. First chapter of Second Thessalonians we read, "[\[2 Thessalonians 1:5-12\]](#) *This is evidence that God's judgment, being righteous, will count you worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are suffering. It is a righteous matter with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with eternal destruction, isolated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at by all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. Therefore we always pray for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling and with power fulfill all your good desires and works done by faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" What is Paul saying there? He's saying, he's praying for the saints of Jesus Christ, that their good works done in faith would be accomplished, knowing what? That the full resolution of the struggle and the strain and the strife of this life will only be resolved when Jesus appears in glory. Jesus coming doesn't nullify our responsibility in- in what we are to do and it doesn't make it so that Jesus can't come unless we are doing X, Y, and Z. But what it does mean is that we struggle and we strain, we strive after good works, we're frustrated in the midst of that, the world is against us. You may think that; you only think that because it's true. The world is against us in all the good things we try to accomplish, but it points us forward to that great day when Jesus will come again. John 14 "[\[John 14:1-7\]](#) *'Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also. You know where I am going, and you know the way.'* Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.'" Jesus is that great way to salvation and He is that way to heaven, that way to the presence of the Father. And what comforting words, "*let not your heart be troubled.*" Regard your hope, brothers and sisters, to be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, reflect on redemption accomplished and applied. Reflect on redemption accomplished and applied. "[\[Titus 2:14a\]](#)... *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness...*" Christ has given Himself for us. He has accomplished redemption and He has applied it. Why? Because He wasn't just making redemption possible, He wasn't making it available, He was making it DONE. And the spirit of God applies it to the people of God. And this great reminder that we find throughout the New Testament, Galatians 1, "[\[Galatians 1:3-5\]](#) *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*" That's how Paul starts that letter. Can't help but be encouraged when that's the-- you open a letter and that's how it begins. Later in chapter 2, "[\[Galatians 2:20\]](#) *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" Let me encourage you, brothers and sisters, as reformed brethren and sistren... Reminds me of a joke our tour guide made when we were near the Dead Sea at the one community there. He said, "We know that they don't have any running water here-- they didn't have any running water here." We said, "Well, how do you know that?" He said, "Well, this was a male only community here and so they only had brethren, they had no cistern." So that was his- his joke. But brothers AND sisters, we're afraid many times to speak of the love of God. Many times in the reformed community it's almost like it makes us nervous to speak openly and joyfully about God's love for us.



Brothers and sisters, God's love drove Christ to the cross. Let us not be ashamed of it, let us not hide it under the basket, let us not sweep it under the rug. God loves us. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Ephesians, "[\[Ephesians 5:2\]](#) Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God." Later in that chapter, husbands, we're reminded that we're to love our wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. First Timothy 2, "[\[1 Timothy 2:5-6\]](#) There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. This was the testimony given at the proper time." Brothers and sisters, as we reflect on redemption accomplished and applied, we are reminded again and again that Christ gave Himself for us, He exchanged Himself for us, He took the penalty of our sin, He lived a perfectly righteous life so that righteousness might be given over to us. He went to the cross and, out of love for us, He gave Himself for us. Now, by His Holy Spirit, He is applying that redemption to us.

So remember the fullness of the history of redemption, rehearse your training and sanctification, regard your hope to be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, reflect on redemption accomplished and apply, and, lastly, renew your zeal for sanctified living. [vs 14] "[\[Titus 2:14\]](#) Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous of good works." Brothers and sisters, renew your zeal for sanctified living. I read earlier Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and verse 10 that follows reminds us, "[\[Ephesians 2:10\]](#) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..." Young people, you might be at that point where you're starting to wonder, "What am I here for? What is my purpose?" And you can take all sorts of tests that tell you you should be in this industry, you should be in this field, you should-- all sorts of things. They can tell you what kind of animal you are. I don't know. What color you are. You can take all sorts of tests that tell you all sorts of things, but the overriding purpose of your life, Christian young person, is good works. What should you do for a living? It doesn't matter if doing that keeps you from good works. Who can you marry? Doesn't matter if marrying that person keeps you from good works. Where should you live? Live anywhere you want as long as living there puts you in a position to accomplish the good works that God has made you for. "... created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them." That is such amazing news for us. God gives us outlines of good works in scripture, He calls us to good works, He gives us His spirit to accomplish those works, and then when we show up we find out that the good works are already prepared for us. They're just right there for us to do, so that we should walk in them. I hope it's easier to be zealous about good works when you understand all that God has done to accomplish those good works through you. This points us back to that first public confession that Israel was called upon to repeat: "[\[Deuteronomy 6:4-9\]](#) Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God. The Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand," (in all that you do) "and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." (they're what you see, what you think about) "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." It shows us this progression of love and belief and consequent obedience to God's word. Brothers and sisters, perhaps your zeal for sanctified living has been lagging. Maybe you've been dragging your feet in good works that you know you should be doing but it seems like you're not equipped, it seems like it's impossible, it seems like you can never get it done. No, brothers and sisters, that God has not only established what good works are, He has not only commanded you to do them, He is not only giving you His Holy Spirit that you might be empowered to accomplish them when you show up to do them, you will remember, "Ah and He prepared them beforehand so that all I have to do is walk in them." Renew your zeal for sanctified living, understanding that the love you have for the Lord, the belief you have in His word results in the fruits of obedience before Him. And why? Why all of this? Why any of this? Because some day we will stand face to face with Christ our

Savior. He is coming again and we will remember that He is the firstborn of those who have been raised from the dead. We will be raised, as well, and made new. And so, brothers and sisters, let the resurrection and Christ's return stimulate you to full confidence in salvation, in all of the redemptive history, in all that God has done, in all the ages to save His people, and fresh commitment to sanctification, to living the sanctified life that God has for you in Christ Jesus.

Stand with me as we pray.