

INTRODUCTION

- What is the grace of God? What does the grace of God do? What does the grace of God teach.
- We may be tempted to think of grace in an abstract kind of way, to think of it only as the forgiveness of our sins. In part, this is certainly true. Grace is God's unmerited favor toward man through Christ to give a way of reconciliation with Himself. This grace was a costly grace, costing the very life of the Jesus on the Cross.
- Most of us are aware of the wonderful words from Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."
- This is a foundational truth of Christianity, that our being made right with God is based only on the work of Christ received with the empty hands of faith as a free gift from God.
- But is this all that grace does? Is grace, if we personified it as a woman, merely one who declares us as "not-guilty" in relation to our sin? Does she simply comfort us when we sin that there is mercy? Is her role simply display compassion, then slip back into silence until the next time we sin?
- In the passage I wish for us to consider this morning, we will see grace more than that, that she functions in the role not only of a comforter, but also of a teacher and liberator.

EXPOSITION

- We see that the subject of this passage is the "grace of God." Everything that follows is the evidence and result of God's grace. This grace "brings salvation." It is only this kind of grace, described in this verse, that truly brings salvation. Salvation in the biblical sense, the forgiveness of God, peace with Him, reconciliation with Him.
- Paul writes that this "has appeared to all men". This doesn't mean that all men have experienced that grace, but rather that whoever one is, whatever kind of man or woman they are, from whatever background and culture, this is true of them.

I. SHE TEACHES – v.12

- Teaching = (Gk. paidueo - instruct, train, teach, discipline). It is more than abstract teaching, but comes and trains for a new and different life. This is the same word used for the raising of children. God's grace comes with practical teaching. It isn't merely about God's forgiveness (though it certainly includes that). It isn't merely about learning certain doctrines (though it includes this). But it teaches, it instructs, it directs.

A. What We Deny

- Denying = (Gk. arneomai - disown, denounce, refuse). It carries the idea of being done with something, setting it aside, and saying it is no longer one's own. It is the word used for Peter's denial of Jesus, saying he didn't know Him.
- 1.) Ungodliness = (Gk. asebeia – godlessness). This means to live in the world as if God doesn't exist. One says "I deny this, I no longer live this way.
- 2.) Worldly lusts = We have already seen that this isn't a denial of being human, and living as God intends us to in relationship with the physical world, but rather all that is against God. It is those desires for things that God disapproves of, that He hates. Though we have those desires as fallen people, there is a denial and refusal to live any longer in that way.

B. How We Should Live

- 1.) Soberly = (Gk. sophrone – in moderation, with self-control). We are taught that we are not controlled by our desires, and be in bondage to them, but live a life of self-control, under the direction of God's Word. We don't partake of things excessively, like drunkenness and sexual immorality, but use these things in the way God intends.
- 2.) Righteously = (Gk. dikaios – justly, uprightly). We are taught to live according to the righteous standards of God's Law. We no longer live according to our own rules, but are seeking to live according to God's rule.
- 3.) Godly = (Gk. eusebos – devoutly, religiously). This is the opposite of ungodliness. We are now living with a sense of God's presence. It is to say I now live with the reality that God exists, I stand before Him, and I will be judged by Him.
 - This isn't something that some day will happen when I go to heaven, but something we live "in the present age." This kind of life, the redeemed and liberated life, is lived here and now in our present world.
 - We see in v.13 that this kind of living is done in a context of earnest expectation.
 - Looking for = (Gk. prosdexomenoi – waiting for, welcoming). There is an active anticipate of something. In our weddings, the groom does not see his bride on the wedding day. He knows she is going to be made beautiful, and longs to see her. What is it the Christian is taught to long for in this way?
- The appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ – There is an anticipation for the 2nd coming of Christ. Jesus has promised to return again to collect His people to Himself. This passage points to the deity of the Lord Jesus, calling Him our great God. He is also called the Savior. A savior is one who rescues someone from danger or harm.
- The blessed hope - Biblical hope is based on that which God has promised. It is further described as blessed, or happy hope. It is a hope that creates happiness now, even in the midst of living in a fallen world. It is also a hope

that, when it appears brings consummate happiness. This is a hope not merely of heaven, but specifically of the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

- Glorious appearing – Notice the description of this appearing: it is glorious. It is with great splendor, magnificence and glory. How easy it is for us to forget this. How easy it is in the business of life to see an expectation of the return of the Lord diminish, and even be almost completely forgotten. But this life is only lived in a grace filled way when we do so with the expectation of the life to come.

II. SHE LIBERATES – v.14

- Another term for liberty is redemption. Though they are not exactly the same, there is a close connection. To have liberty is, in many cases, to have been redeemed. Redemption is the release itself, and the cost for it, and liberty is the result of the person released.

A. What It Liberates us From

- Who gave Himself for us – This points us to the cost of our redemption, of our Christian liberty. I was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who will return in glory, who first gave Himself. It was the sacrifice of Himself personally that brought this about. He did so as the sacrifice for sin, to pay the penalty, the ransom, for the debt we couldn't pay and because of this we were held in bondage.
- That He might redeem us – The first word here is what is called a purpose clause. It give the reason for something. Why is it that Jesus gave Himself? In order that something would be accomplished. Redemption. (Gk. lutroomai = set free, liberate). What is it we are liberated from?
- Every lawless deed – Before Christ's work in a person's life, they are in bondage to lawless deeds. They are a slave of sin. But when the work of Christ is applied, there is a release from lawless deeds. You and I no longer have to sin, but we are released from its chains. No longer can we say "I can't", but now we say "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
- And in the text, what lawless deeds are we redeemed, liberated from? Every one of them. Christ's work doesn't release us from some, but leave the really strong ones untouched. Rather, all the bonds are broken, and I can by God's grace not give in to them. It isn't automatic, but I can now walk away from them.

B. What it Liberates us To

- Purify – there is another thing here we are told as far as the purpose of Christ's death. It is to purify. This means to cleanse and make clean. He does this "for Himself."
- His own special people – What he makes for Himself is a special people, set apart, different, unique from the rest. Because of this redemption, this liberation, people become His purchased possession, He distinctive people.
- Zealous for good works – This word was used for a group of political Jewish activists during the time of the New Testament. They were know for their zeal, passion, and enthusiasm. They wanted to overthrow the Roman government by force, and were willing to die to do so. However, what is described here is a special people who had a zeal for good works. They are those works in Scripture regarding love for God and for our neighbor.
- Jesus didn't die to release people so that they would do just anything, but released them from sin to do good works. This is true liberty.

APPLICATION

- It is wonderful when, in making an application from a text, it is in the text itself. This happens in this verse 15
- 1.) Speak these things – preach them, proclaim them, teach them to all. This is the doctrinal content, what is true. This is what I have sought to do by way of exposition. This is how God defines the work of His grace.
- 2.) Exhort – this is to call to obedience, to urge to respond to them. These aren't just doctrinal truths, but now the people of God are to pursue their purpose. This is what I now do. Don't just know them, but live them. This is the reason why you were redeemed.
- 3.) Rebuke – This is a strong term meaning "show someone his error." It was a term used in the court system, to sufficient convict of one's guilt. There are those who need to be told, "You say you know the grace of God, but the evidence of your life calls that into question because of what Jesus actually accomplishes in the here and now with His people.
- There might be some here that need just this. You say you are a Christian, but there is no change, there is no expectation, there is no zeal. The rebuke is "what you say Christianity is isn't what Scripture says it is." This is especially true when it is merely a cover-up for an ungodly life. But this is what it is to live by grace, not living in wickedness and looking to God for grace, but experiencing grace through a transformed life.
- Even If you are not a Christian, this gives you a general understanding of what God's grace looks like, and if someone presents to you a Christianity that doesn't look like this, then it isn't true. It isn't a presentation without struggle, it isn't perfection, but it is a real, zealous, committed, desire to please God and liberation from sin.
- This rebuke is to be done with all authority. Paul tells Titus to not let anyone ignore the authority by which he speaks. There is an authority when someone speaks the Word of God, and if someone says "well, that is just your view" they are not to be allowed to do so. With the authority of God's Word, the herald of the Gospels says "no, this is on God's authority, in whose Name I speak."