

## Titus 2:11-14 Rediscovering Grace - Transforming Grace CBC 17/2/2019

### Introduction

Do you remember constantly being told what to do as a child?

- 'Tidy your room'; 'Don't leave cups lying around'; 'Move your toys from the floor'
- 'Eat with your mouth shut (you're not a washing machine [!!]); 'Don't slouch'

Eventually we get to cracking point: 'Why should I?'

Sometimes as parents we answer our children poorly don't we? Impatient/overwhelmed

- do you know the worst answer I heard to that question? → 'Because I say so' (... only marginally worse than 'Just because') [I bet you've used that too!]

There's a valid point there, isn't there – Honour our parents

... but it's not a great motivation to a child who needs to know why

And so, what kind of behaviour do we see from our kids? ... resentful; it's a burden

I wonder how you feel when you come to God's word, or maybe even here on a Sunday

... hear the list of things you 'should do'; feel guilty;

Do you go out more burdened than you came in? Do you feel a failure all the time?

If so, we've got something *really* wrong! ... Wrong Motivation! ... And need to get it right!

Letter to Titus has been telling the believers how to behave as Jesus' representatives

... how to behave in the church, in their homes, and in their work

Paul ... could have said "Because I say so – I'm an Apostle, so just do it"

... could even have said "Because it's good for you, it's good for the church"

- & that's important, isn't it? ... we're the body of Christ, we're here for His glory!

BUT, in **v11-14** he gives a far, far, far better answer ...

... an answer that should move our hearts, challenge our desires, change our attitudes

... an answer that moves us from 'grunt' [hard effort] to 'gratitude' [amazing wonder]

So, this is such a vital passage!

If we don't grasp this, being a believer is more about 'grunt' than 'glory'

... we lose slavery to sin, but enslave ourselves to works

Old hymn goes 'In full and glad surrender / I give myself to Thee

Thine utterly and only / and evermore to be'

but all we so often have is 'In slow and grudging service / I rarely live for thee'

Huge opportunity this morning – to move from 'grunt' to 'grace', 'drudgery' to 'joy'

**1. My Great Reason (v11)** "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"

First word 'For' ... Gk. "gar" ... a conjunction ... gives the reason, or explanation

→ Why should we want God to transform our lives at home, work & church?

The answer?: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"

God's grace has come! What Grace? There's three aspects in this short verse:

- Grace, my great motivation – Grace seen in Jesus' Salvation

We've seen – Paul (breathing threats), Mephibosheth (enemy King); Given new life!

And Us – you and me – Rescued, Loved, Enabled - So how can we not respond?

I was only 10 when I became a Christian ... young, nothing 'bad', no great need

- but then God broke in ... revealed to me as I was to Him – a sinner

... not a guilt trip, but a huge sense of God's perfection, and far short I fell

... and massive realisation that I deserve nothing, but He offered salvation

Fitting to have Lord's Table ... bring us back to the cross; We need to be reminded!:

chosen by grace – not my merit; drawn by grace – not my interest

convicted by grace – not my sense of sin; saved by grace – not my work

loved by grace – not my worthiness; glorified by grace – not my service

That word "appeared" - 'epiphany' ... sun 'appears' in the dawn → He broke in!!

=> It's when we see this, - His grace in breaking in, that we respond from the heart:

- Grace, my great example – Grace seen in Jesus' Himself:

We look on Jesus – "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant ... humbled

Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!" (Phil 2:6-7)

→ Why did he do this? ... Grace! ... His great love for undeserving people

Teaching before this in Titus – to honour our Boss, love and serve others in church

May look at our boss & think "why should I please him? why should I obey him?"

=> Why? - Jesus showed such grace, humbling Himself, and so should I!

May look as an older person in the church at a younger person and think

"Why should I seek to help them/draw alongside them? – they just ignore me"

May look at one another and say "Why should I help them? They're so difficult!"

=> Why? - Jesus humbled Himself, put up with us, to draw us to Himself

- Grace, my great commission – Grace seen in God's ongoing work of Salvation

"grace that brings salvation has appeared to all men"

What is God's great commission? ... "Go and make disciples of all nations..."

... in heaven the redeemed from every tribe, nation and tongue will join together

... slaves & free, weak & strong, low & noble, poor & rich, white & black

- it is God's grace that He sends the gospel to all, to draw to Himself

=> My heart should respond: 'Such grace! How can I not reflect this myself?'

=> "Why should I?" ... because of grace! Because of grace!

→ Grace gives us the reason to praise Him, to love Him, and to bring glory to Him

'Your Majesty, I can but bow / I lay my all before You now

In royal robes I don't deserve / I live to serve Your Majesty'

- it's the grateful response of a heart captured by God's Amazing Grace!

**2. My Necessary Transformation (v12) [READ v12]**

TV prog: "Australian princess" ... most common girls possible ... pass them off as princess

[a bit like Eliza Doolittle in My Fair Lady]

... trainer asks "Why won't you act like you have been taught?"

→ one good reason ... there's no heart change! Look better outside, but same within!

But the Christian is different - **Rom 8** ... given His Spirit, given freedom, given new desires

**READ Rom 8:10-12** We have the Spirit, and “Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.”

→ What is the witness of the grace of God working within our lives?

... It's that there is a radical change of heart - 'I long to do Your will'

Two things here:

- **Decision** “It teaches us to say 'no' to ungodliness and worldly passions”

It's the active, day-by-day, moment-by-moment, decision to not give in to temptation

- Oscar Wilde famously said “I can resist anything except temptation”

but Oscar Wilde did not know the grace of God!

- we have His Spirit within; we have freedom from the dominion of darkness

... we have, by God's grace been rescued from the life of sin & failure

So, Paul challenges us (**Eph 5:16**): “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

But get the reason right first! Why do we struggle? Why are we so begrudging?

→ See God's grace, the great cost! And then say 'complete your work in me'

**Rom 12:1** “In view of God's mercy, present your bodies as living sacrifices...”

- **Direction** “and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”

Not just turning from ... but turning to God's way, seeking His path, obeying His word

- Paul's not naïve about the difficulty here – he says “in this present age”

... he's saying 'I've got it that Crete is a difficult place to live'

I know *all Cretans are liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons!* (**Tit 1:12**)

- but that's the very point:

Saved by His astounding, amazing Grace, so different from this world's heart

=> So shine out this grace in your lives! Live out grace in every part

Does this seem difficult? Do you struggle in living out the reality of Christ in you?

Then it's because you've got the reason all wrong!

It's not because 'Alwyn says so'; It's not because 'that's what expected'

→ It's His grace that “teaches us to say ...”

Lovely thing here: - “It teaches us to say” is all in the present tense

... the continual impulse of God's Saving Grace, as we see again His love to us

... the continual power of God's Enabling Grace through His Spirit in us

... the continual encouragement of God's Transforming Grace as we see Him work

→ It's the positive cycle of growth in love, trust and desire for Him

### 3. My Amazing Purpose (v13-14)

Why has God lavished His grace upon us?

... because there is an amazing purpose **READ v14 with me**

... you and I are redeemed *because* He is at work!

- a present plan (**v14**) “purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good”

- look at the certainty in this verse ... do you see the progression?

Redeemed ... why? ... “to purify”

Purified ... why? ... to have “a people that are his very own”

His own ... why? ... “eager to do what is good”

→ we are here for a purpose ... to be a people who are after His heart,

... deeply in love with Him, longing to please Him, eager to do all He wants

=> How will the world be reached? ... primarily by His people living as His alone!

=> This is deeply challenging ... What am I here for? What is my purpose?

Bristol Bus station - rough-sleepers; Security said 'you don't live here, no-one does'

... it was true ... You go to a Bus station for a purpose – to go somewhere!

... no point in being there if not travelling

His grace has appeared to us ... Why? ... That our hearts are transformed so we shine!

- a future promise (**v13**) “while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing ...”

Living in Christchurch near Bournemouth; Ann in Cardiff; saw at weekends

... I lived for the weekend – that was my passion, my focus, my attention

... Planning things to do, places to go, time together, even what to wear...

We have a future “hope” ... it's going to happen!

This is the grace of God – I am His, He is mine, and I will dwell with Him forever

What is the response of a heart full of His grace?

→ I will know the fullness of that grace! He will take me to be with Him!

And so I'm getting ready now, being transformed now, ready for Him!

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men”

My Great Reason – Grace

My Necessary Transformation – Decision & Direction

My Amazing Purpose – present plan & future promise

=> O Lord, let the wonder of Your grace permeate our lives!

... that Grace would transform our lives, our Church, our future, everything