

God's Grace: Its Constancy in Us

TEXT: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

INTRODUCTION

When we think about God's grace, our thoughts usually center on salvation. Passages like Ephesians 2:8, 9 come to mind. Titus 2:11 says, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men." Notice that this grace has appeared to all men. (See also Hebrews 2:9.) But grace has to do with more than just what has happened in our lives. Grace makes it possible for us to be totally forgiven of all sins (Hebrews 7:25). But grace also has to do with our ongoing life for God, with how we live and act in the world.

Look at that aspect of grace which relates to how we live from day to day. The same grace that saves us also teaches us how to live for God continually.

I. "DENYING" (2:12)

Christians are to deny, disown, say no to, refuse certain things. We are to deny ungodliness. This is impiety directed against what should be held sacred. All have been ungodly (Romans 3:23). Grace teaches us to refuse the ungodly way of life. What God has done for us in spite of our failures should lead us to an overwhelming awe and respect (Hebrews 12:28). Even the use of God's name must be held in reverence (Matthew 6:9).

We are to deny worldly lusts (1 John 2:15-17). We are told to "flee youthful lusts" in 2 Timothy 2:22. Grace teaches us to try to stay out of situations that would lead to lust (James 1:13-15).

II. "LIVE" (2:12)

Grace does not just tell us what to stay away from but what to pursue. Christians are to live soberly, righteously, and godly. "Soberly" means with a sound mind, prudently, discreetly. To think and act discreetly. It is used of one who follows sound reason and restrains his passions. One does not throw out the mind when he decides to serve God. Emotions are important, but do not forget the place of discretion. We need to think of how our actions and appearance appear to others and what kind of influence we will have. Some deeds are not wrong in and of themselves, but they must be avoided because of the impression they would leave.

"Righteously" means justly, rightly, in a right state in which God is the standard. This means, as a matter of relationship, wanting to be like God (Romans 1:17). We cannot be righteous and intentionally go on living in any sin (1 John 3:9; James 4:17).

"Godly" means to live with reverence, respect, and piety and have a dignity of life. These three are to be pursued as Christians live.

III. "LOOKING FOR" (2:13)

Grace not only keeps us out of things and teaches us to live in a particular way, it teaches us the attitude we are to have toward the future. Christians are looking for the blessed hope (2 Peter 3:12). Hope is the eager anticipation of what God will do in, for, and through us. Hope anticipates heaven. But hope is to be a way of life toward all things. We are looking for the glorious appearing of Christ (Revelation 1:7). What a great day! Our Best Friend is coming for us. Our full redemption awaits.

IV. "ZEALOUS" (2:14)

Christians are to be zealous. Christ redeemed and purified us as His own special people. This is the meaning of "peculiar." We are special; we

belong to Christ. Notice 1 Peter 2:9. The action of His special people is zealous action. We are to boil, seethe, be eager, have vehement passion concerning "good works." Grace rightly understood leads to a fire in our souls. We are to be anxious to help and serve.

CONCLUSION

Grace is marvelous and amazing indeed. But grace teaches us how to live every day. Out of deep gratitude to God we should live this kind of life.

—Leon Barnes

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