

The sermon describes Christians as living 'in between' two appearances of Christ -- how does the awareness that grace has already appeared and glory is yet to come practically shape the decisions you make each day?

The pastor defines grace as God's undeserved favor toward sinful people, made visible in the person of Jesus Christ -- in what ways have you personally experienced grace as something more than an abstract idea, the way Zacchaeus experienced it as a person standing beneath his tree?

Paul writes in Titus 2:12 that grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions -- what is the difference between resisting sin through willpower alone and allowing grace to be your teacher and trainer in that process?

The sermon distinguishes between discipleship as the life of following Jesus and sanctification as the transformation God accomplishes within us -- how do these two realities work together in your own spiritual journey, and where do you sense tension between them?

The pastor states that good works are not the price of grace but the product of grace -- how does this distinction change the way you think about your own motivation for living a godly life?

Jesus described his disciples as servants who kept their lamps burning while waiting for their master to return, remaining dressed for service without knowing the hour -- in what specific areas of your life does the certainty of Christ's return give your daily responsibilities greater urgency?

The sermon emphasizes that grace trains us in two directions simultaneously -- saying no to ungodliness and saying yes to self-controlled, upright, and godly living -- which of these two directions do you find more difficult, and why?

Paul tells Titus to teach, encourage, and rebuke with all authority, reminding us that the authority rests not in personality but in the truth of God -- how does your community of faith hold one another accountable to the transforming work of grace without slipping into legalism or passive tolerance of sin?

First John 3:2-3 teaches that the hope of Christ's appearing motivates us to purify ourselves just as he is pure -- how does a forward-looking hope in the return of Jesus fuel rather than distract from the present work of becoming more like him?

The pastor closes by inviting people to either receive grace, submit to grace's training, or recover Christian hope -- which of these three invitations speaks most directly to where you find yourself right now, and what would it look like to respond to it this week?

Small Group Guide

Living In Between: Titus 2:11-15

Before You Begin

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to open your hearts to what His grace is still teaching you. Encourage group members to have their Bibles open to Titus 2:11-15 throughout the discussion.

Setting the Stage

The pastor opened with a simple but powerful observation: some of life's most important seasons are lived in between something that has already happened and something we are still waiting to see. An engagement and a wedding. A job offer and the first day of work. A surgery and a full recovery.

Paul describes the Christian life in exactly these terms. Grace has already appeared in Jesus Christ. Glory will appear when He returns. And right now, we are living in between.

Key Takeaways

1. Grace is not an abstract idea -- it is a person. The grace of God appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. It is not merely a theology to understand but a Savior to know. Just as grace stood beneath Zacchaeus' tree and called him by name, that same grace pursues every person in every circumstance.

2. The grace that saves us also trains us. Salvation is the beginning, not the destination. The grace of God does not finish its work the moment we are forgiven. It becomes our teacher and trainer, forming us into the likeness of Jesus through the ongoing process of sanctification.

3. Grace teaches us to say no and to say yes. Grace trains us to reject ungodliness and worldly passions while also pursuing self-controlled, upright, and godly lives. This transformation touches every dimension of life -- internally, relationally, and in our walk with God.

4. Hope shapes how we live today. The certain return of Jesus is called our "blessed hope." That hope is not a distraction from faithful living -- it gives our present obedience urgency, direction, and meaning. We keep our lamps burning because we know the King is coming.

5. Good works are the product of grace, not the price of it. We do not perform good works to earn God's favor. We do good works because God's grace is changing what we love, who we are, and how we live.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question -- Start Here

Think about a season of your life when you were living in between two significant events. What was that waiting period like, and what kept you going during it?

Looking Back: Grace Has Appeared

1. The pastor defined grace as "God's undeserved favor towards sinful people." In your own words, how would you explain what that means to someone who had never heard it before?
 2. Read Titus 2:11. Paul says the grace of God appeared and offers salvation to "all people." Why is it significant that no particular group, background, or type of person is excluded from God's grace? How does that shape the way we see the people around us?
 3. In the story of Zacchaeus from Luke 19, the pastor pointed out that Zacchaeus climbed a tree hoping to see Jesus but discovered that Jesus came looking for him. How does that picture of grace challenge the way you think about your own salvation story?
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Living Now: Grace Is Forming Us

4. The pastor drew a distinction between discipleship and sanctification -- discipleship describing our active choice to follow Jesus, and sanctification describing the inner transformation God accomplishes within us. How do you see those two things working together in your own life right now?
5. Read Titus 2:12. Grace trains us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions. What makes that kind of "no" so difficult in everyday life? Where do you feel that tension most personally?
6. The pastor said, "Grace never allows us to just shrug our shoulders and say, 'Well, I'm a sinner. I can't help it.'" At the same time, he acknowledged that sanctification is often slow and difficult. How do we hold those two truths together without swinging toward either defeat or self-reliance?
7. Grace also trains us to say yes to being self-controlled, upright, and godly. Which of those three qualities feels most underdeveloped in your life right now, and why?

8. The pastor made this statement: "Good works are not the price of grace, but good works are the product of grace." How does that distinction change the motivation behind the way you try to live?
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Looking Ahead: Glory Will Appear

9. Read Titus 2:13. Paul calls the return of Jesus our "blessed hope." How does the certainty of Christ's return actually affect the way you live day to day? Is it something you think about often, or does it stay in the background?
 10. The pastor referenced the parable from Luke 12 about servants keeping their lamps burning while waiting for their master to return. What does it look like practically to remain "dressed and ready for service" in your current season of life?
 11. Read 1 John 3:2-3. The apostle John connects hope in Christ's return directly to the pursuit of personal purity. How does looking forward to seeing Jesus motivate you toward holiness in a way that rules and obligations alone cannot?
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Bringing It Together

12. The pastor closed with three invitations: to receive grace, to submit to grace's training, or to recover Christian hope. Which of those three resonated most with where you are right now? What would it look like to respond to that this week?
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Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

For Personal Reflection Set aside fifteen minutes this week to sit quietly with Titus 2:11-15. Read it slowly and ask yourself: What is grace currently trying to teach me? What is it asking me to say no to? What is it asking me to say yes to? Write down what comes to mind honestly.

For the "No" Grace Is Teaching Identify one specific area -- a habit, a thought pattern, a relationship dynamic, a hidden struggle -- where you sense grace is calling you to say no but you have been resisting. Bring it before God in prayer this week and consider sharing it with a trusted person in your group for accountability.

For the "Yes" Grace Is Teaching Pick one of the three qualities Paul names in Titus 2:12 -- self-controlled, upright, or godly -- and identify one concrete, practical step you can take this week to grow in that area. Make it specific enough that you could report back to the group on how it went.

For Recovering Hope If the pressures and disappointments of this present age have consumed your attention, take time this week to read and meditate on 1 John 3:2-3 and Philippians 3:20-21. Let the certainty of Christ's return reorient your perspective on whatever feels heavy right now.

For the Group Together As a group, discuss what it would look like to encourage one another more intentionally between meetings -- not just during your scheduled time together. Consider a simple commitment to reach out to at least one person in the group this week with a word of genuine encouragement.

Closing Prayer

Close your time by praying together through the three movements of the passage. Thank God for the grace that has already appeared in Jesus. Ask Him to continue His forming and sanctifying work in each person present. And lift your eyes together toward the blessed hope of His return, asking for the faith to live faithfully in between.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Living Between Two Appearings: Grace, Hope, and the Transforming Life

Day 1: Grace That Appeared Reading: Titus 2:11-14; Luke 19:1-10

Devotional: Grace is not a distant idea or a theological concept to be admired from afar. It appeared. It put on flesh. It walked into Jericho, stopped beneath a tree, and called a broken man by name. The same grace that found Zacchaeus is the grace that finds you. You did not climb high enough or search long enough to earn it. Grace came looking for you. Before you understood your need, God was already moving toward you in the person of Jesus Christ. Today, let the reality of grace that has already appeared settle deeply into your soul. You are not waiting to be found. You have been found.

Reflection Question: In what area of your life do you most need to be reminded that grace has already appeared and is already at work?

Practical Application: Write down one specific moment in your life when you recognized the grace of God moving toward you. Return to that memory today as an anchor for your faith.

Day 2: Grace That Teaches Reading: Titus 2:12; Romans 6:1-14; Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: Salvation is the beginning, not the destination. The same grace that rescued you from sin does not then step aside and leave you to manage your own transformation. It stays. It teaches. It trains. Paul makes clear in Titus 2 that grace instructs us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions while simultaneously forming within us a life that is self-controlled, upright, and godly. This is not willpower. This is not self-improvement. This is the ongoing, patient, powerful work of God shaping you from the inside out. Grace never gives you permission to remain who you were. It gives you the power to become who you were redeemed to be.

Reflection Question: Is there something grace is currently teaching you to say no to that you have been resisting? What makes that particular lesson difficult to receive?

Practical Application: Identify one area where you sense God calling you toward greater obedience. Share it with a trusted fellow believer this week and ask them to pray with you and hold you accountable.

Day 3: The Disciple Being Formed Reading: Matthew 4:18-22; Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 2:20

Devotional: When Jesus called his first disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, the invitation was not merely to believe certain truths about him. It was to follow him, to be changed by him, and to be sent out on mission with him. Discipleship is not a program you complete. It is a life you surrender. The work of sanctification -- God forming the character of Jesus within you -- happens as you actively follow, obey, and remain close to him. You bring your willing surrender. God brings his transforming power. Neither works without the other. You cannot sanctify yourself, and God forms you through your faithful obedience. Both are required. Both are gifts.

Reflection Question: In what ways are you actively following Jesus right now, and in what ways have you drifted toward simply believing in him without truly following him?

Practical Application: Spend fifteen minutes today in intentional silence, asking God to reveal one specific area where he is inviting you into deeper surrender and obedience.

Day 4: The Blessed Hope Reading: Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2-3; Luke 12:35-40

Devotional: The Christian life is lived between two great moments. Grace appeared when Jesus came the first time. Glory will appear when he comes again. In between, we wait. But Christian waiting is never passive. Jesus described his servants as dressed for service, lamps burning, ready to open the door the moment the master knocks. The certainty of Christ's return does not pull us out of the present. It anchors us more deeply within it. When you know the King is coming, you tend faithfully to everything he has already entrusted to you. Your relationships, your character, your witness -- all of it is shaped by the glory that is on its way.

Reflection Question: Has the hope of Christ's return become distant or abstract in your daily life? What would change in how you live today if you genuinely believed he could return before nightfall?

Practical Application: Choose one responsibility or relationship that you have been neglecting. Tend to it today with renewed urgency, motivated by the knowledge that the King is coming and you are his servant on assignment.

Day 5: Living Faithfully In Between Reading: Titus 2:14-15; Ephesians 2:4-10; 1 Peter 2:9-12

Devotional: You were not redeemed simply to be forgiven. You were redeemed to be purified, claimed, and set apart as a person who belongs to Jesus and who is eager to do what is good. Good works are not the price of grace. They are the product of grace. The church is not built to

last through gifted leaders or well-designed programs. It is built to last through ordinary people who are continually being formed by the grace of Jesus. As you carry the weight of this present age -- its disappointments, its pressures, its slow and difficult days -- remember where you stand. Grace has appeared. Glory is coming. Now live faithfully in between.

Reflection Question: Are you increasingly eager to do what is good, or has weariness caused you to pull back from the mission Jesus has entrusted to you?

Practical Application: Encourage someone in your church community today. Write a note, make a call, or speak a word that fills their sails with courage to keep following Jesus through whatever they are currently facing.