

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

02.01.2026 | The Grace of God | Titus 2:11-15 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

Thanks for your flexibility and being down here to worship. It's so good to be able to still see you even in a bit of a different space. I've been seeing all week on social media pastors in different parts of the country having to make decisions about services mostly because of winter weather. It's icy especially like in the southeast part of the country where they're not used to that. So they're not able to gather as normal. It's like 60 something degrees and sunny outside. So I'm so thankful for some San Francisco weather right now.

Also just thinking about our church. There's a few years between it wasn't the only time but just especially between 1906 and 1909 1910 when this building was finished when our church didn't have a permanent place to meet. We met in other buildings. We met under a tent. God sustained this church through those times. So special to be able to have hopefully just one Sunday out of our normal space but to be able to still worship with you. If you have a Bible let's go to Titus chapter 2. I can't promise you there's a Bible in the pew or the chair in front of you this morning but maybe you've got one on your phone your iPad maybe you brought one with you. Love for you to go to Titus chapter 2. Read along with us study along with us as we look at God's Word together.

We've been in the book of Titus since the beginning of 2026. We started off the year in this book. We're walking through it. It's our fifth week in the book of Titus. We've got two more weeks after this and then we're gonna enter into kind of a series focused on Lent. But in this book of Titus what we've been considering is really one of the main themes of the book is gospel shaped living. It's the subtitle of this series. What we're looking at is the way that Paul is writing to Titus who's establishing and strengthening the church on Crete. He is calling him to clarify gospel doctrine and then connect gospel doctrine to gospel living. So what he's doing is he's helping to understand helping Titus to understand what are the truths of the gospel because they were being mistaught, misapplied in that context. He's also helping to see how does the truth of the gospel connect to your life. How does the gospel shape our lives as individuals but also how does it shape a whole community of faith. So one thing that's just been a passion of mine as we start this new year is that we would be a church that is shaped by the gospel.

Now that connection we really started to see it more clearly last week as Pastor Clark led us through the beginning of Titus chapter 2. Now remember one of things Pastor Clark said is that gospel doctrine is confirmed through gospel living or sound doctrine is confirmed through sound living. That what we believe is going to shape who we are how we live and so we saw this charge and this call to live sound lives. We're continuing on that today but one of the things I think we're really going to start to see in today's passage and next Sunday is how that connection actually happens. We saw last week that we are called to self-control to godly lives that the doctrine of the gospel should shape us but we haven't yet really seen how does that shaping really take place. What is the connection between what we believe and how we live? How does those things actually connect and that's what we're going to see this Sunday and next Sunday as we look at the book of Titus. Particularly this Sunday what we're going to see is that it is all shaped by the grace of God. That the grace of God is what gives us the ability to live the sound lives. The grace of God is what compels us and gives us the whole opportunity to live these sound lives that we were called to in just the previous passage.

So let me read our verses for us this morning. They should be up on the screen for you if you don't have a copy of God's Word. Titus chapter 2 verses 11 through 15. Paul writes, "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in the present age waiting for our blessed hope the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things exhort and rebuke with all the authority let no one disregard you."

Now before you even take your eyes off the text if you've got in front of you just go right back down to where we just read and look at the beginning of what we started reading in verse 11. So I want you to notice something. Verse 11 starts with the word for. You see that there's this connection as Paul writes that I think is really important to see and it's really central to understanding this passage. I know it's been seven days since last Sunday sermon so sometimes we can really divide out the truths of a book when we kind of break it apart like this but remember this is a letter that is going to be read in the original in one sitting. So all these connection points all this unity all this flow of thought would just be so

much more evident if you're just reading it all together and so what we just saw last week is that Paul called Titus to command the whole community of God's people the whole household older men and older women younger men younger women even slaves who are having to live under the rule of masters all of the household was called to live self-controlled godly lives and then what Paul says is for the grace of God has appeared. You know the word for that that preposition it can mean a few different things it can connect it in a few different ways I think here it means because.

What Paul is saying is here is what you are to call the people of God to they are to live self-controlled godly lives to be different and set apart from the world because the grace of God has appeared. In other words if you just think about last Sunday's sermon Pastor Clark said sound doctrine is confirmed through sound living maybe another way you can think about that is is sound living healthy living is the fruit of healthy doctrine it is what is a byproduct the way that we live godly lives is a fruit it is confirming what we believe and now what Paul is making is explicitly clear is that what is at the very root of our godly living is not just beliefs or doctrine but it is the grace of God at work in our lives.

You see sometimes when you when you go to church and you hear a call to live in a godly way to turn away from sin to live in a way that pleases God you can get the impression that is something you are supposed to do in and of your own strength. You might think well yes I know that I needed God's grace God's mercy to save me from my sin but now that I'm a Christian now that I've been saved now the call to live a Christian life is one that I've got to do in my own strength in my own power and so what Paul does is right after calling the people to live godly lives he makes it explicitly clear that this is actually only possible because of the grace of God that has appeared and is at work in your lives.

You cannot live a God honoring self-controlled life in and of your own strength. You cannot live I mean you can have lots of willpower there's lots of very disciplined people out there you cannot glorify God in your self-controlled life in just your own power and your own strength. It's not a message just to do more on your own it is a message to understand the way the grace of God works in you and through you. What Paul says it is the grace of God is at the root of sound living it is at the foundation for living the Godly life. This is what I want us to take away this morning. This is something I think we just got to spend some time really considering because you know grace is something that's so easy for us to often mention in the church. It's something for us to sing about and talk about but sometimes I don't think we really understand what it means.

I think one of the reasons I would say this is because so often I think people will talk about grace but then it won't have the effect in their life that Paul says it should. Paul says that it will I think it's a sign that that God's grace really hasn't gotten a hold of us in the way that we would think. You see sometimes I think when we talk about grace people think that what they're saying is that God's grace helps them be saved. So many of us probably think that you know we're not perfect. Everybody would probably raise their hand and say you know what I'm not perfect I fall short right thank you Marge for raising your hand right. People would probably confess to that but if we're honest with ourselves we probably think that we're like somewhat close to the line of salvation or at least if we look around at other people we would think well surely I'm closer than they are.

I mean are we able to compare ourselves to people of another political party, people of another group, people who act a certain way and we would say well yes I'm not perfect but surely I'm closer than them. Sometimes we think of God's grace as just what fills in the gaps of our holiness. Sometimes we think of God's grace as just what kind of pushes us over the line but you see when somebody really understands the grace of God, I think when somebody really understands that on their own they are completely dead in their sin. When somebody really understands that the only hope that they have, the only righteousness that they have is all externally given to them by Jesus it actually changes your life in a much deeper way.

I think it's just stories throughout history like famous people we could think of like Martin Luther the great reformer when he was a Catholic priest he struggled with this idea of righteousness because he never knew if he was doing enough to be righteous before God. It wasn't until he understood grace that his life was radically changed and he realized that the only righteousness he could have before God would have to be given to him by faith in Jesus Christ. We think of John and Charles Wesley the founders of the Methodist movement. It was actually as they read Martin Luther's commentaries of Galatians and Romans. They started to realize our good living all the things that we're trying to do in reading the Bible and living good lives they have nothing to contribute to our righteousness. In fact they are just

rubbishness before God but it is only by grace totally of God that we have been saved it radically changed their lives. We think of John Newton. John Newton had to realize that he was a wretch he was lost but in grace he had been found and it compelled him to change his life and to write about and sing about God's amazing grace that we still sing about today. You see when God's grace really gets into you when you really grasp what his grace is what it does in your life it actually changes you. That's what Paul is saying here and that's just what I want us to try to understand today.

How can our understanding our grasp of God's grace and our letting God's grace really grasp us change our lives to live gospel shaped lives. How does the grace of God shape our lives? Well I want to just look at this passage and I want to give you three components of grace and I'll just tell you right now the middle one is going to take the most amount of time so if we go through that first one quick don't think it's going to be a super short sermon but also when we spend a lot of time on that second don't worry about the third we'll get there and we'll get through but we want to see how God's grace is revealed in this passage and how it works in and through us. So first thing that you need to see is the giving of grace.

First thing that Paul wants us to understand is he connects this life that we are called to to the grace of God is the way that the grace of God has been given. Grace by its definition is something that is undeserved it is unmerited it is given freely and so if it is something that is given freely then there must be a time in which grace is given. So how was the grace of God given? We see it in verse 11. Paul says for the grace of God has appeared. Now that word appeared you could just think that means like it just became visible or just kind of showed up but what Paul's actually saying is the grace of God has been manifested it has been fully revealed it has been given to you. So how is the grace of God been given? Well it's not something that Paul actually gets into in these verses what we're going to see is he's going to expound it more at the beginning of chapter 3 so just know that this this sermon and next week's sermon are going to be very closely connected so we'll revisit the giving of grace next week but just so that you could consider it even this morning he says the grace of God has appeared and Paul uses really similar language when he writes to Timothy in 2nd Timothy chapter 1. 2nd Timothy 1 verses 9 and 10 I think the verses will be up on the screen for you. God says that excuse me Paul says that God saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began. Just pause right there.

Notice he says that God has saved us not because of anything that we did but because of God's own purposes and because of God's grace and then he says that the God that the grace of God has been at work or active or given to us in Christ even before the ages began so know that the grace of God was not something new when Paul was writing. The grace of God has always been at work. God was gracious in creating us. God was gracious in pursuing us when we fell away from him. God was gracious to reveal himself to us. God's grace has been at work but notice what Paul goes on to say in verse 10 of 2nd Timothy 1 he says and this grace has now been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

When Paul says to Titus that the grace of God has appeared he is saying the grace of God has been given to you in Christ Jesus. It has been manifested in the appearing of Jesus Christ in Jesus God came to us. In Jesus God became like us in every way. In Jesus God took on our sin. In Jesus God bore our shame. In Jesus God conquered sin and death. Jesus God has brought us to life. God's grace has been given in Jesus Christ in this good news this gospel message of Jesus and now because Jesus has come the grace of God has appeared and now the work of grace takes place. This is the second component of grace and here's where we'll spend our time this morning and that is the work of grace. Paul says the the grace of God has appeared or it's been given in Jesus Christ. It's been manifested in him in his life his death his resurrection and now his ascension and reigning as king. His grace has been given and now he says the grace of God is at work.

In particular I think there's kind of three ways that he teases out the work of grace and I think in this at least the ESV translation you can see them in three participles. Three verbs ending in ing. I think he says that the grace of God is it's at work in bringing salvation in training the people of God and causing us to wait waiting with a blessed hope. So what is the work of grace in the world and in our lives that is bringing salvation it is training the people of God and it is causing us to wait waiting with to our for our blessed hope. So let's just consider this work of grace and these three components. He says the grace of God has appeared verse 11 bringing salvation for all people. The work of grace is to bring salvation for all people. Grace was given in Jesus so that salvation would be made available for all.

Now when when Paul says bringing salvation to all people he's not saying that everyone will receive the salvation or that every person will be saved from their sins. But what he is saying is because salvation is of grace it is available to all people. That no longer was it just for the you know primarily for the people of Israel as it was in the Old Testament but now it is for all kinds of people all types of people for every nation tribe family on earth for every individual the grace of God is is now available salvation is available because salvation is all by grace. The work of salvation makes out excuse me the work of grace makes salvation available to all.

You think about it. Christianity is a is a quite an exclusive religion in one sense. The reason it's exclusive is because Jesus said I am the way the truth in the life and no one comes to the Father except through me. Christianity is exclusive in saying that there are not many ways to God there is only one way to God. It's exclusive in saying that there are not many gods but there is one God and there's only one name under heaven given by which people can be saved and it's the name of Jesus. So there's a sense in which Christianity is very exclusive. There's also another sense in which Christianity is radically inclusive and that is the sense that salvation is by grace therefore all are eligible for salvation. You think about what it means to be saved by grace it means that every person is qualified for salvation.

Take a moment and just think about the worst person that you can think of. Don't point to them and if they're in this room. I mean for some of you you might think of someone personally who has hurt you. Some of you you might think just of a general type of person who does a certain thing. I know some of you some of you are thinking of our president probably. But just think of the worst person that you could imagine. Salvation being of grace means that they are just as qualified to be saved as you are. You're not any closer to the line of salvation. You're not any closer to proving yourself before God to earn his love or his salvation that that everybody is equally eligible. Everybody is equally qualified.

I mean grace if you think about it is really actually quite scandalous in that way. That's why it's so often is hard for us to grasp but I think it's so hard for it to take hold in our lives because it's not the way we want to think. We want to measure things. We want to compare ourselves. Salvation has been made available to all because salvation is totally of grace. Everyone is only saved by what Jesus has done. Nothing that they've done. All they have to do to be qualified to be saved is to be a sinner and it's all of us. He says salvation is made available to all. Bringing salvation to all people is the first work of grace. Salvation is available to you if you are here this morning. You've never trusted in what Jesus has done.

If you've been looking to something else, if you've been trusting in yourself, know that salvation is available to you. But Paul continues on. He says salvation is brought to all people by grace but then once people come to salvation by grace the work of grace begins in them to train them. This is where we go to verse 12. The second part of the work of grace is it training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in the present age. If you can just for a moment think about what we talked about last week. If you weren't here you just look back at the beginning of chapter 2. What were we called to?

Recall to self-control godly lives, right? There were some descriptions given of how to do that in different contexts but that's what we were called to. To live self-controlled godly lives and now he says it is the grace of God that trains us to renounce ungodliness, to turn from our sin and to walk in this godliness that we have been called to. This word for train it could mean instruct, it could mean teach, it can even mean discipline. What Paul says is that grace is our, it's our schoolteacher. Grace is our parent, grace is our mentor. Grace is the one that teaches us, trains us, disciplines us to turn away from our sin and to live godly lives.

This is kind of counterintuitive when you think about it at least for a way most people think. A lot of people say well listen if I'm just saved by grace and I don't have to do anything isn't that just going to lead me to live in more sin. I mean if God always forgives and what I do doesn't matter to my salvation why wouldn't I just continue to live in sin so that God's grace may abound. Paul says actually when you really understand the grace of God, once God's grace really comes into your life and gets a hold of you it actually has the opposite effect. Does it lead you to want to sin more? It actually trains you to live a godly life. How does grace do this in our lives?

I've been really trying to think about this because I think it's the key to really understanding this. I was trying to think about what often motivates us. If grace isn't what is training us or motivating us to live a godly life what often is our

motivator? What I was thinking about, just reading from some other people, I think what often motivates people who are let's just say religious maybe even specifically Christian to try to do good things and stop sinning it's often either guilt or it's greed. What so often motivates us is probably often our guilt. I mean think about it there are probably plenty of people who would say you know what I don't want to sin anymore I want to give up you know falling into that temptation that always fell into I want to read my Bible more because I just don't want God to be disappointed in me. I don't want God to be mad at me. I don't want him to punish me. I want to make sure that I stay in a good place with God and so in their guilt they seek to live a godly life and turn from those sinful passions. For other people maybe it's kind of the opposite almost it's greed.

You ever heard somebody say well listen if you'll just tithe you might only have 90% of your money but just watch what God does he's gonna give you way more. That's pushing towards what we want in our greed. You say well listen if you just have enough faith God's gonna bless you he'll take away that cancer. He'll heal that situation in your life. What's motivating then us is I think probably some type of wanting something more from God that's why I would call it greed. The problem with both guilt and greed as being motivators is they're very self-focused. One beats ourselves up we think we're never doing good enough so we just try harder. The other is always just trying to get something more from God as if he's a kind of a curmudgeon up in heaven just holding on to all the things that we really want but neither one of those are motivated by a love for God. Neither one of those are motivated by a healthy relationship. What if instead of being motivated by guilt or by greed we were motivated by grace?

I mean think about what the grace of God says to you. The grace of God says to you that you are loved unconditionally and there is nothing that you can do to be loved anymore by him. The grace of God says that you have been by faith united to Christ Jesus and you're actually already seated with him in the heavenly places. Your position in heaven is already secure as you walk on this earth. The grace of God says that that nothing you can do can earn more of God's love for you. Nothing you can do can add to the righteousness that has been given to you. The grace of God says that that your relationship with God is secure in his love. Think about if that is what was motivating you. Then you're no longer having to be so self-focused about your own guilt or what you can get from God but you can actually be focused on a love for God because he loved you first.

Listen what I've just found in my own life is that when I'm struggling to renounce ungodliness, when I'm struggling to turn away from sin and temptation, when I'm struggling to walk in self-control and live the life God has called me to live, it's because I'm not reflecting on the grace of God, the love of God that has already been given to me in Jesus. So often I'm looking at the world and I'm thinking about all the things that I think God is withholding from me. So often I'm looking at myself and thinking about just how terrible I am and how much I've messed up and I just then want to avoid God. When I take the time to really reflect on God's love that has been freely given to me, my position in Christ that is so secure, it just grows in me a love for God that wants to just walk with him, wants to just walk in fellowship with him, to just enjoy his love. I start to despise the things that he despises not because I have to but because it's just the relationship that I have with him. I start to want to walk in his light and his life and his love because this is who loved me first. Paul says when the grace of God really gets a hold of you it motivates you, it trains you to turn away from your sin, to walk in godliness in this present age but also causes you to look forward.

This last part of the work of grace is really a forward facing aspect. He says in verse 13, "Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." The grace trains us to live godly lives in the present age and also trains us, it works in us to wait well for Jesus's return. He says we wait for our blessed hope. You think about what is your view of the future? What is your expectation of what is to come? So many times people have a very dismal look at the future when they see the state of our nation, the state of our world. Maybe when they just think about their own lives, their future feels very insecure, unsure. Paul says we because of the grace of God have a blessed hope that we look forward to, that we await.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, right now this world is the worst it's ever going to get from you, for you. It only gets better from here. That when Jesus returns he is going to make all things new, he is going to right every wrong. And if this hope was based on your ability to have a strong enough faith, if this hope was in your ability to do enough good works, then it would be shaky, right? But he says this hope is based on the grace of God, therefore it is a blessed hope that we can await. Why do we renounce ungodliness and worldly passions? Because they have nothing for us in the future. With

the grace of God securing our future, knowing that Jesus has returned, we cast our gaze not just to the cross but also to his return waiting for him with a secure hope that all that we desire is still to come in him, therefore we can turn away from the things of this world. It says the grace of God, it trains us to live godly lives in the present age but also to set our hope in what is secure.

This is how the grace of God comes to work in somebody's life and I was just trying to think about what is the application I could give you that might really be tangible because we were just talking about in our community group last week how you know we want to be self-controlled but we don't always know how. We see here it says the grace of God trains you to be self-controlled but how does that actually happen? It sounds kind of just like a theory sometimes. Here's just what I want to give you this morning. This could be some application for you as you just think about allowing the grace of God to work in you. This application just comes to me in thinking of a quote that I've mentioned before by a guy named Robert Murray McShane. Basically he just said "For every one look at yourself take ten looks to Jesus." What I just found is in our world today we often look at ourselves a lot and we need to take ten looks to Christ.

So here's what I would encourage you to do at some point this week. Take a look at yourself. If you've got the time take one minute and just confess your sin. I mean like deeply confess your sin. Not like the surface level sins or the vague sins like "Oh yeah I struggle with pride or lust or greed." But like get in there and talk about like confess your sin. What do you really... where do you really depart from God in your walk with him? Where have you really broken fellowship with him? Where have you really strayed from his design for your life? Take a minute and really just confess that. Maybe write it down somewhere. Maybe if you get into a discipleship group it's something you can share with others. But take just one minute and deeply confess your sin. And if you've got the time take ten minutes and reflect on God's grace and love for you.

If we're gonna take one look at ourselves and then ten looks to Christ that's just my guidance to you. So if you need to shorten it down maybe take 30 seconds to confess and five minutes I think the math is right there to focus on Jesus Christ in the gospel. But take a significant portion of time. You can't think about the grace of God without first considering your sin. You can't know how far down he's reached until you consider how far down you had fallen. How low you were in your sin. Can't consider God's amazing grace until you knew that you were a wretch lost. Take a minute and confess your sin but then take ten minutes and just reflect on how God has freely loved you in Christ Jesus. Reflect on the cross and Jesus's sacrifice for you. Reflect on the empty tomb, Jesus's resurrection, his covering over your sin and death, his victory over your sin. Think about how he took on your shame and that you bear it no more. Think about all the righteousness of Jesus Christ that is now clothed in you that when God looks at you that is what he sees. Not your sin and your failure and your mistakes but Jesus and his righteousness. Take a significant portion of time and just reflect on the grace of God towards you and just see if it doesn't start to change your life. When you find yourself struggling to turn from sin and live in self-control take one look at yourself but then take ten looks to Christ and allow the grace of God to really work its way down in your life so they can work through your life. This is all done for a very specific purpose.

Here's where we'll close. What is the purpose of grace? Paul says grace has been given. The grace of God has appeared and it's appearing it doesn't work. It brings salvation to all people. All can be saved. It trains the people of God to live as the people of God. It causes them to wait for Jesus's return. Why? What is God's purpose in all of this? Why is God giving his grace in this way? Verse 14 he says that Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Why did God give us grace in Jesus? To redeem us and to save us from all lawlessness. God's grace wasn't just given to forgive you of your sin and then leave you comfortable in your sin. God's grace was given to redeem you out of your sin and your sinfulness. The reason God's grace comes in and trains you and transforms you is because it is at work to purify you, to bring you out of your lawlessness and sinfulness. The grace of God was given to bring a people for his own possession. Grace of God was given to make us zealous for the good works of God.

If you think about it the good works of God is actually what we are originally created for. I know sometimes we think about the things that God wants us to do. It feels sometimes counterintuitive because in our flesh it's not what we want. So many times we think about turning from our passions, turning to the things of God, it can feel like we are betraying ourselves. We're going against ourselves because our fleshly desires don't want the things of God. But actually what the Bible says is that you were made to live in God's design. Well at times it might feel like it goes against you. It is actually

the most natural thing that you can do to live in the good works that God has planned for you. It's actually who he created you to be. At times it won't even just feel counterintuitive to ourselves. It's going to feel very countercultural. Pastor Clark mentioned last week that Paul writes these things to Titus telling him to command the people of God to live this way. It was going to be very different than the way that the rest of the people on the island of Crete were living. Surely it will be like that in San Francisco as well. As you seek to live a life that is not devoted to power or money or sex, you are going to stand out apart from the people that are around you. It's going to feel very countercultural but is actually the very most natural thing that you can do.

What God is doing is he is redeeming and restoring us to who he created us to be and who he created us to be were people that bear his image. Who he created us to be were people that worship him and glorify him and this is ultimately the purpose of God's grace that we would live for his glory. He says he has given his grace to redeem us from all lawlessness. Why? That we might be a people for his own possession. I just want to underscore this as we close this morning that we should never get in the habit of thinking well this is just all about us as if we are the end of the matter. Yes God's grace is given to us to bring us out of our sin and to restore us to who he created us to be but this is greater than just finding your purpose or your ultimate meaning in this world. It's not just about you. You were created for something greater. You're created to bear the image of the one true God and in doing so to glorify him in your life. God has given grace for our own good but for ultimately for his glory. This is why he purifies us. This is why he trains us and cleanses us. This is why he gives us his righteousness that we might live to glorify him.

So this week as you take the time to look at yourself but take 10 looks at Christ. This week as you take the time to allow the grace of God to really get a hold of you. Consider what it means to be saved by grace to be trained by grace what you're ultimately doing is being restored to the person who God wanted you to be. This is a person for his glory so allow God's grace to work in you for your good but ultimately allow God's grace to have its way with you for his glory.