

**The Gospel**  
**The Grace of Christ**  
Titus 2:11-14

December 16, 2018 a.m.

HDBC

**One of the** great things about Christmas is that it shows God to be a God of grace, giving us what we could never earn and doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. One of the most misunderstood things about God is that He has chosen to be gracious to us. That often gets missed because of the chaos, suffering and pain that we see and experience in this world. But, the Bible repeatedly reminds us of the graciousness of God.

**Wherever grace exists**, there will be those who abuse it. In our nation we enjoy a number of freedoms. Every one of those freedoms can and often is abused.

For example, we have **freedom of speech**. But there are those who abuse this freedom. It is used to justify hateful words. We have the freedom to **bear arms**. But some have abused this freedom and used it to injury and even kill others.

**In a fallen world, liberty** cannot remain unlimited because people are inherently sinful. And in our sin, we have a tendency to abuse freedom.

**What is true** of American freedom is true of God's grace. God is gracious by nature and has repeatedly shown grace not only to those who love Him, but to all of creation. Sadly, rather than embracing grace and responding to it with love, loyalty and faith, we often use it for our own self-gratification. Therefore, the Bible speaks often of grace. There are privileges that come because of grace, but there are also responsibilities that come with it.

In Titus 2:11-14 Paul wrote about grace, particularly as it relates to the person and work of Jesus. **5 statements about grace.**

**Read Titus 2:11-14**

## 1. **Grace Appeared (11)**

Grace first appeared in the garden of Eden when God chose not to kill Adam and Eve immediately when they ate the forbidden fruit. He was justified in doing so, but offered grace! God showed grace to **Abraham's wife** Sarah when she laughed at the notion of becoming a mother at her advanced age.

**He showed grace to Jacob** who stole the birthright and blessing from his older brother. He showed grace to the **brothers of Joseph** after they sold him into slavery. Grace was evident when **Moses' life** was he was adopted into the family of Pharaoh.

**These are just** a few examples of grace found in the O.T. Grace is woven throughout the Bible narrative. However, the pinnacle of grace can only be seen in the life of Jesus. It began at his birth, was evident through his life and culminated in his death.

*Appeared* – *epiphaino*. We get our word **epiphany** from this word. We did not receive grace through diligent search or through human effort. Grace appeared in the person of Jesus by God's sovereign choice. That's the way grace always appears. Grace appeared at Christmas, in Christ!

## 2. **Grace Saves (11)**

*Salvation* refers to the divine work that makes us right with God. That was only possible because Jesus paid the price for our sins.

### **What does salvation mean?**

Our sins are forgiven and we receive credit for the goodness of Jesus.

We are adopted into God's family. We become His children.

We are given an inheritance in heaven.

The Holy Spirit comes to live in us.

**This is not** a statement about universalism. He is not saying everyone is saved. It simply says salvation was brought to all men. Grace, in the life of Jesus, means all men have an opportunity to be saved. Grace appeared at Christmas, in Christ. Grace continues to appear through salvation!

### 3. Grace Instructs (12)

Grace not only saves, but it instructs us to live godly lives. Grace leads us to **conform our behavior to match our identity in Christ.**

*Instructing* – *paideus*. Based on the common Greek noun for *child*. The use of this word places us in the role of little children receiving life instruction from a loving parent. The nuance is important. Grace, like a loving parent, teaches us how to live. Note some positives and some negatives here. Taught what not to do and what we are to do.

#### *Deny ungodliness and worldly desires*

**Ungodliness** – Root word means to fall back from or to shrink from, as one would in the presence of a deity. Showing reverence and awe! With the prefix, **a**, it negates the meaning. So, it refers to a lifestyle of irreverence, involving things dishonoring to God.

**Worldly desires** – Paul is not condemning natural desires that are God-given, such as sexual desires, desire for food, desire for a sense of significance. He is condemning the fulfilling of those desires in ungodly ways. He is also condemning an ungodly focus on those desires as being more important than they are. Grace allows us to enjoy the good things of God given to us, but also instructs us to avoid excesses and wrong attitudes.

#### *Live sensibly, righteously and godly*

Grace leads us to pursue things that are sound-minded, things that are deemed good and characterized by reverence for God.

### 4. Grace Anticipates (13)

So, grace appeared in the person of Jesus.

And, grace makes salvation available to all.

And, grace instructs us in how we are to live.

And, grace also looks to the future coming of Jesus.

**The English word** *hope* suggest wishful thinking. **I hope it will snow for**

**Christmas.** It might or it might not. This word **hope**, however means **assured expectation**. Like purchasing an airline ticket You have hope of an assigned seat. That hope is confident expectation. Paul uses this term to describe the assurance we have of the return of Jesus.

**Glory** refers to the state of things as God desires them. That will happen at the return of Christ. **Grace** enables us to live with confident expectation of the return of Jesus. He came the first time as a suffering servant. He will come a second time as a victorious king.

**Paul reminds us** that Jesus is **the great God and Savior**. He is God in human form. He was not simply a courier from God bringing a message. He was and is God, becoming one of us. And as the ultimate God-man, He will one day come back to us and for us.

## 5. Grace Redeems (14)

This section closes with a reminder that grace redeems. We were slaves to sin, but Jesus purchased us out of that slavery and set us free from that bondage. But he did not redeem us to simply allow us to escape the penalty of sin. He redeemed us that we might belong to Him. We are His people, his possession that we might bring glory to Him.

**Christmas celebrates** is a great demonstration of the grace of God to people. We saw His grace in the O.T. in so many ways, as I shared earlier. But those were just snapshots of grace. They were **teasers** compared to the great revelation of grace that was seen in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. **John was right** when he said of Jesus . . . He is full of **grace and truth**.

The story of Christmas is the story of grace.

That grace was **revealed in the birth of Jesus**.

That grace is the key **to our salvation**.

That grace calls our **behavior to be a reflection of our identity**.

That grace anticipates the **coming of Jesus**.

That grace **redeems us for God's glory and pleasure**.

A missionary in a Muslim nation wrote the following:

**When we first** moved to the Middle East we heard that on festival days everyone dresses in their best clothes and goes to visit their relatives and neighbors to celebrate. So, for our first festival we carefully cleaned our apartment, dressed up in our best clothes, got some sweets and chocolates which are traditional to hand out to visitors and waited in our house. But no-one came to visit.

**Another missionary** explained what we did wrong: "On festival days, the small visit the big, and the big give out presents." For example, everyone in a family visits their eldest brother, or their parents, or grandparents. When they arrive they would kiss the hand of the older person to show respect and honor. The host would then care for their guests by feeding them, serving them, and giving them gifts like chocolate, money, or other presents.

**As newly** arrived foreigners without social standing or relatives, naturally no-one came to visit us. We are considered "small" by the culture, so we are the ones who need to do the visiting.

**Every other religion** calls for the **small** to come to the **big** in order to be blessed by them. Christmas reminds us that in Christianity, the **big** came to the **small**. He not only came to the small. He became a **small** in order to save us. That is the greatest act of grace in the history of the world.