

Experiencing Grace, Part 4 – Substitution

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Titus 2:14-15
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Good morning and thank you for joining our Redeemer Bible Church broadcast. I know many homes right now are filled with whining and complaining and a whole bunch of irritation, but, hey, at least the kids are happy. They've got another week of spring break left. I just want to remind you of a couple of announcements before we get started. The first is that you can stay connected to us all week on our Facebook page, our YouTube page, as well as our website and Instagram. We're doing daily videos called The Daily Word. We're explaining the New Testament portion of our Bible reading plan, so you can follow along with the Bible reading plan and you can follow along with us every day on YouTube, Instagram, and our Facebook page. We're also continuing to do weekly episodes of our podcast, Redeeming Truth. We want to stay connected to you as much as we can. We want to teach you, and we want to shepherd your souls. We want to care for your needs. In light of that, I want you to know we're going to be doing a live Facebook session where the pastors, we're going to get together at 2:00 PM this Tuesday to pray. So, if you want us to pray for you, send us an email, info@redeemeraz.org. Tell us what you want us to pray for you about, and if you want to join us and pray with us, I remind you, be on our Facebook page. Join us on Facebook Live, Tuesday at 2:00 PM this week. As always, join us here next week, Sunday at 10:00 AM for another broadcast.

Grab your Bibles and open to Titus 2. Titus 2. If you got a Bible from an usher, if you've holding that in your hands, that is page 1,100. Titus 2. We are making our way through the book of Titus, and we're not going to stop just because of the coronavirus and the government recommending that we don't meet today. We're going to continue. So, Titus 2. We're going to start at verse 11. If you are following along, take a look at verse 11. This is one sentence in Greek, and we're going to read this together.

Titus 2:11. "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 authority. Let no one disregard you."

As God's Word, before we get started, please join me in prayer. Father, these are your words. Even though we're interacting with each other through the wonders of technology, your word is powerful. Your word is powerful than any sword. It cuts beyond our physical bodies. It cuts to the very core of our hearts. It separates what we're saying we believe and what we say we want to do from what we actually want to do and what we're actually saying. You get to the very core

of our motivations and show us where we need to bring our lives in line with your word and so I pray that would be the result of our time here together, that you would use your word, that you would use Titus 2:14-15 to impact us deeply, even though we're watching on our phones or our computers or on our TVs. Use your truth to powerfully impact our lives, so that when we turn it off, so that when we put our phones down, we will say I met with the Lord because you did the work that only you can do. Please, Father, that's what we're hoping for, that's why we're doing this, because we do not believe that because we are not together that you won't work, that because we're not sitting in the same room that your word is not powerful. No, your word is incredibly powerful and can go through technology and impact life. So Father, please do that now for all of us. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

This week we've seen the unprecedented recommendation from our nation's governors to shut down just about our entire country. It seems like every day we inch closer to a national lockdown, where no one could travel or even leave our homes except to do some essential things. Schools are getting longer breaks. Restaurants are closed except for takeout. Movie theaters, coffee shops, other indoor meeting places are also closed. Weddings are postponed, lines for ammo are only being dwarfed by lines for toilet paper. We're washing our hands for 20 seconds. We're bathing them in sanitizer. We're keeping three to six feet distance from all the people we interact with. We're staying indoors. We're not meeting with more than 10 people. We're even live streaming this service. But this morning, we're broadcasting our service with no audience in the room, all because of the coronavirus. Whether a lockdown happens or not, the result being hoped for is that the rate of hundreds of infections a day will slow down. It'll even stop and people will stop dying. However, there are more results that were hoping for, right? We want our lives to go back to normal. We hope that sports will return and parents will cheer their kids go back to school. Restaurants will open again. Toilet paper will flow an abundance. We long for those results. We want to see more than just, hey, we can meet together. We want to see more. I wonder, do you know the result of Jesus' death? Do you know what it is? Oh, I know. You'll say his death means salvation, and you'd be right. But just like what we're hoping for, with the results of all of these recommendations, there are more results to the death of Jesus than salvation as great as salvation is. Those results are seen in Titus 2:14, and they're enjoyed by everyone who's experienced God's grace in their lives. Starting in verse 11, we've been recounting the gifts of God's grace to those who believe. When God's grace appears to an individual, it brings him or her salvation. Grace is God's kindness, his compassion, his favored disposition seen in merciful action towards people who don't deserve it. His kindness towards people who deserve his antagonism seen in his justice for living lives is his enemy.

That's what God's grace is. It's God's kindness to his enemies. The grace that saves people from God's wrath or their sins is then the same grace that trains those people to turn from all of their known sins and to live lives that are pleasing to the Lord. Verse 12. That God-centered, that Christlike shift, that our lives will move into fifth gear as we live lives that are waiting and watching and anticipating for Jesus to appear at any moment to snatch us away. So, as we've been looking at this text, we've been saying, let's be people who are eagerly and happily

anticipating, who can't wait for the return of our King to take us to himself, where we will be with him forever.

The flow of thought from verse 11 to 13 is that grace makes us godly. Grace changes us. Grace transforms us from self-centered people to God-centered people. It changes us from like the world that hates God to like Jesus who knows, loves and serves God. Living for God, doing what's right by him, being like Jesus, living a holy life, being set apart, being obedient to his word, whatever you want to call it, it's not the reluctant acceptance of some religious rules and rituals. Obedience is not optional. It's not something that holds us back. It's not being a fanatic. It's something that only Jesus freaks do. Listen. Holiness is not a parsley on the plate of Christianity. Living a holy life of commitment to Christ, doing good works that please him and obedience to the Bible is Christianity after grace has appeared and saved a person. The idea of salvation by faith generating good works in a life is all over the Bible. That theme is underlying our text this morning.

Grace saves us, verse 11. Grace trains us to be godly, verse 12, as we anticipate the rapture, verse 13, and this long sentence which we've looked at four weeks in a row now comes to an end in verse 14, where we read that Jesus, our great God and Savior, redeems us. "He 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". Look at those first five words, "who gave himself for us." This refers to the cross. Galatians 1:4 says he gave Himself for our sins. Our sins were the problem and the solution was nothing less than Jesus giving himself because of those sins. Notice who gave him up for our sins. What does the text say? He gave himself. This is the selfless self-sacrifice. He gave his own life so that we would have life. He laid it down of his own free will. He wasn't forced. He wasn't caught off guard. He wasn't coerced. He wasn't surprised at the events of that final day. He did it consciously, voluntarily, joyfully, in fact, according to Hebrews 12:2. Notice the text, He gave himself. He didn't give money. He didn't give property. He didn't give someone else. He didn't give an angel. He gave himself. Not only was the cross a voluntary sacrifice, but it was a valuable sacrifice. The price paid to set us free from our sins was, according to 1 Peter 1:18, the infinitely value and precious blood of Christ. Finally, notice the cross was also a substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus gave himself for us. For us, meaning as our representative. He acts in solidarity with us. He did this as one of us. He's not only our representative, He's our benefactor. He gives Himself for our benefit. He gives himself for our sake, on our behalf, for our eternal good and happiness, and for us also means that he acted as our substitute. He gave himself in our place. He gave himself for us. He was treated as if he was us, and why did he do this? Galatians 2:20, "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." He gave himself for us because he loves us.

Now, why did He love us? Because He knew what good little boys and girls we would be. No. He loves us because of his grace. A favor, a kindness for people who deserve his justice for our sins. He showed his love for us by giving himself to save us from his own justice. This phrase at the beginning of verse 14 connects back to the end of verse 13, which says our great God and

Savior, Jesus Christ. The point here, it wasn't just anybody who gave himself for us. It was the great God who gave himself for us. It was the Savior. It was the Christ, the King of the universe. It was Jesus who gave himself for us. That, once again, is grace. Think about that. Him for us. I can't put my hand low enough. The Creator for His creatures, the great God for great sinners like you and me, the Holy One for the unholy, the one who sinned, the one who was sinned against for those who sinned against Him. The guiltless for the guilty, the judge for the judged. This is the highest. This is the climax. This is the apex of God's grace. The voluntary, selfless, substitutionary sacrifice of our great God who became our Savior and died for our sins.

Now, look at verse 14 again. Notice Jesus' sacrifice was for two results. He gave Himself for us, notice, to redeem us and, notice, to purify us. Jesus died, departed and to purify. Now, let's take a look at that first one. Jesus died. Jesus gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness. The word redeem comes from the language of commerce, from buying and selling. We use the word when it comes to a coupon or a gift certificate. We want to redeem it. We buy something with those things. We exchange them for something that we want.

Well, this word was used in the first century for going to a market. Instead of buying food, or instead of buying clothes, you would buy slaves. You would buy people. Mark 10:45, Jesus says, "He gave His life as a ransom, as a payment for many." A ransom is a price paid to set somebody free, either a captive or a slave. So, Jesus gave Himself an exchange for us. He gave His blood, His life in exchange for our lives. Our lives were in danger of eternal punishment for our sins, and He exchanged His life for hours. Taking the punishment we deserve, so that all who give their lives to Him will be free forever. Well, what is it that people were enslaved to? What was the hostile environment that people needed freedom from? Look at the text. He redeemed us from all lawlessness. Lawlessness is what it sounds like. Living your life like there is no law. Living like God's rules don't matter. They don't apply to you. Living in opposition to the Bible. It's a domination by what a person wants, an utter defiance from what God wants. It's contempt for. It's the violation of the word, the will, and the ways of God. There is no partnership, 2 Corinthians 6:14, between righteousness, doing what is right, and lawlessness, doing what is evil. Notice the text. Jesus redeemed us from that. Listen. For those who have trusted in Him as their Savior, for those who've submitted to Him as their Lord, Jesus' death sets them free from thoughts, words, and deeds done in opposition to God's Word. How many of those do you have? I've got thousands and thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions. Notice the text. How much lawlessness does He redeem us from? What does it say? All lawlessness. Hebrews 10:17, "God promises to remember our sins and lawless deeds no more." Every wicked thought, every selfish word, every evil deed rescued from all condemnation, freed from every penalty, from every sin past, present and future. No wonder Romans 4:7 says, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven." Why would we be blessed? Jesus didn't redeem us from almost all of our lawlessness. He redeemed us from it all. As you contemplate the mountain of God's grace that we've seen in these opening verses and in these opening words of verse 14, let's just pause for a minute to point #1) ***Cherish Your Gracious Salvation. Cherish Your Gracious Salvation.*** The

longer we're Christians, I think, the more we take for granted that there's really no reason in and of ourselves that we should be saved. There really isn't.

Notice, we are passive in all of this. We merely received the benefits of all that He did. We don't cannot prove ourselves at all. Look at Titus 3:5. Look at it. It says, "He saved us not, not, not because of deeds done by us and righteousness." Just in the first half of verse 14, listen to the mountain of grace that falls on all who believe. Jesus' death was voluntary. He chose to do it. His death was selfless. He did it for the benefit of others. He considered others more important than himself when he died on the cross. It was substitutionary. He took the wrath that we deserve for all of our sins upon Himself.

He did this, the great God, the King of the universe. What He did was complete, exhaustive, comprehensive, thorough. His death redeems all who believe in him from all of their sins. Every last one. Think about it. This recounting of the gospel is said in the context of encouraging Christians to live holy lives. What is Paul doing with that? He's taking these Christians back to the foundational truths to the gospel, their salvation, their transformation after salvation, the rapture that could happen at any moment. And then, he takes them back to the death of Christ in verse 14. He's taking them back to the basics to motivate them to live for Christ today. The past grace of your conversion, the present grace of your growth and change, the future grace of your glorification, combined with the death of our great God and Savior for our sins. All of that's meant to knock us over. It's meant to blow us away. It's meant to amaze us yet again at the mountain of grace that has come down upon us from Christ, so that we would live lives in devotion to Him.

Have you spent time recently cherishing, reveling in, celebrating the salvation you have, but that you didn't earn? In these dark days, when each of us is fixated on how many coronavirus infections there are and how many deaths it's caused, let us not forget the reason that we can go through this crisis unafraid. The reason there is an anchor for our souls in the midst of the storm of our world is the grace of this voluntary, selfless, substitutionary, priceless, complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins.

The Cretan culture that Paul was speaking into, that Titus was ministering to was just as wicked himself as ours. Christians were getting sucked into it. They were being taken down by the culture into sin and into false teaching. What does Paul do to lift up their eyes to something infinitely better? What did he do to get them off of the world and back into Godly living? He reminded them of the gospel, a reminder of Jesus' death to redeem them from every lawless deed so that they would cherish His grace, and live against the world, and that they would live for their great God and Savior who loved them and gave Himself for them.

Now, Jesus' death had a second intended result as seen in verse 14. It 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. The word purify means to cleanse, to make clean, to remove what defiles and makes dirty. We've been doing this with our hands constantly, right? Now, again, what's made us dirty in the eyes of God? It's our sin. But 1 John 1:7 says the blood

of Jesus, God's Son, "Cleanses us from all sin." Hebrews 9:14, the blood of Jesus will, "Purify our consciences from dead works." Much of the language in this part of verse 14 comes from Ezekiel 36 and 37 where cleansing was connected to Israel's idols being rejected and being removed from their lives, removed from their neighborhoods, removed from their land. That is going to happen according to Ezekiel 36 and 37, when their Messiah, when Jesus returns, sets up His kingdom and reigns for a thousand years. When that happens, Ezekiel says, "They will be my people and I will be their God." Or the way that Paul puts it in verse 14, Jesus purified for himself a people for his own possession. In His ultimate act of grace, when Jesus died to cleanse from our sins, He redeemed us, which means that He purchased us. Notice what the text says. He purchased us for Himself. We are His. We are His possession. He bought us. That's what Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Peter 1:18 all say. He owns us. We were slaves to sin, held captive to Satan. He set us free to be His property forever. And this five-word phrase in verse 14, people for his own possession, really translates one Greek word. The word that means costly, precious, valuable, priceless.

We are more than just the people to Christ. We are more than just the people who belong to Him. His people are a special treasure to Him. This is what the Savior thinks of the saved. This is the Redeemer's heart for the redeemed. We are a people specifically, specially set apart, exclusively for Him. And His possession of His people, by the way, His ownership of them never ends. John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all in, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand." His ownership of us never ends. He's never going to get sick of us. He's never going to get tired of us. We're never going to be worn out to Him. He's never going to move on something else and something better. There is no better treasure for Christ, than the Father, the Spirit and His people. Now, we can cherish that too and Marvel at that and worship Jesus for that. And we should. But look at verse 14, what is the effect that all of this is supposed to have on our lives according to the text? All of this is to make us people who are zealous for good works.

The ESV translates this word as an adjective, zealous, but in Greek it's a noun, zealot. Christians are to be zealot, radicals, crazy. Notice, for what? For good works. The only right response to all of the grace, the Christian has been shown is total life devotion to the one who redeems them, purifies them and is coming again for them. In other words, zeal in living for Jesus is the right and good and expected response of grace. Any teaching that separates Christianity from zeal for obedience is not Christianity.

Now with all that being said, let's just pause here for a minute to point #2) ***Embrace Your New Activism. Embrace Your New Activism.*** Accept it. Welcome zealotry with open arms. Encourage everyone else you know who names the name of Jesus to do the same, to be an activist for good works. Look at Titus 2:7, where to show ourselves, "In all respects to be models of good works." Everywhere we go, everything we do, we are to model good Titus 3:1, Christians are to be ready for every good work. Any situation where good work is called for,

we're to be ready to do it. Look at Titus 3:8. Christians are to, "Devote themselves to good works." This is the Christian life. This is what it means to be a Christian. Listen to 1 Peter 2:24. "Jesus himself bore our sins in His body on the tree that we might"... Well, how do you think that verse ends? He bore our sins that we might be saved, that we might be forgiven, that we might feel good about ourselves. No, He bore our sins in His body on the tree that we might "...die to sin and live to righteousness." See, we think the only result of the cross is that our sins are forgiven. Paul and Peter say, no, we are saved in order to live Godly lives. We are saved that we might be zealous for good works, and the good works are those of saying no to sin, and the good works of saying yes to knowing, loving and serving our Lord and Savior. Let me just ask, are you an activist for obedience, or has your heart atrophied toward this? I'm afraid biblical Christianity in the 21st century is so focused on salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, apart from any works to earn salvation. That emphasis is right. 100%. But I think that emphasis has made it so that we've forgotten that grace always produces zealots for good works, and that grace produces zealots because why? Now, we belong to Jesus.

This is often seen as some kind of second step in the Christian life. The first step is salvation. And then, maybe or maybe not, you'll take a second step into following, loving, learning from, and living for Jesus. Listen, that's not Christianity. Christianity is not live however you want and God will forgive you. You can live however you want. It doesn't matter. After you've committed yourself to Jesus, Hey, and that's fine. No big deal. Jesus doesn't redeem you from lawlessness so you can live in lawlessness. He redeems you from it. He takes you out of it completely. Christians live to please Him, to do what He says, to say what He says, to orient our entire lives around what He says. He's not the most important thing. He's the only thing in everything else in our lives is to revolve around Him. Why? What does the text say? Because of His grace. Grace trains us. Grace motivates us. Grace is constantly working in our lives to make us more and more fanatical, more and more radical, more and more activists for our own holiness.

Why are we afraid of this? Why are we afraid of being called a Jesus freak, a radical, or a holy roller? Why does the opinion of others have such a hold on our hearts instead of Jesus? Why doesn't all that He is and all that He's done and grace towards sinners, enemies against Him? Why doesn't that have more of a hold on our hearts? Why are we more eager? Why are we more enthusiastic for so many lesser things than we are enthusiastic to please the one who gave Himself for us, redeemed us, purified us, and made us His own special treasure? Yes. Some religious fervor can be misguided and even dangerous but notice the text. It says zeal for good works. Not zeal for evil works that are called good works. Listen. Right now, everyone in our culture is trying to avoid the coronavirus and rightly so. But listen, there is something that Christians should avoid more than that virus. Balance, moderation, restraint, relaxation, declining in your Christian life. Listen. You cannot be too Godly. You cannot be too zealous for good works. You cannot give too much of your attention to your soul's holiness before God. Never get into the idea that being an activist for good works is for other Christians who have more energy, and they're just kind of more committed. Never give into the idea that you're Godly enough. You pray enough. You know enough about the Bible. You love the Lord enough. Yes, you are

accepted 100% by God, the Father. You can never be unadopted. But all of the grace that we've been shown is meant to make us more and more committed to Christ in our lives. Be careful against any inclination, any thought, any pull towards caring less about the truth, less about the Lord, less about your holiness, less about your commitment to living for Christ. Beware when things like your church attendance, even though we can't have any right now. But when we get back to this or even being here every week at 10:00 AM on Sundays. Beware when that starts to become inconsistent. Beware when your prayers start getting shorter, your time in God's Word becomes less and less. Beware that that's not a good thing.

One author put it this way, quote, "Whatever you do for God, do it with all your heart and mind and strength, and other things be moderate and dread going into extremes and soul matters. Fear moderation, just as you would fear the plague." How appropriate. He says care not what men think of you. Let it be enough for you that your master says strive. Well, where does He say strive? Hebrews 12:14 says, "Strive for holiness." Not sloth for holiness, not sluggish for holiness. Strive for holiness. Be a zealot. An activist for good works. Be an activist for the good of your own soul's happiness and joy and satisfaction and fulfillment in Christ.

Now, the long sentence that started in verse 11 comes to an end. But verse 15 summarizes this whole section that started really in chapter 2:1. Knowing that grace motivates Godliness, knowing that grace makes Christian zealots for good works. Verse 15, "Declare these things," Paul says to Titus, "Exhort and rebuke with all authority." Everything he said, at least since chapter 2:1, maybe all the way back to chapter 1:10, all that he said, these things, this exposing of false teachers living Godly lives, the grace of God in salvation, transformation, glorification, redemption, and purification. All of these things, Titus, is to declare whether in public teaching or private conversation. This was to be his message. This was to be the tone of his ministry. God's grace and the godliness that grace produces in the lives of Jesus' people. Those were the two drum beats he was supposed to hit constantly. He was to keep doing this no matter what church he visited. He was to be persistent. He was to be a one trick pony, really two trick pony. Grace and the godliness it produces. He was to make God's word clear so that everyone would understand it. Notice the text next. He was to exhort. Titus was to press that truth on people's lives so that they would believe it. Then, finally look at the text. It says that he was to rebuke. He was to kind of confront sin. He was to correct false teaching, so that God's people would obey the truth. He was to keep on doing this, helping people understand, helping people believe, helping people obey the truth. Never giving up, never surrendering, always ready, always zealous, notice, to exhort people, to urge them to live Godly lives, encourage them to do good works, so that those who believe in Jesus will live for Jesus, as these verses in chapter two outline.

Titus was always to be ready to rebuke, to scrutinize, to examine, convince, expose error, correct it with the truth, so that Christians could get back on track, so that Christians could be restored to believing and living in line with God's truth. He wishes to do it boldly. Notice, with all authority. Notice, the authority is tied to his ministry of speaking. He is to declare, exhort and rebuke with

all authority. In other words, what he says has authority because what he says is these things, and these things are the sound doctrine that come from God through his apostles. In other words, Titus had no authority in himself. The authority is in the message that we now have in our Bibles. He was to speak in a way that unleashed that authority on people. He was not to waffle. He was not to pull punches. He was not to be afraid of anything. He was not giving advice. He was not sharing. He was not giving his opinion to be accepted or rejected however his audience pleases. He was to be a voice for God. He has absolutely no authority, no authority in and of himself. He has no authority in his office. All authority rests in his message. He never rises above the truth. He doesn't even have opinions that are on par with the truth. He always remains under the truth, and in spite of all those who will oppose him, in spite of all the disrespect and rejection he will face, notice the text says, Titus was to let no one disregard you. In other words, he was to be impactful. He was to be influential in the ministry among all the churches on that island. Paul's saying don't let anyone evade you. Don't let anyone get around you. Don't let anyone hide from you or the truth that you're to proclaim. He was not to be meek and mild. He was to be bold and courageous, so much so that no one could interact with him and have his ministry go unnoticed. Notice, let no one, not one person, disregard you. The way Paul said this suggests that this is what Titus was doing. He was allowing himself to be disregarded and ignored. Paul writes this to say, Titus, this is your mandate. Preach the grace of God. Preach the transformation that God's grace causes, and don't let anybody disregard you when you do. This is called a courageous difference-making pastoral ministry.

Well, what does that have to do with a whole bunch of non-pastors who are reading this text? What does this have to do with those who aren't in pastoral ministry, who aren't a missionary somewhere? What does this have to do with them? What can you take away from four personal commands to a pastor, Titus, who lived almost 2,000 years ago? I think it's this. point #3) ***Advance Your God-Given Ministry. Advance Your God-Given Ministry.*** Titus's ministry was to put the churches in order by appointing godly leaders, confronting false teachers, and reorienting everybody in those churches around the truth. That's chapter 1:5, all the way to chapter 2:15. But I wonder, what is your ministry? You have one. 1 Corinthians 12:7, "To each Christian is given the manifestation of the Spirit." Translation, you have been given a ministry to do, the verse says, for the common good, for the good of other Christians. 1 Corinthians 14:26, "All ministry is to be done to building up other people." So, you have a ministry to be a blessing to other people. Are you doing it? It's to make us stronger Christians, to encourage us when we're weak, to rebuke us when we're in sin, to make us more able to serve our King. 1 Peter 4:10 says each Christian, "Has received a gift." They've received a ministry to do with that gift, to use that gift, to use that ministry, to serve one another as stewards of God's grace. God himself has given you a ministry to do if you are a Christian. He's entrusted it to you, and you will give an account for it. You will give an account for if you did it, and you will give an account for how you did it, but you will give an account. See, ministry isn't just for pastors or super Christians. Ministry is for every Christian. Ephesians 4:16, each Christian has a part to play. Each Christian has a ministry.

And when each Christian is doing his or her part, the whole body works exactly like it should, and when every part of your body is doing what it should, your body works as it should.

In a world dominated right now by taking care of ourselves, doing what's best for ourselves, looking out for number one as if we were the only ones, what are we doing with the ministries that God has given us? Stopping, slowing down, not advancing in your God-given ministry would be like hospitals shutting down now as the virus is ramping up. There's just too much going on with doctors, with nurse. We need to slow down. We need to take it easy. There's just too much change and chaos and hysteria. We just need to take a breath, and we just need to close the hospital for a while. We'd be outraged. We'd be going, that's insane. Who does that? They're not supposed to do that. That's not what they do. They exist to minister the needs of sick people and help the hurting people. Guess what? So do you, Christian. You exist. God gave you a gift to be a blessing to others, and that gift is a ministry. So, if you have the gift of teaching, you should be teaching. You have the gift of giving; you should be giving. You have the gift of administration; you should be serving. All of these gifts outlined in the Bible are ways to do ministry. They are the on ramp to ministries. Are you doing it? Listen, God still has a job, a task, a ministry for you. That's why you're not in heaven yet. You're do that while you're still here. And when you're done, you'll go home. But until then, advance your God-given ministry. This is not a time to slow down. There are needs that God's people have. There are needs that your community has. Some of you this week bought and passed out food for people who needed it. If you still need something, post it on our Facebook page. I'm sure some of the hundreds that subscribed there on our page will contact you to help you. Some of you right now should stay home, definitely ride this thing out. But even from home, you can minister to people. You can make phone calls. You can send emails. You can write letters to people, encouraging them, blessing them, being a voice of good news in the midst of all of the bad news that's out there. If you need ideas, you can email us at info@redeemeraz.org. We'd love to give you ministry ideas for helping people. We're trying to contact all the people in our church. If you want to help us do that, then please let us know. We want to have a church that is still going even though much of our culture is shut down.

According to Galatians 6, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, every one of us has the ministry of giving. So, I'd encourage you to advance in that ministry as well. Things are tough for all of us, but none of us here have stopped giving. In fact, to help people, some people have even come here and given more. They've given more to make sure people are ministered to and to make sure the ministry here keeps going. So, as I did last week, I would ask you again to go on our website, to give. We're really asking you to sign up for recurring giving. That way, we know every week what to expect for the ministry that God has for us this week. We can see it and we can know, okay, we know this is the amount that God has given us to minister to His people this week. Listen, your job, your hobby, who you live around, who's in your family, all of that is an opportunity for ministry. Look out your windows from your house and you will see while you're quarantined, you will see people all over the front, in front of your house. They're all opportunities to ministry. You can leave your house and go be a blessing to them. You could leave something on

their porch. You can do something to advance the ministry that God has given you. All of us have this opportunity to minister. So, are we advancing the ministry that God has given us in these dark days? Listen, we may not be able to have growth groups, but we're thinking of ways to help you minister to each other. We may not be able to have kids ministry or want to. We're thinking of ways to minister to our kids and to help you minister to your kids during these times. Listen, at the end of the day, God's grace, as we summarize this passage, God's grace will save you. That same grace will transform you. That same grace will get you ready for the return of Christ. It is what motivates Jesus' death to redeem you. His grace is what motivated Him to purify you. His grace made you His treasure, so that you will treasure Him with your life. Then, God graciously gives you a ministry, a ministry that He wants you to advance no matter what's going on in our world. He doesn't want that ministry to slow down, especially now. He wants it to ramp up. Listen, Christian, you are going to be tossed to and fro by what's going on in our world. Your heart is going to have moments of fear. Your heart is going to have moments of doubt. Your heart is going to really attach to things going on in the media, and it's going to take you down rabbit trails in your mind that are never helpful, almost never helpful, and almost never encouraging you towards godliness.

In the midst of all of this, do not forget the grace of God. The grace that saves you, the grace that is transforming you, and the grace that gives you a ministry, a heart, a desire to be a blessing to people in the specific ways that God has made you to bless people. While everybody is retreating, we saw this in our message last week, while the world retreats and protects itself, they run away from the crisis. Christians, we run into the crisis. Yes, we protect ourselves. I'm not saying that. But we run into it and we seek to meet needs. Why do we do that? Because that's what Jesus did for us. That's what He did for us. He met our ultimate need which was forgiveness for our sins so that we would be people, yes, who cherished that incredible salvation that He gave us. But also, so that we would be people who in our cherishing of that salvation have the same eyes that He did. He loved us so that we would love others. Let's be His treasured possession who are zealous for good works, regardless of what's happening in these dark days.

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