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TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Titus 2B

Chapter 2:11-15

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- In our last teaching in the letter of Paul to Titus, we discussed Paul’s mandate to Titus which was to “teach what accords with sound doctrine.”
 - Paul would outline in this section of the letter how believers in the body of Christ should live in accordance to the word of God.
 - He outlined these groups in the following order:
 - Older men, older women, younger women, younger men, Titus (Pastor/Leader), slaves.
 - Paul showed us in this previous text that spiritual maturity was not marked by age, but rather by application of the scriptures in one’s life.
 - We came to find that God uses the older, spiritually mature, men and women in the church to help disciple and lead the younger generation.
 - Older men to younger men and older women to younger women.
 - It became evident that within the organization of the church, the responsibility of discipleship doesn’t fall primarily on the Pastor.
 - Rather, each member of the church body has a role and that is to live out the scriptures according to what is patterned.
 - Titus was to set the example and to model for the body what right living looks like in alignment with the right teaching.
 - Paul concludes within these groups of believers, the slave.
 - The slave is to submit themselves to their masters, regardless of how they may or may not be treated.
 - Ultimately, the response and the responsibility of the slave to live well is no different from any believer in Christ, slave or free.
 - It is this understanding of the text that leads us to the last 5 verses of Chapter 2.
- If I were to outline for us these last 5 verses of Titus Chapter 2, it would be the following in respective order:
 - - Grace makes known the great gift of salvation
 - Grace disciplines us and grace teaches us
 - Grace allows us to look back in humble adoration while looking forward with great anticipation
 - Grace frees us and keeps us
 - Grace commissions us
 - If I were to put a tag on this text it would be “Grace Teaches Us. Grace Leads Us”.
 - Pick me up in Titus 2:11-15.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,
Titus 2:12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,
Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,
Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
Titus 2:15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

- Let’s Pray
- On December 29, 2020, NPR Music did a special cover on Steve Turner’s book, “ *Amazing Grace: The Story of America’s Most Beloved Song*”.
 - Mr Turner’s book tells the story of lyricist, John Newton and his conversion from being a slave trader to an abolitionist.
 - Turner traces the evolution of this song from its origins in 1772 written in Newton’s attic in Olney, England.
 - Turner discovered that the lyrics of this famous song was developed from Newton’s personal

conversion experience.

- This idea of grace being God’s unmerited favor to lost and broken sinners.
- If you aren’t familiar with the lyric, allow me to recite just a bit of it this morning:

**Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found Was blind but now I see
Was Grace that taught my heart to fear And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that Grace appear The hour I first believed**

- Charles Spurgeon said this regarding God’s grace:

A person who is really saved by Grace does not need to be told that he is under solemn obligations to serve Christ. The new life within him tells him that. Instead of regarding it as a burden, he gladly surrenders himself, body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord.

- It is this reality that the Apostle Paul expresses to Titus and this network of Home Churches in Crete that this grace has in fact appeared.
 - Paul will conclude Chapter 2 with the reality of what the grace of God has done and should do inwardly for the believer in Jesus Christ.
 - Pick me up in verse 11.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

- Right off the bat we see that this verse begins with the word “for”.
 - I mention this because the word “for” refers to a particular point in the previous verse or verses.
 - So walk back with me to verses 9 and 10 of Titus Chapter 2. Paul says:

Titus 2:9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

Titus 2:10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

- What we see here is that the slave’s ability to submit to their earthly master, regardless of their treatment, will show their masters a different life response.
 - To a slave master who owned slaves, it could be assumed that some were expected to be argumentative or not satisfactory in their work.
 - We saw a similar situation of this from the teaching I did in Philemon.
 - Onesimus, who was a Phrygian slave, was considered, prior to coming to Christ, doubly useless.
 - There was a famous proverb that stated “A Phrygian is the better and the more serviceable for beating”.
 - Meaning, not only was Onesimus spiritually dead because of his unbelief but he was not well-pleasing in his work and stole from Philemon.
 - By God’s divine providence, Onesimus ends up coming across the ministry of the Apostle Paul.
 - Through Paul preaching the Gospel to Onesimus, Onesimus comes to faith in Christ.
 - It would be after some time had passed, that Paul would send Onesimus back to Philemon to reconcile the wrong that was done.

- Why do I mention this?
- We must recognize that the Gospel message in and of itself is a message of reconciliation and transformation, not only vertically but horizontally.
 - The Gospel changes us at the core of who we are and brings to light who God has called us to be.
- Now realize that Onesimus returning to his master was a death sentence.
 - However, it was an opportunity Paul saw that allowed both Onesimus and Philemon to see the Gospel of grace at work in a hostile situation.
 - Check out what Paul tells Philemon in Philemon verse 15:

Philemon 15 For perhaps it was for this reason that he was separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever,

Philemon 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

- Philemon would receive a doubly useful Onesimus. One who has been made spiritually alive as a brother in Christ.
 - But he will also have a servant who can share the Gospel with others.
 - Friends, this type of relationship in antiquity would be completely counter-cultural. Why?
 - Because you now have slaves and masters as brothers in Christ, together as one.
 - To put it plainly, the Gospel of grace would be on display for all to see.
 - Paul in Titus 2:10 shows Titus and the current reader that slaves, even in their low social status and position are able to make much of the grace of God.
- Paul in the same sentence regarding Christian slaves uses an interesting word for what living well looks like to others.
 - He uses the word “adorn” in verse 10 of Chapter 2.
 - The word adorn in Greek is *kosmeō*. It means to make neat, to decorate, to put in order.
 - Paul references this same word in 1 Tim 2:9-10, as he is talking to women about how they should dress. Check it out:

1 Tim 2:9 Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments

1 Tim 2:10 but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

- ○ This word adorn is beyond mere viewing pleasure. This is an imperative. It requires action.
 - Paul mentions that they are to put themselves in order by putting on what is right and doing what is godly.
- Paul’s point in verses 9 and 10 is simple: By living out what you have been soundly taught, it allows others to know and see this Gospel of Grace.
 - Your life and my life should reflect what God has freely given to us, and that is His grace!
- It is here at verse 11 where Paul will bring the WHY of right living amongst a chaotic and toxic culture to the forefront.
 - He says “ For the grace of God has appeared”
 - That word “appeared” in Greek is *epiphainō*. It means to appear, show, or give light to.
- What is so interesting about this sentence is that in Greek, the sentence actually starts with the word “appeared”.
 - If we were to read it in its proper Greek structure it would read, “It appeared, the grace of God bringing salvation to all men”

- Now, before we move forward we must establish a biblical definition of grace.
 - Grace is the unmerited favor of God by which we are receiving something that we did not and do not deserve.
 - Understanding the very definition of Grace brings about two important questions:
- The first question is, “Who has done the saving?” and the second is “What are we saved from?”
- The “who” that has appeared in human history to bring salvation to all those who would believe and are chosen by God is Jesus Christ, Himself.
 - I love what Paul says regarding Christ entering into human history. He says this in Titus 1:3:

Titus 1:3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,

- If you remember from our earlier teaching in Titus, you can recall this interesting Greek word *kairos*.
 - *Kairos* is a particular point in time related to other points in time with a focus that this time is designated by an authority.
 - Paul would say it this way in 2 Timothy 1:10:

2 Timothy 1:10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

- The appearance of Christ through the incarnation in human history shined a light into the darkness of humanity and our depravity to show our need to be made right before God.
 - Paul mentions in Romans 6:23:

Romans 6:3 For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- So we see that Grace is in fact personified in the very person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - This now moves us to the second question that we posed.
 - If this grace is undeserved, “what are we saved from?”
 - Grace saved us from the very wrath of God.
 - In Romans 5:10-11, Paul says this:

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 5:11 And not only this but we also celebrate in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- God demonstrates His very own love for those whom He has chosen so that they may become the very righteousness of God, in Christ.
 - In exchange for your wickedness, sinfulness, and brokenness, Christ steps in to absolve the rightful judgment we were due.
 - We will tackle this particular doctrine a little later on.
 - Before we move any further, I want to address what some may see as the elephant in the room regarding the last part of verse 11.
 - “Bringing salvation to all men”

- We will address this very doctrine later on in the sermon. So put a pin here, we will be back.
- Paul continues on in verse 12.

Titus 2:12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

- I don't want us to miss what Paul is saying here. It is quite profound, but yet so simple.
 - Paul tells Titus, in few short words, it is grace that instructs us and grace that compels us.
 - He mentions that this grace of God instructs us to do some things:
 - It instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires.
 - The question here really that arises is, how does grace instruct us and compel us?
 - Paul makes this clear as being inspired by the Holy Spirit in verse 11.
 - It is in understanding what has been done for us that should move us to live in such a way that adorns the very life that we have in Christ.
 - If I know that it is God's grace that has saved me from the wrath of God and into the righteousness of God, my entire outlook changes.
 - I can't know what I know and continue on in the life that I lived prior to knowing Jesus.
 - The Gospel demands a response.
 - The word "instructing us" in the Greek is a rather interesting phrase. It is the word *paideuō* which means to discipline, to train, or educate.
 - How does God's grace discipline or educate us to deny ungodliness and worldly passions, desires, and pursuits?
 - Grace reminds us of who we once were and where we once were headed.
 - Remember, this discipline and training is for when?... The Present Age.
 - We live in this space between the "not yet" and the "here and now", and while we are here, we are not removed from the temptation of sin.
 - We are not removed from the battle with sin, rather we are to guard ourselves in the truth and the knowledge of the scriptures in obedience.
- As parents, you may understand it this way. Although we are our children's primary disciple-makers, eventually they will be out on their own.
 - Within our homes, we can provide the parameters by which our children are to act, think, and behave in our presence.
 - We help aid in cultivating right living in our children, all with the hope that when they leave us, they'll live well because they know well.
 - And when our kids go against what we have established in our home, discipline is in place to remind them and get them back on track.
 - In this same way, God has chosen us as His own possession (Titus 2:14) and is committed to conforming us into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- We see a situation in Acts 8:9-25 where Simon the magician who previously practiced magic came to faith in Jesus Christ.
 - And as a new believer, there were still some old tendencies that may not have yet fallen off.
 - The text makes evident that Simon the magician asked the apostles a question that demonstrated a lack of spiritual maturity.
 - It is then that Peter confronts Simon the magician and reproves him. Check out Peter's response in Acts 8:22:

Acts 8:22 Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart will be forgiven you.

- Just as a mother or father disciplines those in whom they love, our Heavenly Father Who bought us with a price will do the same.
 - Our purchase by the blood of Christ was a fervent commitment to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ.

- The objective of sanctification is not to become a better you, it is to conform you to the image of the one that saved you and justified you!
- The question we must ask ourselves this morning is, what areas in our lives are still proverbially hidden from Christ that need to be confronted and corrected?
 - What areas in your life are concealed with sin in your hearts and needs to be addressed and repented of?
 - My prayer for us this morning is that we can submit those areas of unrighteousness to the Lord and seek repentance.
 - And as we seek repentance of those sins, may we humbly submit ourselves to the Lord and put on Christ-like character.
- As long as we are in this present age, we will have our battles with sin. But the good news is that we are no longer slaves to sin.
 - As we submit ourselves under the scriptures, sound leadership, and right teaching, we have no option but to conform. Why?
 - Because we are the Lord's He will not let go.
 - Hebrews 12:6 puts it this way:

Hebrews 12:6

For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts.”

- ○ God's work in those in whom He called WILL be completed.
 - Because those in whom He chooses are wholly His and He will get the glory out of our lives.
- It is this grace that kept you from some things you knew could have been damaging for your life prior to knowing Christ.
 - It is this grace that preserved your life when you didn't even value your own life.
 - It was this grace that sustained you when you made unwise choices.
- It is also this grace, after salvation, that keeps you because it's not your sustaining power that is keeping you – it is God Himself!
 - Let this grace also inform and conform you, friends, as we seek to obey Jesus in every area of our hearts and lives.
- Let's keep moving, verse 13.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

- We see here that grace allows us to look back in humble adoration while looking forward with great anticipation.
- Check out Paul's language here. He says “looking for the blessed hope”.
 - Depending on what translation you are reading, some of your bibles may say, “while we wait on the hope...”
 - For some readers, it could be assumed that waiting is this sense of sitting idly.
 - However, the NASB provides the reader a more accurate translation, and here is why:
 - The phrase “looking for” presumes that there is an active awaiting or anticipation for the arrival of Christ.
 - This is not a person that is sitting down being unproductive in their work, but rather as they are working, they work eagerly awaiting the arrival of Christ.
 - The intent behind what they are doing is based upon this beautiful scene of the appearing of Jesus Christ coming back for His bride.
 - Don't miss Paul's connection from verse 12 to verse 13. There are two important things to note:
 - We first see that we have the very personification of grace in the incarnation of Christ which brought salvation into human history at the right moment for those called by God to believe...

- And in His life on earth showing us what it looks like to truly live and have life more abundantly.
 - Secondly, there is an eschatological anticipation of what is to come for the believer.
 - We are to live well in the here and now as we actively work well to the glory of our great God till the moment we see Jesus face-to-face.
 - We do what we do well and in obedience because we know what is to come and that is Jesus returning for us in the Second Coming.
- One of my most favorite things to do with my wife is watch movie trailers of upcoming films.
 - These movie trailers are intentionally short to not give away the movie in its entirety.
 - The trailer simply gives a glimpse of what will be fully experienced.
 - In this same way our lives as believers give non-believers a preview of coming attractions.
 - The way that we love, the way that we serve, the way that we live amongst a dying and broken world, gives them a taste of what God has done.
 - And it gives them a foretaste of what God will do in the coming kingdom as He rules perfectly.
 - It's this ability to exist in the here and now while we anticipate the not yet, knowing in full assurance that when Christ comes back we will be ready.
 - In the words of our Founding Pastor, Pastor Steve, this gives the believers eyes for eternity.
 - The reality is, the non-believer should get a glimpse of the power and the grace of God by seeing how you live in the Present age.
 - We recognize what we rightfully deserve yet at the same time evidently see what has been freely given to us.
 - It is this mystery of the grace of God that should move us to obey Him.
 - This type of transformation can only be accomplished by God Himself and not by mere men.
 - Check out verse 14.

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

- Paul makes it known here that this grace of God sanctifies us.
 - Paul says that Jesus has redeemed us from something, for something.
 - Jesus' death has redeemed us from every lawless deed.
 - Paul then says Jesus gave Himself for us to redeem us.
 - The language here is what many theologians call "The Great Exchange".
 - The fancy theological term for this work is penal substitutionary atonement.
 - This is a doctrine that many evangelical Christians today struggle to understand.
 - We want to accept this great God of Love but for some reason we struggle to understand His Divine and Holy judgment.
 - Penal substitution simply means that the penalty that we were rightfully due was paid by a Holy and perfect substitute, Jesus Christ.
- Because God is also just and Holy, the very wrath of the Father had to be satisfied.
 - The punishment and wages of sin for humanity had to be absolved, once and for all.
 - If there were no payment for sin, where would God's justice be found? If God doesn't absolve sin, He ceases to be Just and Holy.
 - And therefore would cease to be God!
 - Therefore, God being rich in mercy and love sends His Holy, spotless, and blameless son, Jesus Christ to go to the cross and atone for our sins.
 - Check out what the prophet Isaiah says about the atonement:

Isaiah 53:10

**But the Lord desired
To crush Him, causing Him grief;
If He renders Himself as a guilt offering,**

**He will see His offspring,
He will prolong His days,
And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.**

- Scripture tells us that it pleased the Father to crush the Son.
 - Why would this means be necessary and sufficient for believers? Here is how it works.
- Many Jewish Legal scholars and within the Roman law system can best explain penal substitutionary atonement known in law as “Respondeat Superior”
 - In Latin, it literally translates, “let the Master be answerable”. It is this idea of being vicariously liable.
 - Well-known Christian Theologian, William Lane Craig mentions in his book *Atonement and the Death of Christ* how this principle works.
 - He utilizes these legal terms to express substitutionary atonement as a “legal pardon”
 - He mentioned in one of his writings about a nurse that came to him after one of his discussions.
 - This is what she told him and I quote:

I am a nurse. This principle is everywhere in medicine. If a chief surgeon is performing a surgery and one of the subordinates botches the surgery, even though the chief supervising surgeon did nothing wrong – absolutely innocent – he is the one who is held liable for the acts of that nurse or subordinate that did the medical malpractice. The liability of the subordinate is imputed to the superior. It is not transferred from the subordinate to the superior, but it is replicated in the superior.

- Here is what Jesus did for us. He entered into humanity. Into the very creation He created.
 - He lived for 33.5 years. Fully God and Fully man. He executes his ministry for 3 years ultimately pointing to His death.
 - He is beaten, scourged, whipped until He was unrecognizable and hangs on a cross.
 - He takes on the punishment that we were rightfully owed.
 - Before he dies He asks for a drink, and in return is given a mixture of vinegar and water. It is what the bible records as a very bitter drink.
 - Only He knew the cup of the wrath of the Father would be much worse.
- In John 19:30 before Jesus dies, He says the Greek word, *tetelestai*. This is huge to understand in the text.
 - This word in Greek means “paid in full”. However the verb tense is important to note.
 - Why is this important? Because when Jesus said *tetelestai* he said it in the perfect tense.
 - To put it plainly, not only was the work of the cross finished at that moment in time, but it will continue to be finished through what Christ has done!
 - Christ will not ever be placed on the cross again. He will never die again!
 - Christ is all in all. He is Redeemer. He is Alpha and Omega. He is!
 - What is even sweeter is that those who hear this message of grace and believe, they too are forever kept.
 - Paul continues on by saying that those who are redeemed will also be purified for Christ as His own possession.
 - This saving blood of Christ not only saves us but it cleanses us and it keeps!
 - I love the hymn written by Robert Lowry, published in 1876

**What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus**

- This precious grace is a reminder that we are not saved by our own merit, our accolades, or any of the above.
 - It is only by the kindness of our Lord and Savior that we are His and He is ours.
 - We must not forget the last part of this verse. He redeemed us for something.
 - *“To purify us for good works”*.
 - He saved us so that we may do good works to bring glory to the Father.
 - Ephesians 2:10 says this:

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- The mere fact that we all are sitting in this room hearing the word of God consistently, every Sunday, is a testament to the goodness of God!
 - You and I prior to being saved had no desire in our hearts to love the Lord, to serve the Lord, or to know the Lord.
 - It took God Himself, to bring us to Himself, to make a people for Himself, to give glory to Himself.
 - Friends, we have no stake in this game, but to know that God called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light to participate with Him is gracious!
 - If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side, we too would be just like the cretans on the island of Crete.
 - We would still be constant liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.
 - But thank God grace got a hold of us!
 - This grace, friends, should move us into constant adoration for God and to bring Him glory in the way that we live.
 - If Christ’s death and resurrection was a receipt of what was freely done for us. . .
 - How much more should our lives be a receipt of what Christ has done in us?
- This is Paul’s point regarding grace!
 - If the grace of God reached the worst of us, surely He can reach the Cretans.
 - And it doesn’t require having to look like cretans to reach the cretans with the Gospel.
 - It simply requires someone who is willing to let their lives reflect the very life that saved them.
 - And friends, may we not get so beside ourselves in thinking that because we belong to God that we are better than anyone else?
 - May we not get on our pharisaical high horses and think that the Gospel is only good enough for us!
 - If the Gospel reached you and you are in this room or listening to this video, you too were once an enemy of God.
 - No one is exempt from this truth!
 - Paul wraps it up in verse 15:

Titus 2:15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

- You can sense the weightiness and urgency of the matter regarding Titus teaching things that accord to sound doctrine.
 - Paul tells Titus, “speak these things”. What are these things?
 - Teach sound doctrine, teach the Gospel and teach it in grace.
 - This is not only a command for Titus to teach these things to others, but it is presupposed that Titus is to live these things.
 - If he is the pastor who is selecting these leaders (elders) of these churches, he must certainly find men who are committed to the same truth as he is.
 - Surly, Titus is to be the one in whom others are looking to for godly instruction and guidance.
 - Knowing the culture in Crete and how their lifestyles are the very antithesis of the Gospel, it makes it all the more important to stand firm on these things.
 - Paul gives Titus the very authority to not only establish elders but to preach and teach without the need to compromise the Gospel.
 - Paul shows Titus that this grace that God has given reaches down to the lowest valley.
 - Paul will restate this truth in Titus 3:3 where he says to be gentle in all you do because:

Titus 3:3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

- We have too many churches compromising for the sake of fitting into the culture.
 - We have too many Christians willing to acquiesce to the culture for the sake of being “politically correct”.
 - We have too many churches compromising for the sake of being “canceled” because of saying the right and sensible thing.
 - Paul gives Titus the permission to have the backbone to stand up straight, without compromise, and to speak the truth with all apostolic authority in grace.
 - A church that does not stand on the truth of God’s word and fails to preach the whole counsel of God is, dare I say it, a weak church.
 - A church must build up where people need growth, tear down where there needs to be correction, and teach the whole counsel of God.
 - Friends, this is the work that Paul gave to young Titus and this is the work that God has given our church leadership.
 - Paul ends Chapter 2 by telling Titus, “Let no one disregard you.”
 - Regardless of your age, Titus, you know what the truth is. You know what this great grace has accomplished.
 - Live well, teach well, and do well Titus! Because believers are watching you.
 - And non-believers can come to know our Great God and Savior through seeing your life.
 - Friends, may your lives be marked by the grace of God so that those who see you will want to know the Great God that saves: Jesus Christ, our Lord!
 - Let’s pray.