

Titus 2:11-14; The Grace that Appeared I. Grace that Saves II. Grace that Transforms III. Grace that fills with Longing

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, almost every good story has a moment of great conflict only to be resolved when the main character appears. Like when the war seems to be lost and the evil empire is going to win- there is no hope! Then suddenly the hero appears- and turns the tide. Well, today we find that when mankind was at its lowest, grace appears! The word for “appears” in v. 11 is connected to our word- epiphany. This word is found again in v. 3:4- the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appears. This word was used to describe the sudden arrival on the scene- as when the hero arrives when all hope is lost. So we could say that when all looked hopeless- when humanity was all but lost- suddenly the grace of God appears! But exactly what is the grace that appears? Grace is personified in our text. As a person who arrives and begins His work. So we could say that the grace of God is the undeserved kindness and goodness secured for us by Jesus Christ! Or grace is the good news secured for us in the sending of Jesus. When does this grace appear? Well, it appeared already back in Gen. 3 with the promise of a child who would crush the head of the serpent. Often, the arrival of an angel is called their appearing. To appear in this sense is to show yourself- to be revealed. So God’s grace appeared when Jesus was born as a child. Jesus really is the grace of God in human form- and He has appeared! But it could also be said that God’s grace appears to us each- specifically- when we hear the good news and we believe in Jesus by the Spirit. The message about Jesus is being spread- thus grace is appearing to more people all the time. It is hard to separate God’s grace and Jesus who is the gift of God’s grace; since Jesus is the yes to all of God’s promises. So today we are going to consider this grace of God and what the appearance and arrival of this grace means for us. We will see that grace has something to say about our past, present and future. So we consider this theme: The grace of God has appeared to the lost for the sake of their eternal good!

I. Grace that Saves

In our first point, we consider this grace that saves. As v. 11 puts it, the grace that was revealed now brings salvation for all people. This grace is a saving grace- bringing salvation, deliverance and rescue. What does

God's grace bring? Salvation! What is thing that we call salvation- a word that we use so very often? Well, salvation is to be rescued, redeemed or kept safe. It is to face impending doom and destruction- only to receive blessings and life. The Grace of God is His work in saving the lost- freely and without discrimination. The content of the message of grace is this- you are a sinner and God alone can save you. As John 3 says, Jesus was sent into this world to save the world. He came to seek and save the lost! Jesus came to this world to save guilty sinners by dying on the cross for them. This salvation is gracious- it is free and freely given. God's grace saves any and all who believe and receive this gift of God. Notice that this grace brings salvation for all people. Now this is not to say that God saves everyone, but rather this message of the gospel is for everyone! Who should hear the gospel- who is the preaching for? It is for everyone- the good news is to be shared without distinction. Who then receives this grace of God? All who hear- all who repent and believe! The gospel is for all kinds of people from all walks of life. As we have seen, the gospel is for male and female, rich and poor, slave and free, young and old, pastor and congregation! All need this grace- and all are fit recipients of this grace! As a work of God, grace is a gift. God's grace brings salvation- it is not we who earn it! God delivers it to us- He sends His grace and we receive it. So this good gift is for all- no discrimination. And the cost of this grace is that it is free for all. And the outcome of this grace is the salvation of all who believe. As we will find again in 3:4- He saves us- not by our works of righteousness but according to His own mercy poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ. So the grace of God is His works by which He deals with our sin, makes us righteous and acceptable in His sight. Grace deals with the lost and makes them found- grace take the guilty and saves them from their sins! That is what the grace of God has done for us now that He has appeared!

II. Grace that Transforms

But grace is not done with us yet! Grace not only has good news for us concerning our past sin- grace not only declared that we saved once and for all- grace also has something to say to our present lives. Not only is the grace of God for all- this grace also changes all who receive it! Grace that saves is also grace that transforms. As v. 12 continues, Grace is training us. The gospel is the basis for Christian living as well- right doctrine leads

to right practice- grace declares but grace also informs! We are being taught by the grace of God. Real change is possible when God's grace permeates deep! Now this word for training is the word used to describe a child under a tutor- think of a student in a classroom setting or a child in the care of his parents. As children of God, we are being taught by God Himself. We are being instructed in the school of grace- taught the way in which we should go. So then, although grace is a gift it is also true that grace has an effect on us! Having received God's grace, we now will live in light of that truth. So what does God's grace teach us? Well, God grace is training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions. First the negative side of this teaching. We are taught to say no- to reject certain things- to deny and refuse to live a certain way. To renounce- to refuse to accept. We are to deny the lies of deceit- to refuse to accept all ungodly things. Anything that is against God- that is a false God or anything that has the spirit of the anti-Christ within it. Pagan idolatry and the gods of this age- we deny and refuse to accept. But also worldly passions- not just rank, pagan idolatry, but the worldly mindset and pursuits of this world as well. To say no to the passions and pleasures/ the desires of the fallen flesh. II Tim. 3 summaries this as the godlessness of the last days- people who love the self, love money and are proud. Disobedient and arrogant- unholy- lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Avoid such people! Being grace filled people does not mean that we are wishy washy- that we are wet noodles that bend to everyone else's demands. Being grace filled means that we know what is right and wrong- and we expose the works of darkness and refuse to join in practicing them! Being grace taught means learning to say no! Now let me ask, when is the last time that you said no to anything? I am not asking if you have ever said no to someone- children should not be saying no when their parents ask them to do something. Rather, when is the last time you said no to something that you secretly desired? That you said no to yourself- when you turned that device off or you put that thing away- when you said no to the flesh? We live in a world in a time when people rarely if ever say no to themselves. Especially in regards to food, drink and entertainment. Every wish and fantasy are indulged. But God's people have learned to say no- the grace of God teaches us to refuse to do the things of the world! So we learn to say no to that ugly, angry word that we want to say. Or we say no to that unclean thought- as the Spirit leads us into the way of holiness. As our reading from Rom. 12 puts it, do

not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So as we continue to read in v. 12, grace teaches us to say no to certain things but also yes to others! Training us to live self controlled, uprights and godly lives in the present age. To be self-controlled is to be sober and temperate- as we have seen in the last weeks. To keep your body in check. To be a master of the self- holding your body in check. But also upright- this deals more with your relationship to others. Your life conforms to God's law. As v. 14 puts it- to be zealous for good works. And also piety- that is to be pious, holy, and reverent towards God in your daily walk. A purified people- holy as our God is holy. Now in these three areas we see that the gospel of God speaks to our relationship to the self, our relationship to others and our relationship towards our God. Each area reflects our new identity and calling that we receive in Jesus Christ. These good works- these acts of obedience- are not the grounds of our salvation. No, this grace of God has already been graciously received. But it is also true that grace changes us! We cannot and will not remain unmoved or unchanged! We respond with good fruit! Our faith in Jesus is a living and active faith- one that says no to certain things but also yes to others. We could say that this is the life of conversion- putting to death the sins that remain and coming alive in the image of Christ! Dying and coming to life- saying no to some and yes to others! God's grace compels holiness- Christ transforms us in His image! Now we all like the idea of grace as a gift. The good news of Jesus saving us from our sin. But the same grace that saves is the grace that transforms! The Jesus who delivers is the same who says- if you love me you will keep my commandments. You cannot have saving grace without training grace! These aspects come together! To be saved by grace leads to a life trained by grace! So as Eph. 4 puts it- put off your old self which belongs to your former manner and is corrupt and deceitful- and be renewed in the spirit of your minds- put on your new self created after the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness.

III. Grace that fills with Longing

But not only does grace save and train, grace also gives us a longing for the future as well. As we live our godly lives in the present, grace trains us to wait for our blessed future! As v. 13 puts it, we will live a sanctified life while we are waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

So the grace of God that we have received fills us with a longing to see the God of grace! Note that v. 11 starts by saying- God's grace brings salvation. Now at the end of v. 13 we find that Jesus is the great God and Savior! There is the link- a theme that runs through these verses. Grace that Saves from the God of Grace our Savior! In the gospel, we find a hope for the future. Now hope is built on a certain event that is promised- our hope is grounded in what God has promised us. Not only do we have the current blessings of the forgiveness of sins and being justified- not only do we have the privilege of being sanctified today- we have the blessings tomorrow of glory! Knowing that Jesus is coming back, we wait for Him who is our hope! As we saw last week, Jesus will appear in the heavens on the clouds of glory! Knowing that He is coming back soon, we wait for Him eagerly! Longing to see our Savior! Earnest in our longing to see him who is our blessed hope! So that grace that we have received fills us with a desire to see the one who has earned that grace for us! And notice who this One is! He is our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Great God- very God of Very God! The Great I Am! He is the Savior- the one who delivers us! He gave Himself to redeem us- to ransom us- to purchase us! He purifies us- washing us- cleansing us- making us holy! So as you can see- the very thing that grace does Jesus gives! Saves and cleanses- forgives and purifies! That is the glory of our God- that is the grace that we rejoice in! Knowing that Jesus is going to come back, you can have a firm home in His return!

To conclude, God's grace has something to say to our past, present and future need. We are saved, we are being sanctified and one day we will be glorified! The grace of God has appeared to the lost for the sake of their eternal good! We are saved by God's grace- and grace alone! This great has appeared to us in Jesus Christ! His work and teaching is recorded in the gospel- by which we learn about God's great grace! So may we all rejoice in the grace that we have received- rejoicing in the fact that Christ is our Savior and He is coming back! May we also see to be taught by the gospel- trained to perform every good work as our thanks for His grace!