

“The Motivation For Godliness”

Penetrating a Dark World

Titus 2:11-15

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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Bruce: Good morning, men. Great to be with you.

Men: Good morning, Bruce.

Bruce: Hey, let's get up and go say hello to somebody you haven't said hello to in a week or two. Thank you, men. It's important that we get to know each other the best we can because we're part of the unique body of Christ that He has given to us. And we just need to recognize that and celebrate who we are as a group, as well as who we are individually. Let's turn in our Bibles while Don gets us ready. *(Music)*

Lord Jesus, it is our desire that Your name be praised in all that we do. As we listen, as we teach, as we meditate, as we ponder, as we apply the truth of Scripture, we just pray, Lord, that You would be uplifted, that You would be glorified, that You would be praised. And may it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Continuing our study in the book of Titus, we're in chapter 2, verses 11-15 in the book of Titus, Paul's letter to his pastoral ministry friend on the island of Crete. We come now to a wonderful passage of Scripture which is a really wonderful description of the gospel. Verses 11-15 of chapter 2.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearance 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.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Well, as we've seen in the last couple of weeks, the general theme of the first half of chapter 2 of the book of Titus is that lives transformed by the gospel make the message of Christ more attractive. So we come to verses 11-15. And Paul tells us in his letter to Titus that the entire Christian gospel is designed to produce transformed lives. That's why we proclaim the gospel of Christ. It transforms lives.

Look at some of the things he's already taught us beforehand. And ask yourselves these questions. Why would Christian men be temperate and patient, and love their wives as Christ loves the church? Why should Christian wives be kind and submissive to their husbands? And why should Christian slaves show their masters that they can be fully trusted?

Here's the reason in verses 11-15. It's the fact that the gospel of grace has appeared to all people, and it transforms lives. So in verses 11-15 Paul gives us the reason why people have transformed lives. It's because they're embracing the Person and work of Christ. He has two remarkable statements about the content and implications of the gospel.

And you'll see the same thing, as he repeats it in chapter 3, verses 3-7. Turn over there to the third chapter and listen to this. It's very similar.

“The Motivation For Godliness”

Beginning with verse 3 of chapter 3. *“For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, enslaved to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”*

Now that’s the reason that Christian men love their wives as Christ loves the church. It’s the reason why Christian women are submissive to their husbands. It’s why we as employers and employees manage our employees differently than the world system does. It’s because we’ve been experiencing the transforming doctrines of grace in the gospel of Christ. We see that in both verses 11-15 of chapter 2, and chapter 3, verses 3-7.

So Paul reminds us that the entire nature and character of the gospel of Christ transforms lives and the living authenticates it. It’s the transformed life that authenticates the transforming gospel. Paul has two themes in mind here. The gospel transforms people’s lives. That’s his theme. And the evidence of that is—

Participant: Transformation.

Bruce: Transformed lives that authenticate his message. And that’s what he’s teaching us right now in this particular passage, as we work our way through Titus chapter 2.

He makes two statements about Christ’s appearing. In verse 11 he says, *“For the grace of God has appeared.”* And then in verse 13 he says that we are waiting for *“our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

Now verse 13 is one of the greatest passages you’ll see about the Deity of Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Notice how he describes it: *“the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”* Jesus Christ is God. That’s one of the best statements you’ll find in the Scriptures about the Deity of Christ. Don’t ever forget that. People say, “Jesus is just a good teacher.” Take them to Titus chapter 2 verse 13.

Let’s talk about these two appearings. That’s the theme of this chapter—the two appearings. The first one is this. *“The grace of God has appeared.”* You’ll see that in verse 11.

Now men, we need to understand this: that God has done a decisive act. That’s past tense—*has appeared*. Note that with the word *for* at the beginning of that verse Paul is giving the reason for and spelling out the logic behind Christian living. He’s saying that the logic behind transformed lives is because the grace of God has appeared. It’s a permanent decisive act. And the motivation for godliness is the grace of God.

Now let’s explore that for a moment. Now Paul regards the grace of God in these verses as a past fact with great present implications and consequences and significance. He tells us that God’s grace has appeared to us. And notice this. God’s grace appears to us. But the present tense reality is that God’s grace educates us.

Take a look at verse 11. *“For the grace of God has appeared”*—past tense; a decisive act. God has done something permanently. Grace has appeared, *“bringing salvation for all people, training us.”*

Now the present tense reality of the grace of God having appeared is that grace trains us. It educates us. It’s something that teaches us. God’s grace has appeared to us. It’s past

“The Motivation For Godliness”

tense, a decisive act. And God’s grace educates us. It also motivates us. It not only appeared, but two other things have permanent consequences and significance. It trains us. God trains us in His grace. And He motivates us by His grace. Let’s explore that for a moment.

The decisive act is this: that God has brought us this salvation in Jesus Christ. That’s a past fact. Grace has its fullest expression in the Person and work of Christ.

Now we’ve got all kinds of definitions of grace—God’s resources at Christ’s expense, unmerited favor. A friend just sent me a new one. Here’s a new definition that’s pretty good: *unconditional acceptance given to an undeserving person by an unobligated Giver.*

Participant: Oh, wow!

Bruce: Unconditional acceptance given to an undeserving person by an unobligated Giver. Now Paul makes this statement. *“The grace of God has appeared.”* And he goes on to say this: that the grace of God has its fullest expression in the Person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Now think back upon any incident in the life of Christ that you’re familiar with in the Scripture and what does it describe for you? It describes grace.

Take a look at the eternal covenant where it all began, the conversation between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, where God the Father said, “Son, I’m going to send You to the earth to redeem a people for My own possession.” And Christ’s response is, “I’ll go.” What is that? That’s grace!

What is it when the Father ordains, and the Son accomplished, and the Holy Spirit applies? What is that?

Participant: Grace.

Bruce: That’s grace! Take any incident in the life of Christ and it’s a picture of grace. We have nice definitions. But the real expression of grace is to take a look at the Person and work of Christ. Everything He did in His life was one great expression of grace. This is just what Paul is telling us. *“The grace of God has appeared”*, and is found in its fullest and greatest expression in the Person and work of Christ.

And so the next time you read anything about the life of Christ, just thinking about John chapter 4, the woman at the well, the conversation He had, what’s that about? It’s about grace. If you see anything about Christ and His work, it’s about grace. And that’s what Paul is telling us. *“The grace of God has appeared”*, and is found in the Person and work of Christ. If you want to know what grace is, take a look at His life. Take a look at His work. And you’ll see that it is the embodiment of everything that God wants us to have in this life.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: I think it’s important to know that grace is not past tense. It also says that grace *teaches*. It’s currently with us. And like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10, it empowers. It’s really hard to get your hands on grace, isn’t it?

Bruce: Well that’s what Paul just told us about. It has present-day consequences. It’s a past act. Grace has appeared—past tense.

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: But it has present realities. Notice the next word—*trains*.

Participant: Yes.

“The Motivation For Godliness”

Bruce: And motivates. He educates us. Now we need to talk about how God educates us through grace because that’s the present-day consequence.

The reality is that Christ came, paid for our sins and redeemed us. That’s a past fact. Christ died. That’s a fact. Christ was crucified. That’s a fact. Christ rose again from the dead. That’s a fact. That’s all of grace.

Now grace has implications, and Paul says that there are two implications of the fact that grace has appeared. The first is this: *that grace educates us*. It continues in the present tense of educating us and also motivates us towards godliness.

The term *grace* can also mean beauty or elegance. And when it is used of God it refers particularly to His beautiful character which delights in giving generously to the undeserving. Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: Let me say sharply that when Christ warns us, that’s also grace.

Bruce: Oh, absolutely.

Bishop Rodgers: I mean people definitely tend to think that they’re in great shape. (*Unclear.*) And when Christ says, “Beware of Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell,” that’s a gracious thing to say to somebody.

Bruce: Absolutely it is. That’s my point, men. If you want to understand grace, you’ve got to take a look exhaustively at the Person and work of Christ and see everything that He does, everything that He says, everything that He’s about and that He represents, and the purpose of everything He’s about. It’s all about grace. Yes, please?

Participant: So Bishop Rodgers may have just answered my question. I think of some conversations when Jesus was addressing the Pharisees and calling them “a brood of vipers.”

Bruce: Right. Absolutely.

Participant: I’m wondering where the grace is on the surface there. But I think he just answered that.

Bruce: That’s a warning!

Participant: It’s like telling your kids not to play in the middle of the road.

Bruce: That’s right. Or don’t stick your hand in the fire. That’s a warning. That’s a gracious warning. The point of Jesus is this: that He is the embodiment of all that we know about grace. If you want to know more about grace, look at the Person and look at the work of Christ.

Notice chapter 3, verse 4. “*When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared.*” Grace is seen in the kindness and love of God. This is all part of the same theme. “*The grace of God has appeared.*”

Now let me give you an illustration. I just read one from a British author, a friend of mine by the name of John Benton. Let me give you a little illustration which I think has some merit to it. Bear with me for a moment.

A poor farmer went to see his bank manager. He said to the bank manager, “I’ve got some good news and some bad news. Which do you want first?”

The banker replied, “Well, you’d better get the bad news over with first.”

“Well,” said the farmer, “I’ve had such a bad year that I can’t pay the mortgage that I owe you on my house.”

The bank manager looked disgustedly and said, “There’s more?”

“Yes,” said the farmer. “I’ve had such a bad harvest that I can’t pay any of the money I borrowed from you to buy my new machinery, either.”

“The Motivation For Godliness”

“That’s bad,” replied the banker.

“I’m afraid there’s more,” said the farmer. “Last year I also borrowed money from you to buy seed and fertilizer and other things. I’ve had such a bad time that I can’t even repay that to you also.”

“That’s terrible!” replied the bank manager. “You’d better tell me the good news.”

“Well,” said the farmer, “the good news is that I still intend to do business with you.”
(Laughter)

Now turn that around and replace those two people, and you’ve got some pretty good theology. Switch that around and here’s what you have. God’s grace is that despite our total spiritual bankruptcy before Him because of our sin, He still wants to do business with us. And men, what is that?

Men: Grace.

Bruce: Grace. God’s heart of compassion and spontaneous mercy to us in all of our failure, in all of our moral ugliness, is such that He still loves us and still desires to provide for us and all of our needs, and He still wants to do business with us.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” You see, in our total bankruptcy, grace says this. “I still want to do business with you.” *“When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared.”* He still wants to do business with us.

So Paul says this: that the scope of salvation and the fact that grace has appeared can be seen in that it *“has appeared to all men,”* meaning that it is being made visible. It’s made visible because of the Person and work of Christ. It appears to all men—to Jews or Greeks or Cretans—depending not upon your background. It’s available to all people. It has appeared. It’s available to all people, made visible.

The concept of *being made visible* means that it’s a historical fact, accessible to all people. Christ lived and died and He rose again. That fact is preached and proclaimed and offered to the world. And as a result of that act, the gospel reaches Mary the prostitute and Mary the virgin. It reaches the fisherman Peter and the Pharisee Paul. And whoever you are, God loves you and has sent His Son, *“so that whoever believes should not perish, but have eternal life.”* What is that? Grace! It has appeared. It’s visible to all men, all people.

Grace has its greatest fulfillment in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Friends, that’s why, when you talk to somebody and they start throwing all kinds of darts and smoke screens at you—you know, “Why this? How come that? What about this? Have you thought about that?”, you take it back to the very basic question. What have you done with the Person and work of Christ? Take them back to that very issue, because that’s where you begin to see what?

Men: Grace.

Bruce: Grace. And that’s where you understand that the gospel changes lives because grace is what transforms us. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies. And men, that is grace. Take them back to the very basic thing. Who is the Person and what is the work of Christ? Take them back to that, because that’s where they’re going to be introduced to the concept and the fact that grace has appeared. It’s found in a Person, described in a Person, in His life and His ministry.

Now notice this. The past fact of grace has a present continuing influence. It teaches us. It educates us to say two things. *No* is one thing—no to ungodliness and worldly

“The Motivation For Godliness”

passions, “*and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*” The critical phrase there is “*in this present age.*”

The grace of God is almost personified here, as a teacher, as a schoolmaster, for the task of educating us—notice!—in the art of living. That’s what grace does. It teaches us in the art of living.

The word *teach* here means *a total training program*. Our teacher first gives us a double negative, a double denial—no to ungodliness and no to worldly passions. It teaches us. It’s more than just passing on pure knowledge. Grace teaches us in the art of living.

It’s the picture of a tutor who is taking on new students, new children. And grace puts us under its tutelage. And our teacher is grace.

We’re made to see why we must reject ungodliness. That could be practical atheism. Ungodliness is practical atheism. It teaches us first of all to say no to practical atheism or ungodliness, and also to say no to worldly passions. Those would be selfish desires rooted strictly or solely in this present age. It teaches us to say no to those two things, educating us, teaching us, training us.

And then secondly, notice this. Our teacher of grace makes it very clear to us that we are to pursue three things. It teaches us to pursue three things. First of all we say no, and then we pursue three things - *self-control, upright and godly lives*.

Say no to ungodliness, no to worldly passions. At the same time, he teaches us and trains us in the art of living. And here’s what he teaches us in the art of living. Three things - self-control, uprightness and godliness.

Now what’s the significance of those three things? Well that trio of virtues—self-control, uprightness and godliness, really covers all the relationships we’ll have with everyone in our lives. It covers all relationships. Those three words are preparing us for any type of relationships you have.

Here’s how we define it. *Self-control* refers to our relationship to ourselves and our behavior. First of all, you need to control yourself. How can you govern other people if you can’t govern yourself? The first relationship we have to take care of is ourselves. Grace teaches us to be self-controlled. Be self-controlled. Control yourself.

The second characteristic that grace teaches us is *uprightness*. That refers to loving honesty in our dealings with other people. How do we deal with other people? First of all, it’s self-control with me, myself and I. And then it’s uprightness with other people, any person I come in contact with, all the relationships I’ll ever have. We do it in loving honesty. That’s uprightness.

And then the third characteristic is this: *godliness*. And that refers to a humble, reverent and obedient walk with God, who is the center of our lives.

Grace teaches us two things, men. It teaches us “no,” and then it schools us in the art of living in relationships. Yeah, Don?

Don: Yeah, Bruce. I just want to say that verse 12 here is a good antidote against antinomianism.

Bruce: Uh-huh.

Don: Because there are people who say, “Grace! That means I can live anyway I want.” But it teaches us to say no.

Bruce: Absolutely.

“The Motivation For Godliness”

Don: And it teaches us to say yes to other things, but no to ungodliness and worldly lusts.

Bruce: Do you know what *antinomianism* is? It’s anti-law. It means “against the law.” That’s what it means. There’s no standard anymore. You just have a free-for-all. Do whatever you want. That’s antinomianism—against the law. That’s what don was referring to.

And the first thing is this. Here’s how he educates us. No! Don’t do that! And instead of not doing that, replace it with this: self-control, uprightness and godliness, in the art of living. Yes, Mike?

Mike: I was just looking at the list of those three things, and if you take any one of those away, you’re in trouble.

Bruce: all three of those things cover any relationship you’re potentially going to have in your life—with yourself, with other people and with God. Yes, please?

Participant: You could almost say that your relationship with God should be first and foremost, and from there your other relationships will flourish. You’ll be better prepared to deal with other people, be self-controlled and such things.

Bruce: Absolutely. God is the center of our relationship with all other things. But there is a trio of character qualities, and grace trains us in the art of living. That’s the point I’m trying to make, men.

What has Paul been telling Titus in these previous verses? Women, submit to your husbands. Husbands, love your wives, lead your children. Slaves, be submissive to your masters with honesty and integrity. Make sure that they know that you’re faithful. You see, he’s telling us that this is how we need to be.

And then he goes on and tells us this. Grace is going to be your schoolmaster. Grace is going to be your teacher. It’s going to teach you how to get along in your relationships by developing this trio of character qualities.

First of all, grace says no. Then it says that there are three things you need to work on. And grace will teach you how to do these three things in the art of living. That’s Paul’s whole counsel to Titus. It’s about the art of living in these verses.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: In this life, the Lord has virtually been speaking to my heart to just obey whatever I hear Him saying. Sometimes it will be like just do what you know God’s telling you to do. You’ll meet Him there, and everything else kind of takes care of itself.

Bruce: Just be an aggressive responder to what you see the Lord doing around you. Just be obedient to that. Be an aggressive responder. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom, the discernment, the understanding to see what He’s doing around you. And when you see that, you’ll be obedient to that. And everything else will work itself out.

And what is that? That is grace teaching us what? The art of living. That’s what this passage is about. It’s about the art of living. Paul’s theme is this. The gospel transforms lives. And it teaches us the art of living. Yes, Brian?

Brian: Under the self-control, Hebrews 12:4 says, “*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*” So in that self-control, that’s a real battle that we’re talking about. Is that a fair statement?

Bruce: Oh, my goodness! It’s warfare! It’s called spiritual warfare! Absolutely! It’s a fight; it’s a battle. We’re involved in that. That’s why time after time we have to say,

“The Motivation For Godliness”

“Get behind me, Satan! Satan, be gone!” It’s a battle; it’s a struggle. And we haven’t suffered to the point of shedding blood. We have no idea what it’s like. But it’s spiritual warfare. That’s why we need to put on the full armor of God.

So life is a battle. But notice this, men. Grace is teaching us what? How to live. It’s teaching us how to live because the gospel has appeared. Grace has appeared, past tense. It has present tense realities and present tense consequences. Yes, Jim?

Jim: Bruce, you talked about practical atheism. I’ve read that there are some people who say that the majority of Christians in the country today live as if they are practical atheists.

Bruce: That’s not surprising. I happened to be flipping through an article in last night’s paper about somebody who came from one of the sub-countries of Russia. Izbekistan, is that how you pronounce it?

Participant: Uzbekistan.

Bruce: One of those Stans. (*Laughter*) They were Jewish. And the reason this couple left was because they did not want to live in a heathen environment, because the national religion was atheism. And they felt they had a better chance of getting out of there. They referred to the national religion as atheism.

And so many times in our country today, people practice atheism without even knowing it. They don’t even know it.

Participant: They say that in America that if religion is removed from our way of life, then atheism is the national religion.

Bruce: It does become that.

Second Participant: I thought it was materialism.

Third Participant: It’s the same thing, really.

Bruce: It’s all the same thing. Yes, please?

Participant: (*Unclear*) Yes, salvation is a free gift. But there’s a cost. If you want the deeper life, there’s a cost; there’s a sacrifice. We want the deeper life, but we’re not willing to pay the sacrifice. A good example is that one of our counselors went out yesterday to get into the NFL. He’s been training diligently for years at Wesleyan University. He’s this big guy. But he would not have even been looked at had he not been willing to pay that price of sacrifice. We want to be strong, godly men. But are we willing to pay the price to get there?

Bruce: Absolutely. That’s why we need what? What does your friend need every day? Somebody was training him, wasn’t he?

Participant: He did have a trainer.

He had a trainer who was working with him. What does grace do?

Participant: It trains us in righteousness.

Bruce: It trains. We’ve got our trainer to do exactly what you said in the art of living, to pay the price. Grace is what trains us.

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: And the first thing that grace trains us in, Paul says, is what? No! No! And then it teaches us the art of living. What a beautiful trainer we have, and grace is our trainer.

The grace of god is our schoolmaster, men. It is there to educate us and to train us in the art of living, the way that he just described in these verses.

“The Motivation For Godliness”

So how does the grace of God in Christ train us? We might need to examine that for a minute. I think of three avenues of education that are suggested by Paul in verses 12-14. I think that first of all, *grace trains our heads*. It trains our heads—verse 12. It changes our way of thinking. It educates our minds, giving us a reason for godly living and for godly lives.

“Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” You see, men, the first thing grace does is that it gets you to think differently.

What does the word *repent* mean?

Participant: Turn around.

Bruce: Turn around. But it also means that before you turn around, it means to think again. Literally, the word *repent* means to think again, to turn. You’ve got to think right. The first thing that grace does is that it teaches us to begin to think right. It educates our heads, our thinking.

Secondly, *our hopes*, our aspirations. You’ll see that in verse 13. God educates not only our heads, but our hopes and our aspirations. For we live in a new context of being unified with Christ. We pursue godly lives in this present age, we’re told, *“while we wait for the blessed hope.”* That changes our aspirations. And that is *“the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”* That’s what we’re waiting for. As we have already been reminded, our faith rests on the hope of eternal life.

Here’s a good definition of a Christian according to these verses. A Christian is somebody who is waiting. We’re waiting. Grace has appeared. But there’s going to be another appearance. It’s going to be the second coming of Christ.

And we’re waiting for that! A Christian is defined as somebody who is *“waiting for the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”* We’re waiting for the Deity of Jesus Christ to be revealed. And that will come in all of His glory at the Second Coming.

Notice. The Christian is someone who’s waiting. Self-control, which underlines all godliness, involves the postponing of immediate gratification in the light of a more distinct and a more glorious hope. It changes our aspirations as well as our heads.

And then lastly, I think that *it changes our hearts*. God educates our heads. Grace educates our hopes, and then lastly our hearts.

When you have a full understanding of Christian character, not just our minds and our aspirations, but also our feelings and emotions have changed as well. That’s where motivation comes in. Yes, Frank?

Frank: Do we confuse good works with grace?

Bruce: Pardon me?

Frank: Do we confuse grace with good works, or should they go hand in hand?

Bruce: I don’t know. I’ll ask them. Do we confuse them?

Participant: Grace produces good works.

Bruce: Grace produces good works. A good work is a result of what?

Participant: God’s grace.

Bruce: Grace! You couldn’t do it without grace because you’d be lost. So one of the main emphases of the book of Titus is *“people who are zealous for”* what? Good works, because what do good works manifest? The reality of a transformed life because the gospel has appeared. So grace is the means behind our good works. It’s evidence of the fact that God’s grace has been our schoolmaster and teacher.

“The Motivation For Godliness”

Here’s where we come to the point of motivation. Our hearts are deeply touched. They’re deeply moved, deeply entranced. Paul explains this. And notice this statement. If this doesn’t affect your heart, I don’t know what does. Don and I were just talking about this earlier this morning as he was playing the piano.

“Who gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.” What is that? Grace.

Now notice two aspects. There’s an individual impact and a corporate impact. *“Who gave Himself for us to redeem us.”* That’s the individual. You and I are personally redeemed *“from all wickedness.”* And then *“to purify for Himself a people.”* That’s a collective group known as the—

Participant: Church.

Bruce: The church. Now friends, if that doesn’t move us to be motivated to live a godly life,—that’s where grace educates us. We just need to think about that. I have been redeemed. And I’m going to discuss that in a moment, if we have time. We are a people who have been purified, a church of His own people.

You see, that goes back to the eternal covenant, where God the Father said, “Son, I’m going to send You to create a people for My own pleasure. It’s going to require going to the cross.”

And Christ said, “I’ll do that.” That’s grace.

Notice the purpose behind what God’s grace in Christ did for us. It was to rescue us from wickedness, to make us His own special people. That’s why I wanted you to go around and say hello to everybody today. You’re in the presence of special people! This is not just a man sitting beside you, or in front or in back of you. This is someone God has redeemed, rescued at the payment of a price, and somebody God has purified internally by changing your heart of stone and giving you a heart of flesh. And now He brings a people together. And men, we need to celebrate the man who sits beside you, the man who is in front of you and in back of you. Get to know each other, because you’re part of something magnificent. It’s God calling a people together for His own possession, a group of people who are eager to do what?

Participant: Good works.

Bruce: Good works as an expression of—

Participant: Grace.

Bruce: Grace, because salvation has appeared. Yes, Brian?

Brian: You did 1 and 2 Peter a couple of months back, right?

Bruce: I did.

Brian: Now I completely missed this. But this is really the transforming, and it absolutely speaks to what you’re talking about and what Frank just asked. 1 Peter 4:10 says, *“Each who has received a gif, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”* So if we believe Corinthians 4:7, *“that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from ourselves”*, these gifts that we’ve been given—what we’re skilled at—as we get to know these men around us, that’s where we can pluralize it to them, putting God’s glory on display by doing what He’s called us to do. I mean it’s such a beautiful picture of coming together and how we might serve one another, showing the world that we are the body of Christ, transforming it for Christ’s sake and for God’s glory.

“The Motivation For Godliness”

Bruce: Absolutely. Thank you. That’s a great reminder. And remember, Paul’s admonition to Titus is this. *“Teach these things”*—the apostles’ doctrine, so that the doctrine of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will be more attractive.

How do we make it attractive? In relationship with each other, that’s how we make it attractive—the way that we treat each other, the way that we master the art of living in our relationships. All of life is about relationships, men. It’s all about relationships. And grace teaches us the art of living.

Participant: Bruce, on that note, we can be godly men. But if we’re isolated from each other as people,--

Bruce: That’s right.

Participant: We should come together, and together have that zealousness for good works. Just imagine! I think of this in military terms, as an army of men. You can’t fight by yourself.

Bruce: That’s right.

Bruce: You need each other as brother to brother, in terms of life and death. You need to come together and have a mission and a purpose and a cause. So it starts off with being godly. We can’t make it until we have God. But once you do that, it needs to be powerful and effective, and the enemy knows that. I think he wants to keep us isolated. How well do we know each other? You know, we come here Fridays. But how well do we know each other for a mission and a cause, to come together to change the world? The Lord can really use a band of brothers like this to really do that.

Bruce: Amen. And it makes Christianity more attractive. It adorns the gospel of God. The great word in our other translations is *adorn*. It means to beautify. Men, we have the chance to beautify the gospel by how we relate to each other, first of all understanding this. I have been personally redeemed. I’ve been purified to be part of a body.

Now that ought to move us and motivate us. Grace teaches us in our heads to think differently. It changes our hopes. We’re waiting for the second coming of Christ. And thirdly it motivates us to live godly lives and to do good works, as people zealous for good works. Men, it is in this present age that we do this. It’s in between these two appearances—the One that has appeared and the One that will appear—we live in between. We live in grace, but we will live in glory. We live in grace. But men, we will live in glory, the glory of our great God and Savior. The blessed hope signifies our future prospect which brings for us eternal blessings. And *“the gracious appearing”* can be literally translated, *“the grace of the appearance of the glory of our great God.”* And the Christian lives in between those two times in this present age. We live in between those two appearances, between that grace appeared and the fact that Christ will appear.

Now notice this: that God’s glory is a glory which transforms those who will see it. And Jim could talk a lot about that in his study of the Second Coming. The Second Coming is going to transform things to such a magnitude as we’ve never seen it before! It blows us all off the charts.

Notice that when Moses was allowed to see something of God’s glory on the mountain, his face shone. Read about that in Exodus 34. Elsewhere, in the New Testament, Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that *“we who with unveiled face all contemplate the Lord’s glory are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

“The Motivation For Godliness”

You see, the blessed hope of the Christian is that when Christ returns at His second coming, His glory will be totally unveiled. And there will be such a quantum leap of transformation in our lives and the lives of this world that will just be mind-blowing, because the glory of the Lord is going to be unveiled. Right now it's veiled. But when the Lord returns it's going to be unveiled. And the consequence of that will be the transformation of this entire universe. And all of creation will go through a radical change, a transformation.

Paul's whole theme is transformation. The gospel transforms. And we're just getting a glimpse of it when you're transformed in your own life. You see, we're living for the hope of eternal glory. And it's going to be unveiled. And that glory is going to be so much more glorious that it's going to transform us to a different magnitude, and the quantum leap of this transformation will be unlike anything we've ever seen before, because the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will be unveiled. It's going to be revealed.

And men, we live between those two times. We live in grace right now. But one day, men, we're going to live in glory! Yes, Don?

Don: Yes. I notice, Bruce—and maybe you'll be getting to this—that in verse 15 the responsibility of the pastor is awesome. My translation says, *“Speak these things. Exhort and rebuke with all authority.”* A pastor is to preach and teach these things and to teach the whole counsel of God, even to rebuke if necessary. I thought that was interesting.

Bruce: I'll tell you what. I'm going to close this right now because I want to discuss two things more in depth next week. And Don, we are going to get to your point in verse 15. We'll close with that.

But I want to come back and talk next week about these two words—*redemption* and *purification*. We need to discuss that in detail. What does that mean to you and to me and to the world? What does that mean that you are redeemed? What does it mean that a body has been purified for His own pleasure? We need to understand the implications of that. And so we'll take that up next week.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for grace. First of all, Father, we thank You for the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, the true God. Father, what people need is that they don't need intelligence. They don't need inspiration. They don't need idols. They need the revelation of the true God. And we find that in the Person and work of Jesus Christ because we know this. The grace of God has appeared. We live in grace, but we will live in glory. In this present age may we do our good works that will radically validate the transforming power of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And may it be so. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen!”