

“The Motivation For Godliness” *Part 2*

Penetrating a Dark World

Titus 2:11-15

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Bruce: Okay, Don. Set the tone for us, please. Quietly go before the Lord and know that He is God. (*Music*)

Gracious Father, we thank You for the gift of laughter as long as it's clean, in which we can enjoy the fellowship. We can laugh with one another. We can cry with one another. We can pray with one another. We can learn from one another. That's what we are about here. Heavenly Father, we're trusting that Your Holy Spirit once again will fulfill His job description and call attention to the Person and work of Christ. And may it be so for Your glory and our benefit. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Last week we were in Titus chapter 2, looking at verses 11-15. We'll pick that up this week, do a quick review and then finish this portion. It's a profound portion for us. Titus chapter 2, verses 11-15.

“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 this present age, waiting for the 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. The key to this passage is understanding two appearings. The first appearing occurs in verse 11. *“The grace of God has appeared.”* We discussed that last week. We'll review that a little bit. In verse 13, *“waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

We live between those two appearings. One has already appeared—past tense. God's grace has appeared. As we talked last week and learned last week in this passage, the most complete description, illustration and application of all of what grace is is found in the Person and work of Christ. Grace has its fullest expression in the Person and work of Christ Jesus.

A good definition for grace is *God's resources at Christ's expense*. You can use the acrostic. A friend sent me a new definition a couple of weeks ago—*unconditional acceptance given to an undeserving person by an unobligated God*. We're talking about grace.

The thing that Paul is teaching us today in this passage is that grace is a schoolmaster. It's a teacher. And we need to understand what it has taught us, how grace teaches us. Because its greatest expression is found in the Person and work of Christ, then if we learn anything about Christ we're learning about grace. And when we talk about grace, we're talking about the Person and work of Christ in its fullest expression.

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God’s grace is this. Despite all of our spiritual bankruptcy, God desires to have a relationship with us. “*Blessed are the poor in spirit*”, we’re told in the Beatitudes at Jesus’ first staff meeting. “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” Grace is all about the Person and work of Christ.

There are two things that we need to understand about grace as a teacher. Men, the spirit of this passage is essentially that God is saying that grace is a schoolmaster. We come under its tutelage. Grace teaches us two things—to say no to ungodliness and sinful passions, and also it teaches us how to live life. It teaches us two things—no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and “*to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*”

And the key is “*in this present age.*” We’re in between the two appearances. The first appearing is that grace has appeared, past tense. The second one is the second coming of Christ. And when He comes we’re going to see that we’ll just expand our vision of who He is when He returns in all of His glory.

Now I want to encourage you to listen to what our brother Jim has to say about the Second Coming. He’s done a wonderful study on that. And when we have the opportunity we’ll give him a chance to teach some of that to us, because he has done a wonderful job giving much of his life helping us understand that and putting it into film. And I would encourage you to come and see the gospel of John, because you’re going to see something wonderfully done. It’s going to be very, very inspirational and very, very meaningful, and very, very powerful in the proclamation of the Person and work of Christ and the demonstration of grace. You will see the demonstration of grace so clearly in the book of John because it’s all about Jesus as God. Jesus is God.

There are two things we learn from grace. Paul teaches us in this passage first of all to say no. And the second thing is to live a life that is pleasing to Him by three things—self-control, uprightness and godliness. There are three things that we learn from grace through the life of Christ.

Self-control refers to our relationship with ourselves and our behavior. Grace teaches us everything we need to know about any relationships that we’ll ever have. First of all it starts with ourselves, our self-control. It teaches us about our relationship with ourselves and our own behavior. We guard our behavior by self-control. “*God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-control.*” Self-control is how we relate to grace. In our response to the Person and work of Christ we exercise self-control because that’s the relationship that we have with ourselves.

Uprightness is a second word that we understand God is teaching us through grace. And that refers to loving honesty in all of our dealings with other people. Uprightness deals with other people. Self-control deals with ourselves; uprightness deals with other people. With any type of relationship that you have, you need to be upright in the relationship you have. First of all, we have to exercise self-control. If we don’t exercise self-control, we will not exercise uprightness with other people.

And the third thing that Paul teaches us is *godliness*. And that refers to a humble, reverent and obedient walk with God, who is the center of all of our lives.

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Now the whole spirit of what Paul is teaching us there is the art of living. That’s what grace teaches us. Grace teaches us first of all to say no to ungodliness and unrighteousness. And then it teaches us the art of living by self-control, uprightness and godliness. The grace of God is a schoolmaster to educate us and to train us in the art of living. That’s what Paul is teaching us in this particular passage, as we saw last week.

How does he do that? In three areas—in our heads (verse 12.) It teaches us to think correctly. You’ve got to think right, act right, feel right. Paul says, “*Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.*” The first thing grace does is that it teaches us how to think correctly. The world says, “Feel, act, think.” Scripture says, “Think, act, feel.” It’s what we would call transformational *thinking*.

Secondly, our hopes are educated in the Scripture by grace. And this means that our aspirations and what we look for, looking for the Person of Christ to return. Our aspirations are clear. And so our hopes are changed by the grace of God as we understand the Person and work of Christ.

And thirdly our hearts are changed. Our emotions and our feelings are all changed as well.

So how does grace teach us? It teaches us to think correctly. It teaches us that we have a different set of hopes, and we have a different set of emotions and feelings. All those things are a result of God’s grace.

Our hearts are touched as Paul explains that Jesus Christ is the One 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.*” Look at the second portion of this verse.

He redeems us individually and purifies us collectively. What’s the collective purification process? What is that? The church.

Participant: Fellowship.

Bruce: It’s the church. Redemption deals with us individually. Purification deals with the whole church. And so He redeems a people for Himself, “*to purify for Himself a people*” that are His own possession that are zealous for good works.

What is the evidence of your having been taught by grace in your mind, your aspirations and your heart? What’s the evidence of that? Good works. It’s what Paul says—zealous for good works. That’s the evidence that you’ve been taught by grace. It’s not that you’re gaining any merit from your good works. This is not merit oriented. It’s gratitude expression oriented. You’re not doing this for merit, to earn your salvation. It’s an expression of gratitude for your salvation by your good works.

So listen to this again. God deals with our emotions and our feelings. “*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.*”

Notice that the purpose behind what God’s grace in Christ did for us was to rescue us from wickedness and to move us to become God’s special people. We express our gratitude for our His salvation by our good works because we exist between these two appearances—the grace that has appeared and the grace that will appear at Christ’s second

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coming. We live in between these two. We live in grace right now, men. But we will live in glory.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Please?

Participant: What would you define as good works?

Bruce: They are defined strictly by three things. They are consistent with the Scripture, with the right motive, and for the right reason. That’s a good work. Defined by the Scripture, with the right motive, and for the right reason.

That’s why a nonbeliever can only do a bad good work. He can’t do a good good work because he doesn’t have the right reason and the right motive.

They can do a good work. They can build a hospital wing. It’s very, very helpful to our world. But is that a good work in God’s eyes? They don’t have the right reason-God’s glory. They don’t have the right motive.

So that’s how a good work is defined. The best we can do is a good good work. But even our good works are tainted, aren’t they? My good works are all tainted. But a believe is the only one who can do a good work.

That’s why it says, “*to purify a people for Himself, eager to do what is good,*” who are eager for good works. It’s only the church who can do good works. The world can do bad good works, but they can’t do good good works. Yes, Jim?

Jim: Bruce, I think I remember something Luther said about good works that the ungodly do, that in fact it’s one of the worst of all things because it gives other people the impression that you can be good without God.

Bruce: That’s right. That’s excellent. You see, the very best thing a nonbeliever can do is a bad good work. It’s good in the eyes of the world, but not in the eyes of God. Yes, Bishop, please?

Bishop Rodgers: St. Augustine called it “splendid vices.” *(Laughter)*

Participant: Ah, yes.

Bruce: Splendid vices. That’s right. It’s like hen Jonathan Edwards said that my children are “sinful little vipers.” *(Laughter)* Your son was born as a sinful little viper. Wow! *(Laughter)*

Participant: In covenant diapers. *(Laughter)* **Bruce:** In covenant diapers. *(Laughter)* Yes?

Participant: In Titus 2, where you were talking about self-control, so we don’t get legalistic or put on a façade, would this be a good summation? Self-control of thought, self-control to deny self and rather to serve others for and to God’s glory. So if we can think of the thought that way, would that—

Bruce: I think it’s keeping it in the context of the passage of Scripture which is important. Self-control, the way we offset that, is by good works. Now how do you define good works? We’ve just included everything you just said. They’re defined by the Scripture, for the right reason, for the right motive. That’s all the things you just described.

I think that what we’re really saying is this: that God has purified a people for Himself who will demonstrate good works defined Biblically, for the right reason and the right

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motive. That’s what calls attention to His grace and our work. That’s an exercise of self-control. “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear or timidity, but of power, love and self-control.*” It all starts with our own self-control.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Please.

Participant: This is a classic example of how legalism occurs. It starts off when you disregard the word go God saying that this is what God has done. If you go back to verse 11—

Bruce: Sure.

Participant: This is what God has done.

Bruce: It has occurred.

Participant: So for all intents and purposes, this is a factual statement of our condition.)Unclear)

Bruce: Correct.

Participant: In the Bible, there is always now that you’ve heard what God has done,—the imperative; what you should do.

Bruce: Yes. That’s right.

Participant: And that’s what you should do sometime, to get into this whole aspect. Well I’m saved by grace. And that leads to, let’s call it conservative or reformed antinomianism, where we don’t worry about being holy.

Bruce: That’s right.

Participant: When you look at the indicative, you can never realize what we’re called to do because of the love of God. And so it’s a classic situation that we see here in this passage.

Bruce: Very much so. Thank you. That’s excellent.

Now what are the implications of these two appearances in verse 14? We just said that. Remember, the two appearances are these. “*The grace of God has appeared*”—past tense; factual. Christ came, died for our sins, was resurrected, ascended back into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father right now, interceding for us. Guys, those are facts.

What we’re looking for is the return of Christ, His second coming, with all of His glory and His magnificence.

Now we’re caught in between those two, waiting in between those two. We are now living in grace, but we will live in glory. What are the implications of our living in between those two appearances? That’s what we need to take a look at for a moment.

Paul uses two metaphors here to explain what Christ has done for His people. He gave Himself to redeem and to purify us.

Two things. First of all, what does it mean to be redeemed? The classic definition is *rescued through the payment of a price*. The very first thing that God did through the sacrifice of Christ was that He redeemed a people individually. Redemption is being rescued through the payment of a price.

In the context of the book of Titus, as you recall on the island of Crete, the slaves outnumbered the Roman citizens about four to one. Historians would say that there were

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about sixty thousand slaves on the island of Crete. A well-integrated Roman family would have at least four to five slaves. So that means there were probably about fifteen thousand families and sixty thousand slaves.

The word *redemption* is something they could really identify with very, very significantly, because when you were redeemed, when a slave was redeemed, you were rescued from one master and given to another master. They bought you. You were rescued. Now hopefully you went from being rescued from one master and went to a better master. But the whole point of redemption is this. You are rescued by the payment of a price, but you're not left alone. You now come under another Master.

That's the point. The Scripture says this. He redeemed and purified a people for His own. Now the word *redemption* means this. You and I were rescued from the domain of Satan and now placed under a new Master, the Lord Jesus Himself. That's what it means in the context of this passage. You go from one master to another. And so we've been removed from the master of Satan who was the master over us prior to our regeneration. And now we're turned over to a new Master, the Lord Himself.

That's why Colossians chapter 1, verses 13 and 14 are so powerful. We have been “*rescued from the domain of darkness, and transferred into the kingdom of the Son He loves.*” You see, that's a powerful verse—Colossians 1:13. We have been rescued from the domain of darkness. Men, no longer are we under the mastership and the leadership of Satan himself, the evil one, the prince of the power of the air. We've been rescued from that because of the cross of Christ because grace is what?

Participant: A free gift.

Bruce: It has appeared. Grace has appeared. You've been rescued if you're in Christ. You've been rescued from the domain of darkness, and now you're under the Mastership and the Lordship of Christ.

That's why it's so important that when you teach evangelism you don't separate Christ as Savior and Christ as Lord. You've got to be careful about that. Some people say, “I've invited Jesus into my heart as Savior, but I haven't made Him Lord yet.” (*Laughter*)

You hear that all the time. Somebody will have a conversion experience or a pseudo-conversion experience, perhaps with some evangelistic campaign. And usually the conduct never changes. And somebody will say, “Well, he or she just accepted Christ as their Savior but never made Him Lord.”

Well I'll tell you what, folks. God has already made Him Lord.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: He is already Lord. We don't make Him anything. We accept Christ on His terms, not on our Americanized evangelistic terms. So we've got to be careful about separating the Savior-ship of Christ from His Lordship.

When we are redeemed, we go from one master to the next. And prior to our regeneration and our conversion we were under the leadership of Satan himself, the prince of the power of the air. And we were rescued. And why were we rescued? Because grace has appeared! Grace has appeared and salvation is made available to all people, as we're told in the Scripture. It's made visible. Grace has appeared, past tense. And now we eagerly wait for the arrival of Christ to come a second time. We've been “*transferred into*

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the kingdom of the Son He loves”, and rescued from the domain of darkness, rescued through the payment of a price. It’s with His blood that Christ paid for our sins and set us free from sin’s dominion and consequences. He has brought us into His own service, which is true freedom.

Do you know what true freedom really is? True freedom is not the freedom to do what you want. True freedom is coming under His leadership and serving Him, doing what pleases Him. That’s true freedom.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: True freedom is doing what pleases God. That’s why a good work has to be defined by the right motive. What’s my motive in doing a good work? Is it so that people will think that I have a good reputation? Or is it to call attention to the Person and work of Christ in my life for God’s glory?

You see, that’s why the whole thing is to be eager for good works. We’re eager to express our redemption. That’s what good works do. Good works reveal your redemption. It’s evidence of the redemptive power of Christ paying for your sins. And you do these good works which are consistent with the Scripture for the right motive and the right reason. That’s an expression of our redemption for the world to see. And that’s why God purified a people for His own possession who are eager for good works, not to call attention to us, but to call attention to what? The fact that His grace has appeared. Grace has appeared and has changed your life and changed my life.

The next thing we need to understand is *purification*. We see that redemption is individualistic. Purification is collective.

The second metaphor is that of *washing and cleansing*. Through the cross Christ has released the Spirit into the lives and hearts of His people. We’re given new life. In Titus 3:5 Paul speaks of “*the washing of rebirth*.” In Ephesians 5:26 he speaks of “*the washing with water through the word*.” Now clearly in both of these passages of Scripture he’s talking about rebirth. He’s talking about the Word.

The word Paul has in mind here is the inward purifying of our hearts which flows out of the work of Christ—the inward purifying of our hearts which flows out of the working of Christ and the accomplishments of Christ.

Now let me develop this with you for a minute. Where does the purification process begin? It begins in the heart of God. That’s where it starts. Where did the redemptive work of Christ begin? It began in the heart of God. Notice that expression—“*to purify a people for His own possession*”, for Himself. He did this for Himself, not for us.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: We are never the reason God does anything. We just receive the overflow of what God does and purposes in His heart.

Now let me give you an illustration. Go with me, please, to the book of Isaiah. Just go to Isaiah chapter 48 verse 9. Here’s where it begins, men. Here is the beginning of the church, purifying a people for His own possession.

Isaiah 48 verse 9. “*For My name’s sake I defer My anger.*” That’s the same word as *wrath*. “*For My name’s sake I defer My wrath*” or “*anger. For the sake of My praise I restrain it from you, that I may not cut you off.*”

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Now notice. Who is the reason God does something?

Participant: Himself.

Bruce: Himself. He does it for His name’s sake. Now the word *name* implies every characteristic, attribute and character quality of God Himself. When you invoke the name of God and the name of Christ you’re invoking all of Their characteristics, attributes and character qualities, Their whole Persons. *“For My name’s sake I defer My wrath. For the sake of My praise I restrain it before you, that I might not cut you off.”*

Now that little phrase *cut you off* is a Hebrew idiom that means this: to have a relationship with you. Men, there could be no relationship we would have with the Lord Jesus Christ unless God did what? Held back His wrath; held back His anger for our sin! There’s no way that we could have a relationship with Him if He didn’t do that first. And He did that for Himself so that later on He could have a possession, a people of His own called the church.

So the very first thing that God does in this whole process in beginning to purify you and me, cleansing our hearts, the very first thing He does is this. He holds back His wrath so that there might exist the possibility of a relationship with us.

Now let’s go over to Isaiah chapter 43 verse 25. First of all He holds back His wrath so that a potential relationship with us might exist. The next thing He does is this in Isaiah 43:25. *“I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember Your sins.”*

Now who does God do this for?

Participant: Himself.

Bruce: Himself, because if He didn’t do this He couldn’t have a relationship with us because we would be exposed in our sin. He blots out our transgressions *“for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”* He holds back His wrath, blots out our transgressions, and doesn’t remember our sin anymore. Now that’s what He says He’s going to do.

The prophet Isaiah is speaking on behalf of God saying, “This is what is going to happen.” Now where do we see what does happen?

Let’s go to Ezekiel chapter 36. Here again the prophet Ezekiel is speaking on behalf of God. We’ve already seen this. In order for us to have a relationship with Him he did a couple things. He held back His wrath, blotted out our transgressions from His sight, and He doesn’t remember our sin anymore.

Now here’s the impact it has upon you and me. That’s where it began, in His heart. Let’s pick it up in verse 22 of Ezekiel chapter 36.

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD God, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD,’ declares the LORD God, ‘when through you I vindicate My holiness before their eyes.’”

How in the world are people going to see God as holy?

Participant: Through us.

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Bruce: It’s through us! It’s through our having been redeemed individually, rescued through the payment of a price. We’ve been “*transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the Son He loves.*” He has purified us, changed our inner heart desires so that we are what? Eager for good works, because the good works call attention to whom?

Participant: God.

Bruce: God Himself. You’ve got to have the right motive, to have the right reason. Verse 24. Now here’s how He does it. Here’s how He purifies us. The Scripture says that He purifies a people for His own possession. Here’s how He purifies us.

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey My rules.”

That’s what Paul says when he says this: to purify a people for His own possession. That’s what God does to purify a people for His own possession.

Here’s how it works. The first thing He does is this. He calls us to Himself. Look at verse 24 and follow the sequence along. It’s very, very clear, very, very powerful, very, very simple. He calls us to Himself.

Next He cleanses us from ourselves. If we’re going to be the people who demonstrate God’s holiness to a lost world, the first thing He has to do is what?

Participant: Clean us.

Bruce: Clean us up! If we’re going to be the means, He has got to change the means. He’s got to clean us up. He calls us to Himself. He cleanses us from ourselves.

Next He does this. He creates a new heart within us—regeneration. He creates a new heart within us. And how does He describe that? By removing the heart of stone that is insensitive to spiritual things and replacing it with a heart of flesh that is now sensitive to spiritual things. And why is that? Because He’s purifying a people for His own possession. He calls us to Himself, cleanses us from ourselves, creates a new life within us.

He completes us with the power source of the Holy Spirit. “*And I will put My Spirit in you.*” No longer are we the means of our own regeneration. We’re not the means of our regeneration; God was that. We’re not the source of our own lives anymore. That’s why grace teaches us how to live our lives with self-control, uprightness and godliness. You see, that’s what the Holy Spirit does.

So again the process of our cleansing is this. He calls us to Himself, cleanses us from ourselves, creates a new life within us, completes us with the Holy Spirit. And notice this next. He causes us to be obedient.

Who takes responsibility for your personal obedience?

Participant: God.

Bruce: God does. How does He do that? By holding back His wrath and blotting out your transgressions and remembering your sins no more, and by calling you to Himself, cleansing us, creating a new life within us, completing us with the Holy Spirit. And the

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end result, the consequence is this. “*I will cause you to be obedient and to walk in My statutes*”, eager for what?

Participant: Good works.

Bruce: Zealous for good works. That’s why it’s so important that you understand that. Often in our Reformed theology we have a tendency to overlook good works because we want to make sure that people don’t say that you earn your salvation by your good works.

Now good works are an expression. When God changes your hearts, men, you have a heart that is zealous to do that because you want to put God’s life on display, because you’re the reason that the world will see that God is holy!

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Do you understand that? You’re the reason that the world will see that He is holy, because He changed our hearts. What Paul is teaching us is so significant. Grace teaches that tuff. It’s a schoolmaster. It teaches us the art of living. And part of the art of living is being redeemed individually. Part of the art of living is being collectively purified as the church.

So the body of Christ demonstrates zealousness for good works, to call attention to God in His grace.

Participant: When I think about what we bring to Him, I love what God says later on. He says, “*I will save you from all your uncleanness.*” I don’t bring Him anything. Yet He saves us.

Bruce: Absolutely. Grace has appeared, past tense. That’s a fact. And we live in grace right now, men, but we will live in glory soon.

Participant: Bruce, I’m with you up until the completeness of the Holy Spirit. You say that He even gives us the good works. But in verse 15 he says to speak and exhort and reprove.

Bruce: I’m going to get to that.

Participant: So there is human responsibility.

Bruce: Oh, no question.

Participant: I’m not seeing where—

Bruce: Where are you talking about? Back in Titus?

Participant: He calls us to be cleansed. “*I will give you a new heart.*” He removes the heart of stone and purifies His people. But after that I don’t see where He completes us with His Holy Spirit. Where is that here in this passage?

Bruce: He says, “*I will put My Spirit within you.*” That’s completion.

Participant: That’s Ezekiel 36.

Bruce: “*I will put My Spirit in you.*” It simply means this. When He puts His Spirit in us, He gives us the will to be willing.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: He now gives us the will to be willing. Before that you didn’t have the will to do it. That’s how He takes responsibility.

Now I’m not saying that we don’t have any personal responsibility. We absolutely do. It’s the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man that go hand in hand. So we do have a responsibility. And that responsibility is found in that expression in Titus: “*zealous*

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for good works.” That’s our responsibility. So we don’t get off the hook. He prepares us. God never equips us to do something He doesn’t equip us to do beforehand. What does He want us to do? Be zealous for good works.

How does He do that? He changes your heart with your inner cleansing. He equips you to do that. And now you have a willingness to be willing to do that, and to do it for God’s glory. Okay?

Participant: Yeah. And so my experience in life has been that in Reformed circles that we as Reformed men are good up to that point. And then they’re zealous for good works. That’s where I struggle. I don’t see that. So how can we have the Holy Spirit in us? How can we as men not do good works?

Bruce: Amen. You can’t.

Participant: It’s like what my brother was saying. God demonstrates it. He does it first. Now we need to do it.

Bruce: Absolutely. No question.

Participant: So as a man, that’s my whole life, in fact. I’m going to do it whether anybody joins me or not. But it sure would be nice if we could come together as men and make a difference.

Bruce: It would, absolutely. Don’t get hung up on “zealous for good works.” That’s an expression of our gratitude for the fact that grace has appeared. You’re motivated by gratitude.

Participant: But if the Holy Spirit is in you, then you’re going to be zealous.

Bruce: Oh, of course you are! That’s why he just gave us that.

Participant: You can’t sit on your butts and do nothing.

Bruce: No. Absolutely. We’re saying the same thing.

Participant: Yeah.

Bruce: Yes, Ted?

Ted: You won’t sit on your butt and do nothing.

Bruce: That’s right.

Ted: You can’t help yourself.

Bruce: That’s right.

Ted: I mean, if you’re zealous for golf, nobody has to tell you to go out and play golf, or whatever the desire of your heart is. And I think sometimes we think of it as God has got this work, and now He’s given us these jobs to do out here. Actually the job that we’re doing out there is Christ Himself within us. It comes from our union with Christ.

Bruce: That’s right.

Ted: Indeed, if our lives are not marked by consistent good works, it raises a question whether we are in union with Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Ted: Which is a far more frightening question than to say, “Are you living a good life, or not?”

Bruce: Absolutely. If you don’t have a zealousness for good works, (because the Spirit will give you the will to be willing), if you don’t have the desire to do that, you’ve

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got to check yourself. Don't go looking around at other people. Ask yourself “What's wrong with me?”

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Remember, you don't use the Bible to bash people over the head. If you're going to bash somebody over the head, bash yourself. If you don't see a zealotry for good works, there's something amiss.

Participant: I think part of this comes to the fact that, coming back to your axiom of being zealous for good works, the question is, well why am I not as zealous as it appears that I should be? And it gets back to some of the teaching Bruce has said, that it comes with proper thinking. If we start out every day with what I feel, we are not going to be successful beings, living for God.

Bruce: Absolutely right.

Participant: As starting out every day by saying, “I know that I am in God, and therefore I think accordingly.” You will be more zealous by starting with thinking than starting with feeling.

Bruce: Because you'll be looking for opportunities. Absolutely right.

You've heard me use the expression “be an aggressive responder to what you see the Lord doing around you.” When you wake up every morning and you have that focus, Lord, give me the sensitivity and the awareness to see what you're going to do around me today. I want to join that because when I join that, I know it will be blessed. It will have the right motive and the right reason and the right Scripture reference, and all the other things involved.

When we don't have that, you've got to check yourself and say that there is something amiss. Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: It's puzzling. I know that what we've been talking about is the chief emphasis of Scripture. But isn't there another way in which God reveals His holiness, precisely through His judgments?

Bruce: Oh, absolutely, through His judgments. No question about that.

Participant: Bruce, so I serve the poor and the orphans. And the hardest people to get to come and join me are men every year, and it's getting harder. I talked to the cashier yesterday and for the past two weeks, and it's getting harder. And so what are we doing as men to encourage ourselves and our boys to get out and do something, because it's not happening. So how do we transfer from head knowledge to our hands and our feet? That's the challenge.

Bruce: I can't answer that question for you. That's an individual thing that you have to respond to yourself. Notice. Don Belt has got his two boys here. That's a beginning. The most encouraging thing I see about us getting together on Friday mornings is not you old guys. *(Laughter)* Myself included. Ted, you're still a young guy. *(Laughter)* But it's not the old guys. It's the fact that he's bringing his sons. We've got some boys back there. We've got another son over here. That's the most encouraging thing, because maybe the next generation will catch sight of this. And maybe they'll understand, as a result of their being purified in the body of Christ, that they will have an eagerness to be zealous for good works.

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So this is one of the things we can do. But I think that we have to individually look at ourselves and become aggressive responders to what we see the Lord doing around us. Yes?

Participant: Just to piggyback on what you’re saying, Matt. Another thing, and I just saw this recently, if I go to Don and I say, “Don, you’ve been playing the piano for thirty years. Can you teach me?”, he’s going to say, “Sure.” If I go to you, Bruce, and say, “Can you teach me how to play spoons? I don’t know how to do that.” We’ve done certain things for so long that we can teach others, except for whenever it comes to Scripture. For whatever reason us as men—not us here’ I think we’re the exception—men outside have been coming to church for ten, twenty or thirty years, yet they won’t pass that along and do the work of Deuteronomy 6 and pass that along to their children. But I think we need to call them on it lovingly, and also, like we’re trying to do, witness by teaching our children to do it, and it’s slow. God will do it if we’re obedient to teaching that to our kids, and we’ll get there.

Bruce: Yes, Jim?

Jim: Matt was saying about how we move from head knowledge to action. I think that in part we don’t have the right head knowledge. I think that’s what you’re saying.

Bruce: That’s what I’m saying.

Jim: That’s the means. Men don’t hear it and so they don’t act.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: If you don’t hear the right truths, you’re not going to think and act correctly.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: That’s why part of the purification of the inner spirit of the person is the changing of the way you think in your head. That’s what I was trying to say. The way you think is different.

Now let me give you a couple of summaries about the teaching and the measure of the thing that is to be taught. Look at verse 15. Go back to Titus. “*Continue teaching these things.*”

What things do we teach? Titus 2:1-14. Continuing admonishing Christians to do these things. We need to encourage people to do these things. Continue rebuking Christians who refuse to do these things. That’s part of what we need to do. Let no man despise you in the teaching of these things.

We have the responsibility, men. When God gives us something, we need to what?

Participant: Give it.

Bruce: Give it away. One of the great treasures I have personally, when I was finishing my doctoral work and studying at Oxford in England, was a handwritten letter given to me from one of my advisers, written by Charles Spurgeon.

Participant: Wow!

Bruce: And I have it in my office at home And I said to the gentleman who was one of my advisers at Oxford, “This is such a treasure! How can you give it away?”

He said, “It only becomes valuable when you give it away.”

Men: Wow! Amen!

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Bruce: And he gave me this letter by Charles Spurgeon! I look at that every time I go to study. I say, “Charles Spurgeon is right there in front of me..” (*Laughter*) What’s that?

Participant: You don’t have to give it to me, but I’ll take a copy. (*Laughter*)

Bruce: The point is this. My adviser was giving me a great lesson in this. The things that are the most valuable are the things you give away. That’s when they become valuable.

That’s what we have with the gospel of Christ. That’s what Paul is telling Titus. Don’t let anybody despise you. Don’t let them think poorly of you. Teach these things and give them away. Yes, Don?

Don: Yes. I notice that in my translation, at the end of verse 15 it says, “*Speak, exhort and rebuke with all authority.*”

Bruce: Correct.

Don: I think there are some pastors in pulpits who, for whatever reason, are reluctant to offend people in the congregation. But they’re to do it with all authority. Lovingly for sure, and not lording it over people, but nevertheless with all authority, because they speak with no less authority than the word of God.

Bruce: Do you have a couple minutes? I’ve got something to respond to Don about that because you brought up something very good, Don. Here are a couple of things I would just say for teachers, for all of us.

We’re to teach the apostles’ doctrine, not the latest fad.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: We’re to teach the apostles’ doctrine. We’re to teach not our own ideas, but the Scripture, being fully aware that “*heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.*” Preach and teach the apostles’ doctrine.

Secondly, *we’re to teach in a way that encourages people.* Let the people see that the Scripture you’re working on yourself is the same Scripture working with them. The pastor must show such people that he loves them as he brings the word of God to them, what you’re saying, Don. So it is that the Scripture is full of God’s love and promises, a lot of “do not fears.” People will respect and respond to a man who teaches them when they begin to see that he is seeking in his own heart and applying the Scripture to himself.

Next I would say this. *We are to be brave enough to rebuke the people and warn them when they need it.* A Christian leader can lose credibility with people if he is too frightened to do this. He must do it with a calm spirit and from a motive of love, but he must do it. He must sometimes bring the threatenings that the Scriptures say to God’s people.

Next I would say this. Underlying this must be *permanent personal sincerity and integrity.* *Sincerity* would mean that not only is the teacher teaching God’s word to other people, but that he’s also applying it to his own life. And *integrity* will mean a diligence in making sure that we have understood God’s word correctly. We teach it correctly and we have the humility to realize t when we’re wrong. That’s part of our integrity.

Those are just some things I offer to you for your consideration when we give away the apostles’ teaching. May it be so that God will have us be a people who are zealous for

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good works. And we will be expressing with gratitude the fact that grace has appeared in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father, there is much, much more that we could discuss today because of our inability to apply the truth that You give us. We’re absolutely dependent not upon our knowledge or our understanding, but upon the mercy and ministry of Your Holy Spirit. We thank You that He is the One who gives us the will to be willing. May it be so, Father, that we will seek You clearly with a heart that desires to know You more clearly, and pass it on and give it away for Your glory. And all God’s men said, “Amen.” (*Applause*)